NEWS REPORTING AND EDITORIAL INTERPRETATION OF THE PALMER RAIDS, 1919 - 1920 BY THREE DETROIT DAILY NEWSPAPERS: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

NEWS REPORTING AND EDITORIAL INTERPRETATION OF THE PALMER RAIDS, 1919-1920 BY THREE DETROIT DAILY NEWSPAPERS: A STUDY

By

Alexandra Remelgas

A large number of alleged alien radicals were arrested, under the direction of A. Mitchell Palmer, the attorney general of the United States, in separate raids in principal United States cities in November, 1919 and January, 1920. The several thousand persons, seized by agents of the Department of Justice in the nation-wide raids, were held for extended periods of time and were subjected to a variety of personal abuses during the period of their confinement. Some 249 aliens were deported to Soviet Russia in December aboard the United States transport Buford. Allegations of the dangerous intent of the arrested aliens to overthrow the government by force were subsequently proved false in the majority of cases. The Palmer raids and Buford deportations resulted in the massive violation of individual liberties by federal authorities.

There were mass arrests in the Detroit area in both the November and January raids. The January raids in Detroit were particularly infamous in the violation of individual liberties. Aliens in the city were arrested without warrants and were detained under conditions detrimental to their health and well-being. Eight hundred men were confined from three to six days in the fifth floor corridor of the Detroit Federal Building. They slept on a bare stone floor and had access to limited sanitary facilities. The prisoners ate food brought by friends and relatives; federal authorities had made no provision for their feeding. The men were not permitted to communicate with relatives or attorneys. Prisoners not released after interrogation in the Federal Building endured similar conditions of confinement in the Municipal Court Building and the Fort Wayne Army barracks, near Detroit. City officials and a voluntary committee of citizens protested against the conditions of the alien confinement in Detroit and submitted a report to the Department of Labor on the treatment of the prisoners.

The responsibility of the press in a democratic society encompasses a dedication to the protection of individual liberties. Three Detroit daily newspapers of general circulation, the Free Press, the Journal, and the News, were evaluated in this study to determine their adherence to standards of responsible news reporting and

editorial interpretation during the Palmer raids and Buford deportations. The news reporting and editorial opinion of a number of nation-wide daily newspapers and weekly and monthly periodicals were examined for the purpose of comparison with the three Detroit dailies.

The news reports of the November and January raids in the Free Press and the Journal were written with a pro-government bias that assumed the arrested aliens were guilty of conspiring to overthrow the democratic political system in the United States. The two newspapers ignored the injustices suffered by the aliens confined in Detroit. The editorial opinions of the Free Press and the Journal emphasized the threat of organized labor, foreign workers, and Negroes to the security of the nation. The News was the only general circulation daily in Detroit to report an objective account of the conditions of the alien confinement, to consider the point of view of the arrested persons in its news columns, and to understand the position of the foreign-born prisoners in its editorial pages. There were examples of responsible news reporting and editorial interpretation in Detroit and elsewhere in the nation, in late 1919 and early 1920, however, these were exceptions rather than the rule.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The press, as the fourth estate, was made independent of government to be a censor and critic of official actions. The justification for the freedom of the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution is in the responsible evaluation by the press of administrative decisions, legislative deliberations, and governmental policies. News reporting should serve to inform citizens of the workings of their government to better enable the intelligent solution of public problems. The editorial function should encompass the defense of individual rights and liberties threatened by governmental encroachment. In 1919-1920, the individual liberties of a substantial portion of the alien population of the United States were threatened with violation by the Department of Justice under the direction of A. Mitchell Palmer, the attorney general of the United States. This study will examine the adherence of three Detroit daily newspapers of general circulation, the Free Press, the Journal, and the News, to standards of responsible news reporting and editorial commentary during the Palmer raids, 1919-1920.

History of the Palmer Raids, 1919-1920

The Palmer raids, as part of the Red Scare of 1919-1920, were the result of a number of severe social and economic dislocations in the United States following the end of World War I. Inflated prices, an unstable stock market, labor unrest, and numerous bomb threats disturbed the sense of national security. In 1919, there were strikes in the steel industry, coal mining, the building trades; and among longshoremen, transportation employees, and stockyard workers. The city of Seattle experienced a general strike and Boston's police force walked out. Domestic crises coupled with the Bolshevik ascendance to power in Russia and the emphasis of the Communist Third International on a forthcoming world revolution added fear to the elements of instability in the United States. The organization of the American Communist and Communist Labor parties in 1919, though weak in actual numbers, was credited with fomenting much of the labor unrest in the United States.

The Alien Law of 1918, specifying categories of aliens subject to deportation, was in part an expression of nativistic hostility toward foreign elements in American culture. The deportation of certain aliens was thought to be the answer to eliminating the divisiveness in American society. "In favor of deportation are first, the desire of society for order . . . and besides this, the interest

of the nation in keeping its population free from elements which are considered undesirable additions to our present and future stock."[1] Thus, the nation-wide raids in November, 1919 and January, 1920, by agents of the U. S. Department of Justice under the direction of Attorney General Palmer, were part of the reaction of conservative America to combat potential threats to national unity, economic stability, and a predominantly white Anglo-Saxon racial composition posed by the newer immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.

On November 7, operatives of the Department of Justice conducted nation-wide raids in eleven cities against the Federated Union of Russian Workers. Follow-up raids by local police in various cities continued through the tenth of November, including raids in Detroit in which 250 members of the Union of Russian Workers were jailed. Official figures, released on November 10, indicated that 230 aliens were held throughout the nation for deportation out of a larger number arrested and subsequently released.[2]

Some 249 of those arrested were deported on December 21, 1919, under the jurisdiction of the Alien Law of 1918 which stated that aliens who were anarchists, believed

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[1]Zechariah Chafee, Jr., Freedom of Speech (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), p. 284.

[2]Robert D. Warth, "The Palmer Raids," South Atlantic Quarterly, XLVIII (January, 1949), p. 6.

in or advocated the overthrow of the government of the United States by force, advocated the assassination of public officials, the unlawful destruction of property, or who belonged to any radical organizations were subject to deportation. The S. S. Buford, an old Army troopship, sailed to Hango, Finland, where the deported persons traveled by train into Soviet Russia. The deportees included 199 members of the Union of Russian Workers who had been apprehended in the November raids; 43 anarchists who had previously been scheduled for deportation; and 7 misfits, criminals, and public charges.[3] Among those with criminal records were Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, who were both well-known for their espousal of violence and anarchy.

The night of January 2, 1920, was set by Attorney General Palmer for synchronized nation-wide raids by federal agents against members of the American Communist and Communist Labor parties. The bulk of arrests were made on schedule but, as in November, separate raids by local officials continued for several days after the federal dragnet had ended. Some 5,000 suspected radicals were arrested in thirty-three major cities during the raids. Meeting halls, recreation areas, cafés, and homes were among the places searched by federal agents for alien

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[3]Robert K. Murray, Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964), p. 207.

radicals. Some 2,500 aliens were held throughout the nation subject to investigation for deportation after the January raids.[4]

The Department of Labor held jurisdiction over the deportation of suspected alien radicals. During the critical months from November, 1919 through January, 1920, William B. Wilson, the secretary of labor, was ill and John W. Abercrombie, a solicitor in the U. S. Bureau of Immigration, was made acting secretary of labor. Abercrombie was a personal friend of Palmer and was cooperative in issuing some three thousand warrants for the arrest of suspected alien radicals.[5] On March 6, Louis F. Post, assistant secretary of labor, replaced Abercrombie, who took leave of his duties to campaign for senator. Acting Secretary of Labor Post reviewed some four thousand cases by the end of June, 1920 and declared approximately 600 aliens subject to deportation; the others were granted their freedom.[6]

Careful placement of undercover informants, who worked for the Department of Justice, in radical organizations was the mainstay of Attorney General Palmer's preparations for the November and January raids. The agents of the General Intelligence Division were assigned the task

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[4]Warth, "Palmer Raids," p. 9.

[5]Ibid., p. 8. [6]Ibid., p. 18.

of organizing meetings of radical groups for the nights proposed for the raids. The raids were scheduled at night as most organization members worked during the day. Nighttime also enhanced the factor of surprise and confusion on the part of suspected alien radicals who were arrested in their homes.

The meeting halls of radical organizations were the places where the federal agents concentrated their efforts. Following in importance were choral societies and schools for foreign-born adults; shops operated by suspected radicals; restaurants and cafés; bowling alleys and billiard parlors; and social rooms for playing checkers and other games. Those arrested were frequently in attendance of classes, lectures, concerts, or dances. Sidewalks outside radical meeting halls and private homes also netted many alien suspects.

Citizens were not to be detained and an admission of an alien's membership in a radical organization was imperative at the time of the arrest. After the January raids, citizens were released after spending twenty-four to forty-eight hours in jail in Chicago. In St. Louis, some citizens were held for as long as six days. Cases took from two or three days to three weeks to be reviewed in Detroit.[7] Reliable evidence was brought out, in the

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[7]Max Lowenthal, The Federal Bureau of Investigation (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950), p. 167.

Senate Judiciary Committee investigations from January to March, 1921, numbering American citizens as one-half of the one thousand persons arrested in Detroit in January, 1920.[8]

Membership in a radical organization was frequently determined by the Department of Justice on the basis of mailing lists or lists of prospects for membership. A person's physical presence at the meeting place of a radical organization was also taken as proof of affiliation with the radical group. Many of those who were associated with radical organizations had no knowledge of the political aims of the group. Guilt by association was an accepted tenet of Attorney General Palmer and his federal agents making the arrests.[9]

The deportation law specified use of warrants issued by the Department of Labor in the arrest of suspected alien radicals. Federal agents were instructed to secure warrants before arresting any alien, but this requirement was often neglected in practice. Substituted for a warrant was a forced consent of the suspected person to allow federal agents to search his personal belongings.

Deportation hearings were conducted in secret with the exclusion of the public, the press, and the alien's family. The alien was often unable to speak English and

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[8] Ibid., p. 169.

[9] Ibid., p. 184.

the investigator, acting for the secretary of labor, seldom understood any other language. The alien was not entitled to counsel at the expense of the government, a right allowed accused criminals. Frequently, the alien was not able to obtain a lawyer for his defense. Following his deportation, "all mistakes and wrongs [were] covered by the intervening ocean."[10]

The possible effect of the Palmer raids and Buford deportations on the democratic process was evaluated in the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings in 1921 and in 1923.

> When an alien has been admitted lawfully to the United States . . . he has a right under our laws to due process and equal treatment of the laws, just the same as a citizen has. . . . To arrest him in advance of a warrant, without probable cause, on mere suspicion, is certainly going back to barbarism; and . . . if an alien's rights can be disregarded in that way, the still more important rights of a citizen may likewise be disregarded. . . .[11]

Detroit Raids, November, 1919 and January, 1920

In 1920, Wayne County had a higher percentage of foreign-born persons than any other county in the Lower Peninsula of the state of Michigan. Foreign-born white

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[10] Chafee, Freedom of Speech, p. 238.

[11] U. S., Congress, Senate, Charges of Illegal Practices of the Department of Justice, by Senator Thomas J. Walsh of Montana, 67th Cong., 2nd sess., Feb. 5, 1923, Congressional Record, LXIV, 3005-3015.

persons comprised 35 to 50 percent of the total population of Wayne County.[12] The city of Detroit, with a total population of 993,678, had 27,278 Russian-born persons residing within the city limits.[13] Persons born in Russia or of Russian descent were those persons principally suspected of radical activities by Attorney General Palmer in 1919 and 1920. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia was largely responsible for the identification of Russian aliens with dangerous radicalism in the public mind.

> . . . the more conservative elements in American life saw everywhere the hand of the Third International. Popular revulsion against the course of revolution in Russia and fears of what might happen in this country should the Reds gain more control over labor, become interacting forces which steadily deepened our hostility toward the Bolsheviki.[14]

More than fifty men, mostly of Russian descent, were apprehended in Detroit by federal agents on Friday, November 7, 1919, under the direction of Arthur L. Barkey, chief of the local representatives of the Department of Justice. The raid on the alleged headquarters of the Union of Russian Workers, at 450 Clairpointe Avenue, netted about twenty men; others were taken at their places of

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[12] U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population, III, 502.

[13] Ibid., p. 496.

[14] Foster Rhea Dulles, The Road to Teheran: The Story of Russia and America, 1781-1943 (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 162.

dwelling by federal agents to Detroit police stations. Two days later, on the tenth of November, Barkey, federal agents, and local policemen raided Thurner Hall, at 136 Sherman Street, where approximately a thousand persons were attending a play being presented by the Union of Russian Workers. About 250 men were arrested; women in attendance were not detained. Arrested aliens crowded Detroit jails after the raids. Warrants for deportation were issued to twenty-five leaders of the Union of Russian Workers.[15] None of the aliens arrested in Detroit in November, however, sailed on the Buford in late December.

The largest raid in Detroit was staged during the coast-to-coast dragnet set for the night of January 2, 1920 by Attorney General Palmer. About nine o'clock, federal agents, supervised by Arthur Barkey, entered the House of the Masses, a three-story building owned cooperatively by members of the Workers' Educational Society, and the principal meeting place of the Communist party in Detroit. At the time of the raid, a dance was being held in the social center; classes were being conducted in other rooms of the building.

Every male in or near the area of the building was arrested and taken to jail, including members of the orchestra playing for the dance; several men who were having

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[15] Detroit Journal, Nov. 8-11, 1919.

a drink in the café on the first floor of the building; a 17-year-old high school boy who had been inquiring about a job; a college instructor who was teaching a class in physical geography; and one person who had stopped out of curiosity to see what the disturbance was about. Twenty-two members of the Workingmen's Sick Benefit and Educational Society, who were playing checkers in a nearby hall, were also arrested, mistakenly, as members of the Industrial Workers of the World, a radical labor organization. Altogether, federal agents arrested and confined about 800 persons in Detroit. More than 350 of those arrested later proved conclusively that they were either American citizens or aliens who had no affiliation with any radical organization.[16]

The 800 men were held from three to six days in the fifth floor corridor of the Detroit Federal Building.[17] There was little light or ventilation and the men slept on a bare stone floor at night. Sanitary facilities consisted of one drinking fountain and one toilet to be used by all of the men who were detained. No provision had been made for the feeding of the prisoners; they were fed whatever food their families or friends brought. Those arrested were refused communication with relatives or attorneys.

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[16]Frederick R. Barkley, "Jailing Radicals in Detroit," Nation, CX (Jan. 31, 1920), p. 136.

[17]Murray, Red Scare, p. 215.

Prisoners not released after the initial period of confinement in the Federal Building were transferred to precinct police stations and the "bull pen" in the Detroit Municipal Court Building. For seven days, 128 men were locked in the small cellar room, twenty-four by thirty feet in size, where they subsisted on coffee and biscuits. The Department of Justice had no list of those being held; women and children waited in the Federal Building and precinct police stations for news of missing friends and relatives.[18]

On January 13, the 450 remaining prisoners were transferred to the Fort Wayne Army barracks, near Detroit. The 220 aliens, who remained prisoners in March, sent out an open letter of protest asking for immediate deportation. One of the prisoners had died from lack of medical attention; two others, unable to endure the close confinement and unsanitary conditions, became mentally ill. "The food we get is foul and we are kept in cold cells, almost without light," the letter said. "The prison guards treat us brutally, inhumanly."[19]

Another three months passed before most of the prisoners were released after their cases had been reviewed by Acting Secretary of Labor Post. James Couzens,

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[18]Warth, "Palmer Raids," p. 16.

[19]Ibid., p. 17.

the mayor of Detroit, said the raids had created a situation intolerable in a civilized city. The manner of detention of the prisoners, the Detroit commissioner of health said, was a menace to the public health. A prominent citizen of Detroit compared the resultant confusion and unsanitary conditions of the alien detainment to the Black Hole of Calcutta.[20]

The Three Detroit Daily Newspapers: the Free Press, the Journal, and the News

The Detroit Free Press was the city's oldest daily newspaper still published in 1919-1920. The Free Press, established on May 5, 1831 as the Democratic Free Press and Michigan Intelligencer, was managed by Sheldon McKnight. On September 28, 1835, the newspaper, which had begun as a weekly, became the first successful daily in the state. The Free Press was turned over to corporate ownership in 1896. When the newspaper was established in 1831, it was a proponent of Jacksonian democracy; in 1919, it was listed as being Independent in political affiliation.[21] In 1919, the Free Press was a standard-sized, eight-column daily published every morning from its

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[20] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[21] George N. Fuller, Detroit and Wayne County, Vol. III of Historic Michigan, ed. by George B. Catlin (Dayton, Ohio: National Historical Association, 1928), pp. 228-232.

offices on Lafayette Boulevard, with membership in the Associated Press, a cooperative news-gathering agency. The Free Press maintained out-of-town business representatives in Washington, D. C., New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, and London. Beneath its front-page nameplate, the Free Press proclaimed itself "Michigan's Greatest Newspaper." The daily circulation of the Free Press in 1919 was 124,161; its Sunday circulation was 157,489.[22]

The first issue of the Detroit Evening Journal was printed on September 1, 1883. The newspaper began as a two-cent evening daily established by Lloyd Brezee. A stock company was formed on December 6, 1883, and, by 1919, the ownership of the newspaper had changed several times. On July 21, 1922, the Journal was sold to the Detroit News.[23] In 1919, the Journal was a standard-sized, eight-column evening daily, with membership in the Associated Press. Its political orientation was Independent-Republican. The daily circulation figures for the Journal in 1919 were 109,889.[24]

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[22]N. W. Ayer & Sons, Directory: Newspapers and Periodicals (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Sons, 1920), pp. 431-432.

[23]Clarence M. Burton and M. Agnes Burton, eds., History of Wayne County and the City of Detroit, Michigan, Vol. I (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1930), p. 646.

[24]Ayer, Directory, pp. 431-432.

The Detroit News was established by James C. Scripps on August 23, 1873, and the Sunday edition first appeared on November 30, 1884, as the Sunday News-Tribune. Scripps's aim was to publish a newspaper of mass circulation.

> With no political ends to serve and with entire absence of ill feeling, the city editor began to handle the city's news with much of the same freedom that would be allowed in conversation. It was a revelation to staid prosy Detroit, and the News quickly got the reputation of being a "sensational" sheet, although compared with later up-to-date journals in our larger cities it was commendably moderate and respectable.[25]

In 1919, the News was a standard-sized, eight-column daily published weekday afternoons and Sunday mornings by the Evening News Association, with offices on Lafayette Boulevard. Independent in political affiliation, the newspaper boasted of the largest daily circulation in Detroit at the time, and was the only Detroit newspaper that printed the previous day's circulation figures on the front page of every issue. The daily circulation of the News in 1919 was 220,302; its Sunday circulation was 190,870.[26]

Commission on Freedom of the Press: Journalistic Standards

In 1947, the Commission on Freedom of the Press, financed by private grants and composed of thirteen men

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[25]Burton, History of Detroit, pp. 644-645.

[26]Ayer, Directory, pp. 431-432.

distinguished in the fields of law, communications, history, and philosophy, published a general report that dealt with the responsibility of the agencies of mass communication to inform the people of the United States about public affairs. The standards established by the Commission on Freedom of the Press are useful in the evaluation of daily newspaper coverage of the Palmer raids by the Detroit Free Press, the Journal, and the News. The commission named five requirements consistent with the responsible performance of the press as a disseminator of public information.

The first requirement was that the media give "a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning."[27] The reporter for a newspaper has a commitment to accuracy. He must observe and record with care and competence the news of the day separating firsthand knowledge from rumor. Fact must be separated from opinion in a news report. A single fact should be placed in a larger context to lend perspective to the news account. The activities of the various social groups in the country need to be interpreted to one another with care to present the representative, rather than the exceptional in group behavior.

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[27]Commission on Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 21.

The second requirement was that the agencies of mass communication provide "a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism."[28] Newspaper publishers are responsible for reporting significant ideas contrary to their own in the objective accounting of public affairs. All the important viewpoints of the various interest groups of society should be presented by the agencies of mass communication. Through the mass media various social groups can develop an understanding of one another. The sources of facts and opinions should be identified in the news report to establish the credibility of the account.

The third requirement was that the news report and editorial commentary project "a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society."[29] The agencies of mass communication are frequently principal sources relating fact and opinion to stereotypes. The presentation of social groups within the confines of stereotyped images contributes to a distortion of the public judgment regarding that particular social group.

The fourth requirement was a commitment of the media to "the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society."[30] Fair and accurate reports of groups or ideas contrary to established social goals

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[28] Ibid., p. 23.

[29] Ibid., p. 26.

[30] Ibid., p. 27.

should be provided to the public. The press should distinguish between positive and negative social goals, encouraging societal attainment of the former.

"Full access to the day's intelligence" was the fifth requirement suggested by the commission.[31] Citizens must be assured all the information relevant to public concerns and popular participation in government to facilitate government by consent.

> The press must know that its faults and errors have ceased to be private vagaries and have become public dangers. Its inadequacies menace the balance of public opinion. It has lost the common and ancient human liberty to be deficient in its function or to offer half-truth for the whole.[32]

Limitations to Standards of Responsible Journalism

A consideration of possible limitations on the standards of responsible news reporting is useful in the examination of the press coverage of the Palmer raids by the Detroit daily newspapers that were publishing at the time. Standards of responsible journalism are limited by the selection and emphasis of news items; word choice; speed in writing news stories and headlines; carelessness, indifference, or ignorance on the part of journalists;

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[31] Ibid., p. 28.

[32] William Ernest Hocking, Freedom of the Press (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 197.

errors or deception by informants; manufactured news and faking in connection with pictures; and the particular bias of reporters, editors, or publishers of newspapers.[33]

A newspaper has a limited amount of space in which to print all the newsworthy events of a single day. The position of a news item in the paper; the placement of the item on a page; the amount of space allotted to the item; the use of illustrations, prominent headings and type size are factors affecting the emphasis of a news item. The emphasis given a news item is often indicative of the news values of the newspaper. Emphasis can determine the relative importance or obscurity of any news item.

Word choice can often stray beyond the strict confines of objectivity in news stories and, particularly, in headlines. Many persons read only the headline or first few sentences of the article. The small amount of space allowed for the headline in news columns can lead to misrepresentation of the main point of the news event. Frequently, the length of the word in the headline is more important than the meaning implied. Varying shades of meaning can also be presented through the use of "judgment" words and phrases. Adjectives are often used unconsciously, or sometimes deliberately, to "color" the content of a news story.

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[33]Leon Nelson Flint, The Conscience of the Newspaper: A Case Book in the Principles and Problems of Journalism (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1925), pp. 16-29, 37-49, 51-60.

The speed and pressure under which most news stories are written also impair the accuracy and objectivity of news items. Carelessness, indifference, or ignorance on the part of reporters or editors frequently augment the adverse effects of speed and pressure. Reporters sometimes use words disregarding the fine shadings of meaning that may be implied.

> In economic affairs, the ignorance of the typical American newspaper man is most marked. . . . It is not surprising that he stamps as "bolshevistic," "radical," "socialistic," or "anarchistic" . . . all plans for altering the status quo, or that he utterly confuses the news relating to such plans.[34]

Evidence is often misrepresented by reporters through the casual acceptance as fact of the uncorroborated statements of single individuals. The reporter frequently does not consider the official or personal bias that might cause a person to misrepresent the facts. The reporter has an obligation to be skeptical of statements of fact issued by government sources or political leaders. These could be expressions of opinion guided by selfish motives. The reader should be watchful of the semi-official or semi-authoritative but anonymous statement. Included in this category are phrases, such as, "officials of the State Department," "government and diplomatic sources," "reports reaching here," and "it is stated on high

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[34]Nelson Antrim Crawford, The Ethics of Journalism (New York: Borzoi Press, 1924), p. 76.

authority that." A minor bureaucrat, a paid agent, a chance acquaintance, a dinner table conversation, or hotel lobby gossip may be the source behind the ambiguous statement.[35]

Manufactured news is an obstacle to responsible journalism based more on contrivance than carelessness. Falsification does occur most often, however, when the actual facts are unobtainable and rumor is printed instead. The press agent seeking free publicity for his concern, the advance story that never materializes, and the rewrite man who develops a full-blown story from a few meager facts are sources of manufactured news. Faking in connection with pictures is accomplished by the setting up of photographs or through the use of sophisticated developing techniques.

The bias of reporters, editors, or publishers of newspapers can contribute to news distortion. The news can be influenced by the social and economic circumstances of the publisher; thus, the news can reflect a particular class orientation. Reporters or copy editors may fear that a political or economic story will not be printed if the story is impartial or liberal in its evaluation of an issue. The newspaper caters to a mass audience; it can

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[35] Ibid., p. 78.

sometimes sacrifice accuracy and objectivity to present the stereotyped images held by the mass of the people.

> The newspaper . . . is essentially a herd institution . . . A long list of taboos--sexual, political, economic, and social--are dogmas of the American faith. . . . the dogmas of American faith are subject to no critical examination. . . . newspapermen in part are themselves influenced to believe what the herd believes, because they are essentially of the herd, while in part they consciously publish through fear what they believe the herd wants--as they say, they "give the public what it wants."[36]

The standards of journalistic responsibility, established by the Commission on Freedom of the Press, provide guidelines for the evaluation of the news reporting and editorial commentary provided readers of the three Detroit newspapers during the Palmer raids. A consideration of possible violations of these standards is also important to the study. The selection and emphasis of news items; word choice; carelessness, indifference, or ignorance on the part of journalists; errors or deception by informants; manufactured news and faking in connection with pictures; and the particular bias of reporters, editors, or publishers are factors with the potential to impede the responsible fulfillment of the journalistic function. A consideration of the news coverage and editorial commentary of the three Detroit daily newspapers, the Free Press, the Journal, and the News, will attempt

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[36] Ibid., pp. 88, 91.

to ascertain whether they were voices of conservative reaction or vehicles in the vanguard of progressive liberalism at a time when the citizenry was confronted with a critical challenge to democratic precepts by irresponsible governmental action.

CHAPTER II

THE NOVEMBER RAIDS

National Scene in November 1919

Cities and small towns across the United States celebrated the first anniversary of the signing of the armistice ending World War I on November 11, 1919; parades and confetti, however, were merely token tributes to an illusion of peace. The memory of the war was still part of the national conscience. Headlines in newspapers reminded readers of disagreement in the top echelons of governmental power over the signing of the peace treaty. The Senate approved the treaty stipulating non-participation of the United States in the League of Nations; but, Allied military aid to the czarist armies fighting against the Bolshevik forces in Russia entailed the loss of American lives and prolonged the war spirit. Newspapers in Detroit reported the silent homecoming of the bodies of the men in the local 339th Army Division who had died fighting on the Russian front in 1919.

Coupled with the memory of the war and the influence of the conflict in Russia on the public mind was the closer reality of domestic strife. In early November, 1919, the

steel strike was termed a manifestation of industrial barbarism by a Senate committee investigation. A court injunction was issued to strikers to end the coal dispute before the winter freeze. The Detroit City Council pondered the problem of public street car transportation as residents in neighboring Toledo, Ohio, walked to work.

Human interest stories in the Detroit newspapers echoed the theme of war and conflict. The Free Press reported on November 8 the efforts of police to find a lost Ohio girl who was grieving over the death of her soldier sweetheart. Exhortations for charitable contributions to the Detroit Patriotic Fund, published in the three Detroit daily newspapers, appealed to the still prevalent war psychology.

> A year ago our doughboys were going over the top with a dash that gave Detroit high rank on the nation's Roll of Honor. Now the drums are silent, the captains and the kings have departed, and the national reaction from standing at attention threatens each one of us. We cannot have been through this war in vain; we must not slip back into evasions and selfishness to the extent of losing sight of the sick and the afflicted, the poor and needy.[1]

The nation, sipping near beer and non-alcoholic wine, contemplated international conflict and its domestic tensions while voting for the permanent extension of the War-time Prohibition Act state by state.

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[1]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 9, 1919, p. 16.

Detroit Free Press: News Reporting of the November Raids

Fear of an upset of the economic and social status quo in the United States fixed in a large segment of the conservative public mind the possibility of the overthrow of the government by a radical element indoctrinated in bolshevism. An eight-column, page-one banner headline in the Free Press announced that fifty alleged Reds were arrested in Detroit as part of the nation-wide raids on Friday, November 7, 1919. The twenty men taken from the hall at 450 Clairpointe Avenue and others arrested in their homes were said, by the Free Press, to have been active in Detroit in preaching the overthrow of the government. The phrase "disciples of direct action" was used to describe their revolutionary intent.[2] The statements were not verified by reference to either fact or a specific source of authority.

The raid on the Clairpointe Avenue hall entailed lively scuffling, but federal agents managed to subdue and handcuff the twenty men while awaiting reinforcements to aid in the escort of the prisoners to the Owen Building, the federal Department of Justice headquarters, for questioning. A reporter for the Free Press described the scene, using adjectives laden with bias.

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[2] Ibid., Nov. 8, 1919, p. 1.

> . . . the offices were crowded with heavy-featured, sullen foreigners. Some of them were still rubbing their eyes, indicating that they had been asleep when the government sleuths swept down on them. They ranged in age from about 18 to 60 years. For the most part, they were typical of the foreign laborer. But, here and there, in the disgruntled group, was the "soft-handed" agitator type.[3]

The reportorial emphasis of the Free Press on November 8 was on the Detroit raids, followed by shorter stories on the raids in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Newark, St. Louis, and Ansonia and Waterbury, Connecticut. Agents in New York arrested two hundred persons to start the nation-wide roundup. Thirty-six warrants had been issued by Anthony J. Caminetti, federal commissioner general of immigration, for the arrest of the two hundred persons in New York said to have been active in the industrial unrest of the country. The news story overlooked the importance of the arrest of two hundred persons with the authority of thirty-six warrants. The Free Press frequently reported hearsay as fact under the general attribution of "it was said."

> The raids, taking place on the eve of the widely advertised celebrations of the second anniversary of the establishment of the soviet government in Russia, were said to have nipped in the bud a country-wide plot openly to defy governmental authority. This has been advocated, it was said, for several weeks by combined radical elements, the I.W.W., anarchists, and Russian agitators. Pamphlets and other literature to this effect are in possession of the Department of Justice, it was said.[4]

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[3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

On November 9, the Sunday edition of the Free Press headlined the raids as a deathknell to radicalism in Detroit. The Free Press reported the opinions of governmental authorities without questioning their validity. Unsubstantiated generalizations and personal prejudices were frequently reported as facts. A sub-head and the text of a news story reiterated the personal prejudice of Arthur Barkey, chief of the federal agents in Detroit. "They are great among themselves, but as individuals they are yellow to the neck," Barkey said in a description of the persons arrested in Detroit.[5] Detroit was said to have been a hotbed of radicalism that had caused alarm in the city for months. The Union of Russian Workers had been kept under surveillance by federal agents. An unidentified source stated that there were six schools in Detroit that taught the principles of bolshevism under the guise of sociology. The information reported in the news columns indicated that the Russian Union presented a psychological threat more than a demonstrable physical menace.

An article in the Sunday supplement of the Free Press explained the views of General Leonard Wood, United States Army, in an in-depth interpretation of the bolshevik menace. The problems brought about by American labor,

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[5]Ibid., Nov. 9, 1919, p. 1.

according to General Wood, were the result of infiltration by illiterate aliens who were ignorant of our language and institutions. The bolshevik inclinations of the aliens were roused to a peak by unprincipled agitators. The disgruntled foreigner exaggerated the pleasant features of life in his own country and the hardships attendant upon life in the United States. The agitator capitalized upon these feelings and turned the well-meaning foreigner into a dangerous radical. As a solution to the radical problem, General Wood suggested the passage of stringent laws to regulate the quality of immigration allowed to enter the United States and the swift deportation of aliens already in the country who were inimical to American institutions.[6]

A report by the Free Press Washington correspondent, William P. Simms, was front-page news in the Sunday edition. Simms capitalized on the continuation of the conflict psychology in the United States, describing the raids as an effective measure in the war against the Reds. The steel strike investigation, coal strike injunction, alien arrests, and demand for deportations were interpreted in the article as first steps in a new policy on the part of government authorities to eliminate labor despotism in the United States.[7] Nativistic hostility and the desire

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[6]Edward S. Van Zile, "American Democracy Will Put End to Bolshevism, Says General Wood," ibid., p. 5.

[7]William P. Simms, "U. S. in Finish Fight on Reds," ibid., p. 1.

on the part of American industry to maintain the economic status quo were the unstated reasons behind the government raids. The Free Press implicitly supported both in its news columns.

Following the Friday night raid was a larger raid, Saturday, on Branch No. 6 of the Union of Russian Workers located in Thurner Hall at 136 Sherman Street. About 1,500 persons were present in the hall watching a Russian play when federal agents interrupted the continuation of the performance. A reporter interjected his own bias in the news story, which appeared in the Free Press on Monday, November 10.

> The plan was to await until the play was over. But the piece was longer than "Hamlet," and perhaps even less to the liking of the federal agents and policemen, as the lines were in the Russian language. So, at a signal from his chief, one of the department of justice operatives, a native of Russia, stepped to the stage at 11 o'clock. The startled players gaped as their "lines" were thus interrupted. The pompous person in charge of the amateur production rushed from the wings. An excited buzz started from the audience. The play was supposed to be a comedy, but the atmosphere was charged with something that wasn't funny.[8]

The building was surrounded by federal agents and Detroit police. Women in the audience were permitted to leave through the main exit. The men were instructed to line up on the right side of the hall. The orders were complied with except for the few women who clutched the

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[8] Ibid., Nov. 10, 1919, p. 1.

arms of their husbands or male companions. The men were searched and questioned by the federal agents. The 250 men suspected of radicalism, in the opinion of the questioning federal agents, were taken to city, county, and federal jails throughout Detroit. Arthur Barkey, chief of the federal agents in Detroit, said in an interview with a Free Press reporter that the raid yielded much inflammatory literature and that many of the men in the hall had Red pamphlets in their pockets. The exact nature of the literature or pamphlets found in the Detroit raid was not specified in the news report.

A secondary front-page story on November 10 elaborated on the philosophy of the Union of Russian Workers. The Russian union was an organization that believed in no God or master and desired to put an end to all government by any means, the Free Press headline said. Anonymous officials said the literature seized in the raids was of a most inflammatory nature and made no effort to hide the program of death and destruction of the Russian union. No specific reference was made to particular articles or authors of the seized literature though ample material was quoted in the news columns of the Free Press.[9]

The Free Press New York correspondent, William N. Hardy, reported statements, by federal investigators in

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[9] Ibid.

New York, which described the persons arrested in Detroit as the "worst type of radicals preaching the overthrow of orderly government."[10] The names of foreigners said to have been involved in radical activities since the Communist convention in Detroit in 1914 and in January, 1919, were in the possession of federal authorities. New York officials had the names of many Detroit radicals. Lists of contributors to the I. W. W. defense fund had been discovered in the raids, as well as the names of Michigan men and women who had written articles for magazines barred from the mails. Performers, mostly women, in the productions of the Revolutionary Dramatic Club in Michigan were on the government's list of radicals.

Collectors and contributors of money for the legal defense of Jukka (John) Toiva, who was arrested at Timmons, Ontario, for distributing I. W. W. literature, and others who were arrested at Houghton, Michigan, were listed by the Department of Justice as radicals. A news report in the Free Press described the radical activities of a particular alien couple.

> John Pancener, of Detroit, and Mrs. Alma Pancener, presumably his wife, are identified as active in the revolutionary movements. Mrs. Pancener is described as director of free employment bureaus with an office at 215 Gratiot Avenue, Detroit. Mr. Pancener served

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[10] William N. Hardy, "Detroit's Radicals of Worst Type, Say Federal Agents," ibid.

> part of a term at Leavenworth and immediately upon being released on bail he became a traveling speaker for the I. W. W.[11]

John and Alma Pancener were reported by the Free Press to be undesirables who should be deported as soon as possible.

The Free Press reported the government's position for conducting the raids in its news columns. No photographs accompanied the news stories on the November raids. Statements about the arrested aliens were often generalizations substantiated only by reference to anonymous authorities. There were no interviews with the arrested aliens or attempts to report the effect of the raids from an alien's point of view. The legal basis for the raids was accepted without question. Also accepted without question was the predetermined association of "alien" and "foreigner" with "Red" and "radical." After three days of coverage of the raids, the news focus of the Free Press changed to reporting the Centralia, Washington, disturbances and the coal strike settlement.

Detroit Free Press: Editorial Interpretation of the November Raids

Ideological conformity to reactionary conservatism was the mainstay of Free Press editorial opinion. The steel and coal strikes were linked with a presumed

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[11] Ibid., p. 3.

Bolshevik infiltration of labor by Free Press editors. The I. W. W. agitators went underground to convert the ranks of trades union laborers to their philosophy of radicalism. The endorsement by Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, of the miners' strike was interpreted as an example of defiance of governmental authority and an incitement for others to do likewise. The Free Press considered the aims of the A. F. of L. as being compatible with those of the Union of Russian Workers. Any attempt to disturb the economic and social status quo, by bettering the wages and working conditions of laborers, was labeled as radical in the editorial columns of the Free Press.[12]

The root of radicalism in the United States was attributed to the foreign element. Naturalization of the foreigner was not synonymous with Americanization in the opinion of Free Press editors. Foreigners continued to live in ethnic enclaves and to send their children to schools whose teachers taught in the language of their nationality. The Americanization of immigrants was inhibited because they spoke a foreign language, observed national customs, and displayed a singular disposition to vote in conformity with other immigrants in their district or ward. Immigrant sentiments were rooted to their native

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[12]Editorial, ibid., Nov. 11, 1919, p. 4.

lands and their loyalties belonged to their particular countries of origin. The implication, in the editorial commentary of the Free Press, was that foreigners were enemies, just as the Germans were enemies during the war, and should be regarded and treated as such.

> The men who did the dirty work of the German kaiser in this country during the war . . . were all, or nearly all, naturalized Americans. The possession of naturalization papers did not incline their hearts toward America. It merely served them as a cloak to cover their nefarious work and gave them opportunities to carry it on, and it was undoubtedly for that very purpose that they became American citizens. They could knife us in the dark so much more easily, and with so much more safety to themselves.[13]

The Free Press endorsed a positive government program for eliminating the radical influence in the United States. If the laws against preaching sedition and the overthrow of the government were inadequate, the Free Press advocated the immediate passage of stronger laws. Strict regulation of all foreign language publications was urged by the editors of the Free Press because the United States was an English-speaking country with no need for information in foreign tongues. In the opinion of the Free Press editors, the founders of the republic did not guarantee free speech and free press for the utterance of seditious propaganda. The exact nature of seditious propaganda was not defined in the editorial. The Free Press outlined

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[13] Ibid., Nov. 10, 1919, p. 4.

several choices to be considered in the disposition of the cases of the arrested aliens.

> Those who are found guilty of murder or are found to be accessory to murder can be eliminated as all criminals of their type are eliminated. The others can be shipped out of the United States and they ought to be given much less consideration than they are receiving. They ought to be dumped unceremoniously on the countries whence they came; and for a farewell handed a good dose of the medicine sometimes known as "the fear of God."[14]

Detroit Journal: News Reporting of the November Raids

The lead story on Saturday, November 8, in the Journal was a summary of the nation-wide roundup of aliens regarded by the federal government with suspicion. The national summary was followed by a subsidiary story reporting the Detroit raids. The Journal printed longer, more detailed statements of Attorney General Palmer than did the Free Press. The aliens arrested were all said to be leaders in the Union of Russian Workers, which was described by Palmer as the "worst anarchistic organization in the country."[15] Members of the Russian union were said to be conducting an active propaganda campaign for social revolution in the United States. Most of the arrested persons were Russians. A counterfeiting plant; a large

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[14] Ibid., Nov. 17, 1919, p. 4.

[15] Detroit Journal, Nov. 8, 1919, p. 1.

supply of counterfeit bank notes; materials used in making bombs; rifles; revolvers; red flags; and tons of inflammatory literature were seized in the nation-wide raids. The destructive potential of the confiscated material was assumed in the news report.[16]

More than fifty men were apprehended Friday, November 7. The men, mostly of Russian descent, were transported in several patrol wagons to the Owen Building for interrogation. They were said to be suspected of the radical intent to institute governmental changes by means of bombs and terrorism. The descriptions of the arrested men reported in the Journal differed significantly from those printed in the Free Press. The men were described as being well-dressed, averaged twenty-five years of age, and had no appearance of belonging to the criminal class. The Journal news report said that a few of those arrested were citizens and others had filed their first papers to obtain United States citizenship. The Journal mentioned that local officials of the Department of Justice had not disclosed any destructive intent on the part of the arrested aliens. A few of the leaders were to be held for deportation, but most of the men were to be released.[17]

The Journal allotted more column inches in its news stories for detailed coverage of the national raids

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[16] Ibid. [17] Ibid.

than did the Free Press. News reports on raids in Chicago and New York followed the local coverage. Preparations for a reign of terror in Chicago were said to have been discovered by a Department of Justice agent who infiltrated the ranks of the radicals. The two hundred or more persons gathered in the Russian People's House on the lower East Side of New York were surprised by the raid. Aliens were attending a class. Police in New York said that those arrested were listening to a radical lecture; the students said that they were attending a class, trying to learn English. The Journal, in an Associated Press wire story, reported that the men seized in New York, with several women among them, were herded together and subjected to severe beatings.[18]

The Journal did not publish a Sunday edition. The next news report on the raids appeared in the edition for Monday, November 10, following the complete Saturday night roundup. The men arrested on Saturday night were said to have advocated the disregard of governmental authority and the elimination of human and property rights. The news report of the Saturday night raid at Thurner Hall in Detroit, during the presentation of the Russian play, which appeared in the Journal on November 10 was substantially different from the news account in the Free Press.

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[18] Ibid., p. 2.

> It was the plan of the government men to wait until the play ended before they made their presence known, but at 11 o'clock they decided that it was time to act. One of the agents who speaks the Russian language stepped to the stage. The startled players halted their act and showed symptoms of panic. A suave gentleman who was directing the play rushed from the wings. . . . Women clutched the arms of their male companions and not a few uttered wild cries, but the orders were complied with. There was no disturbance.[19]

A human interest story on standing room only at the Detroit jails appeared in the Journal on November 10. Facts that deserved serious consideration were reported with banal humor. Many prisoners already confined in the jails were released to make room for the 250 arrested aliens. The aliens were put in cells with gamblers, drunks, and other miscellaneous offenders. Some of the prisoners had to spend the night standing up, because of the critical shortage of space in the jail. The importance of the conditions in the jail was negated by the flippant style of the news report.

No photographs accompanied the news report of the raids. The Journal, like the Free Press, did not interview any of the arrested aliens, or present the point of view of the arrested persons. The Journal also failed to consider the legal authority behind the raiding procedure. The position of the government was affirmed in the news reports in the Journal.

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[19] Ibid., Nov. 10, 1919, p. 2.

Detroit Journal: Editorial Interpretation of the November Raids

The editorials in the Journal were vehemently pro-government and, at times, vindictive in tone and implication in supporting the alien arrests. The association between radicalism and the foreign population was firmly established by the Journal editors. The Journal warned complacent foreigners to enlist themselves in a program of militant Americanization of the radical alien element. Unless the foreign population succeeded in Americanization, the editors warned, they were to anticipate the application of restrictive immigration laws to their countries of origin and the deportation of alien agitators.[20]

The Journal articulated upon the atrocities of the Bolsheviks in Russia and implied that alien radicals in the United States harbored the same inhuman tendencies. The Russian Bolsheviks had instituted a program of nationalization of all children. Children in Russia were said to be the property of the state. Parents who refused to give their children to the state were imprisoned. Journal editors stated that countless Russian mothers had gone insane or had committed suicide when they were forced to comply with bolshevik policy.[21]

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[20]Editorial, ibid., Nov. 14, 1919, p. 4.

[21]Ibid., Nov. 15, 1919, p. 4.

The Journal inveighed against the careless use of the word "radical." Former President Theodore Roosevelt and David Lloyd George, prime minister of Great Britain, were radicals in the good sense of the word, the Journal editors observed. The aliens termed radicals at the time of the raids were little more than wild-eyed fanatics, in the opinion of the Journal editors.[22] The parlor Reds of American stock shared a guilt equal to that of the alien agitators in the attempts to disrupt American society. The publishers of the Nation, the Liberator, and the New Republic, periodicals of opinion; newspapers that denied approval of governmental tactics in their columns; and college professors dedicated to objectivity, rather than to government propaganda, were designated parlor Reds by the Journal editors.[23]

The Journal was positive in its conviction that the American Way of Life in 1919 would remain undisturbed by the adjustments following the First World War, the propaganda of the subversive foreign influence, and the disruptive industrial strikes. America was to remain true to the image conceived by its founding fathers as a democracy for the people, the Journal said, despite the conflict between labor and capital and polarization of liberals and

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[22]Ibid., Nov. 12, 1919, p. 4.

[23]Ibid., Nov. 11, 1919, p. 4.

conservatives. The Journal applauded the raiding tactics of the government agents and called for sterner measures to eliminate the radical menace.

> This city has had more than its share of yapping madmen, who have been rhapsodizing these many months publicly and privately and it has been only a question of time until the heavy hand of authority would put sudden end to their zealous ravings and their irrational adhesion to a program of outright revolution. Leniency and tolerance have allowed their meetings and publications to inflame the ignorant and misguided, the foreigner and the ne'er-do-well, the vagabond and the vicious until the festering blemish has become a menace. . . . in applying forceful methods the government is only beating the bolsheviks at their own game and in the extermination of venomous reptiles and in fighting infectious epidemics, energetic measures are the most reliable and most effective in protecting the great body of society.[24]

Detroit News: News Reporting of the November Raids

The News was the only general circulation daily in Detroit to summarize the legal basis for the Palmer raids in its news columns. The News also was the only newspaper in Detroit to print a story considering the position of the arrested aliens. A story by a News Washington correspondent, Louis L. Goodnow, which appeared five days after the first raid, explained that only aliens were subject to deportation. No American citizen, either native or naturalized, was eligible for deportation. The raids were conducted under the authority of the general immigration

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[24] Ibid., Nov. 10, 1919, p. 4.

law that applied solely to aliens. Federal agents were instructed to arrest only those aliens who had advocated violent overthrow of the American government.[25]

A week after the raids, the Detroit Sunday News considered the effectiveness of the legal measures used to cope with radical instigators. The story appeared to be a government handout from the office of Attorney General Palmer. Federal laws then in effect were deemed inadequate by the attorney general to thwart the growth of revolutionary radicalism. Palmer said the Department of Justice was unable to deal with more than 60,000 persons because of the weakness of the statute in effect in 1919. He urged the passage of a law to supplement the Espionage Act of 1917, or to replace it, when the wartime measure lapsed. The foreign language press was described by Palmer as a dangerous instrument in the hands of radical elements. More than two hundred foreign language newspapers had espoused changing the government by violence and anarchy, the attorney general said. Palmer urged changes in the immigration laws to simplify the deportation procedure. He warned of the dangerous radical potential of the American Negro, as well as that of the immigrant. The government, it seemed, also anticipated trouble from the Negro.[26]

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[25]Louis L. Goodnow, "Aliens Only To Be Ousted," Detroit News, Nov. 12, 1919, p. 1.

[26]Detroit Sunday News, Nov. 16, 1919, p. 1.

On Monday, November 17, the News printed the position of Ludwig C. A. K. Martens, the unrecognized Soviet ambassador to the United States. The News was the only general circulation daily in Detroit to print the statement of Martens. Martens offered to provide transportation to Russia for all Russian citizens who wanted to leave the United States, or who were considered by the government of the United States to be undesirable. He protested the cruel treatment Russian citizens had been subjected to by federal and state officers and by mobs acting without authority. Martens announced that he had received thousands of applications from Russian citizens who were eager to return to their country. Russian citizens in the United States had been denied the protection of law. The News printed a statement by Martens, elaborating on the abuse of Russian aliens.

> "The lot of thousands of Russians in the United States today," he explained, "is exceedingly unhappy through no fault of their own. Through daily abuse in the press and the prejudice created by a virulent campaign of misrepresentation, their Russian citizenship has become a bar to employment. They have been arrested without warrant and subjected to oppressive treatment against which they have no adequate protection, as citizens of a country whose government is not recognized by the United States."[27]

The news report on the Martens statement was the only sympathetic consideration by the Detroit press of the plight of the Russian aliens arrested in the November raids.

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[27] News, Nov. 17, 1919, p. 17.

The News allotted less space per column inch than the Free Press or Journal in its coverage of the raids. The headlines and sub-heads in the News were more subdued than those that appeared in the Free Press or Journal. In general, the News gave the fairest, most accurate, and factual account of the raids of the three general circulation dailies in the Detroit area.

A headline in the Saturday, November 8, issue of the News reported that the United States was to deport alien radicals. A national summary followed, which described the Union of Russian Workers as worse than the Bolsheviki, and which attributed revolutionary intent to the constitution seized by federal agents. Attorney General Palmer was cited as the source for most of the statements made in the story.

A local story followed, which concisely summarized the events of the Friday night raid. The point was made that federal officials refused to discuss the arrests because they were under orders from Washington to remain silent. Stories on the Chicago and New York raids followed the local news. The same reports were printed in the Journal and, probably, were distributed by the Associated Press, though this was not indicated.

The Sunday News printed a state-wide summary of events that cited the arrest and interrogation of more than 400 Russians thought by the Department of Justice to

be radicals. A report, with a Washington dateline, followed, quoting Attorney General Palmer on the dangerous intent of the Union of Russian Workers. The Monday, November 10, coverage of the Saturday night raid on Thurner Hall was more terse and objective than the coverage in the Free Press or Journal. The News reported that federal agents arrested 250 more radicals in the raid at Thurner Hall while a Russian play was in progress.

> One of the operatives ascended the stage and announced the audience was thickly sprinkled with police, and the hall surrounded. Women, of whom there were several hundred present, were dismissed. The men were lined up and searched systematically. There was no disorder. All whom the police suspected of anarchistic tendencies were detained; the others were freed. . . . Many of those held will be deported . . .[28]

The News, on November 11, reported the receipt by P. L. Prentis, chief immigration inspector in Detroit, of warrants issued for the deportation of twenty-five of the arrested aliens. The aliens had to wait for interviews by immigration bureau inspectors and the review of their cases by the Department of Labor before the decision on deportation was final.

Detroit News: Editorial Interpretation of the November Raids

The editorial interpretation in the News was more rational in thought, clear in exposition, and moderate in

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[28] Ibid., Nov. 10, 1919, p. 1.

tone than the editorial opinion of the Free Press or Journal. The News approved of the deportation of radical aliens in the interest of national security. Prisoners found guilty of offenses against American institutions were liable to conviction and deportation. The News cautioned the Department of Justice, however, to take care to execute a judicious administration of its power. The News predicted that increased suspicion and distrust would result from ill-considered action on the part of federal authorities. The public was asked to suspend judgment until assertions could be verified with facts.

> If the citizens of this country can be assured that the apprehended persons are to be given a fair trial, and that those who are deported are deported only on the very soundest kind of evidence against them, it will be difficult to establish the thesis that freedom of speech is no longer in existence in this country. One of the most cherished attributes of Americanism is fair play.[29]

The News suggested that political ambitions, as well as a desire to maintain national security, might have been the impetus behind the raids. The presidential aspirations of Attorney General Palmer received a boost with the publicity that had accompanied the arrest of the Russian aliens. The suppression of the steel strikers in Gary, Indiana, by General Leonard Wood, had made him eligible for consideration for the presidency. The use of military power in the suppression of the Boston police

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[29]Editorial, ibid., Nov. 11, 1919, p. 4.

strike by Calvin Coolidge, governor of Massachusetts, had elevated him to the ranks of possible presidential candidates.[30]

The News said that more care might have been observed in the raiding procedure if the accused radicals had not been foreign-born, for the most part, and thus ineligible to vote. The compliance of coal mine leaders with the court injunction to end the strike, the quick settlement of the Boston police strike, and the failure of the steel strike demonstrated to the editors of the News the negligible strength of bolshevism in the United States. The majority of American workers supported the fundamental principles of American democracy and were opposed to bolshevism and revolution. The News urged government leaders to carefully consider the further use of their military power.

> Labor will yield to the autocratic power of the government just so long as it is sure this power is being applied equally to all citizens alike and solely in the interest of the national welfare. If, however, the terms "law and order" and "Americanism" grow to become merely the shibboleths under which autocratic power is used for the suppression of one group in the interest of another, they will cease, abruptly, to have the vote-drawing power they now possess.[31]

An editorial cartoon, on November 14, pictorially represented the same idea. The cartoon was titled, "Betsy

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[30] Ibid., Nov. 13, 1919, p. 4.

[31] Ibid.

and I Killed a Bear." Betsy Public held a dead bolshevik bear in one hand and a rolling pin labeled "election" in the other. She stared fiercely at a politician, labeled "presidential candidate," who was literally up a tree.

The Free Press and the Journal were firmly pro-government in their news and editorial columns. The News was the most objective in its news reports and sympathetic to the position of the arrested aliens in its editorial evaluation of the November raids. Coverage of the raids was prominent in the news and editorial columns of the three general circulation dailies in Detroit for about a week. Public interest in the plight of the arrested aliens subsided until the alien deportations in December on the United States transport Buford.

CHAPTER III

THE BUFORD DEPORTATIONS

The aliens in Detroit who were arrested in the November raids were detained locally, and all expected an eventual deportation to Soviet Russia. By December, many aliens had been sent to Ellis Island, an immigration reception and detention center in New York, from cities throughout the nation to await deportation.[1] The S. S. Buford, an Army troopship used in the Spanish-American War, was secured for the transport of the aliens from the United States. On December 21, the Buford sailed from New York, carrying 249 aliens who had been judged, after the review of their cases by the United States Department of Labor, to have advocated or supported the overthrow of the government of the United States by force.

F. W. Berkshire, a supervising inspector of immigration on the Mexican border, was in charge of the deportees during the voyage. A colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, four lieutenants, and fifty-eight enlisted men were sent by the War Department to guard the aliens and to prevent

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[1] Detroit Free Press, Dec. 21, 1919, p. 1.

any disturbances aboard ship.[2] At the time of the sailing, the destination of the Buford was not known, even to its captain. The captain was under instructions to open the sealed sailing orders twenty-four hours away from the port of New York. The Buford was stocked with provisions sufficient to last 500 persons sixty days. Those deportees who had not properly equipped themselves for the voyage were supplied with complete outfits from Army stores.[3]

Among the 249 deportees were three women, Emma Goldman, Ethel Bernstein, and Dora Lipkin. Emma Goldman was regarded as one of the most dangerous radicals aboard the Buford. In 1893, as a young woman in her twenties, she had been sentenced to a year's imprisonment on Blackwell's Island, New York, for making a speech to striking garment workers in New York City. She had been convicted of inciting to riot and unlawful assembly. In subsequent years, she had been arrested many times in various cities for making public speeches that officials regarded as unlawful and a menace to the public order. Unsuccessful efforts to deport her had begun in 1907. During World War I, she had become widely known for attempted obstruction of the draft law.

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[2]Louis F. Post, The Deportation Delirium of Nineteen-Twenty (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1923), p. 7.

[3]Detroit Free Press, Dec. 21, 1919, p. 1.

The most notorious of the male passengers was Alexander Berkman. In 1892, he had attempted to murder a wealthy steel manufacturer, Henry Clay Frick. At the time, the steel industry was involved in a conflict with striking laborers. Berkman wounded Frick and was sentenced to twenty-one years in a Pennsylvania penitentiary. He was paroled at the end of fourteen years for good behavior. After his release, he was frequently arrested for making public speeches. He sustained no further convictions, however, until his arrest in 1917, with Emma Goldman, for obstructing the draft law. The deportation cases of both Berkman and Miss Goldman had been pending since their imprisonment in 1917. Before the expiration of their prison sentences, the Department of Labor reviewed their cases and ordered them deported to Soviet Russia aboard the Buford.

Berkman and Miss Goldman both were enthusiastic about their return to Russia. Berkman, whose uncle was in charge of Russian railroads and chief of the Moscow Soviet, expected to go to Petrograd and cooperate with Lenin and Trotsky in governing the country. Miss Goldman anticipated organizing the Russian Friends of American Freedom to continue her championship of the working classes in the United States.[4]

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[4]Upon living in Russia following their deportation, both Emma Goldman and Berkman were disillusioned by the

The Buford docked in the harbor of Hango, Finland, on January 16, 1920. Officials of Finland took charge of the deportees and facilitated their passage over the border into Soviet Russia. During the sea voyage, Inspector Berkshire had allowed the deportees maximum freedom of the ship and had provided humane treatment for them. While the Buford passed through the Kiel Canal in Germany, however, Berkshire withdrew freedom of the ship from the aliens and confined them to their quarters. The deportees protested in their quarters until Berkshire restored their freedom of the ship. This was the only disturbance for the duration of the voyage. The freedom allowed the aliens aboard the Buford did not imperil the security of the deportation voyage.[5]

Detroit Free Press: News Reporting of the Buford Deportations

A front-page story in the issue for Sunday, December 21, headlined the proposed sailing of the "Reds' Ark"

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bolshevik regime. In the twenties, she wrote several books that described her disappointment in the Soviet system. She left Russia and lived in England, Spain, and Canada until her death, in 1940, in Toronto. After twenty months, Berkman left Russia and bitterly criticized the Soviet leaders in subsequent speeches and writings. Denied citizenship in any country, he wandered throughout Europe until he committed suicide in 1936 in Nice, France.

[5]Post, Deportations Delirium, pp. 8-9.

for a "mystery port." A description of the "slow-going Berkman ship," which was to "steer into icy seas laden with the world's goods," followed the headline.[6] The story was from the Associated Press and it carried a New York dateline. The dramatic effect of the report was heightened by ample use of adjectives and imaginative phrasing.

Preparations for the departure of the "ark" were said to be concealed in a "thick veil of official secrecy."[7] Handcuffed and well-guarded aliens arrived at Ellis Island from Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Hartford, Connecticut. The deportees were described as being in a jovial humor as they left the trains. The "Internationale" was sung by many of them. They were well-provided with clothing to withstand the Russian winter and were said to have had ample financial resources. "Many of them had acted like real capitalists in saving high wages [earned] in steel mills and mines," the Associated Press report said.[8]

A local story accompanied the wire dispatch on the proposed New York sailing. The Buford was to sail without the sixty-six persons, jailed in Detroit, subject to deportation. Most of the prisoners had been arrested in the

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[6] Free Press, Dec. 21, 1919, p. 1.

[7] Ibid. [8] Ibid.

federal raid on November 7. Preparations of the men for the trip to Russia kept the jail in a commotion, the Free Press reported. Visitors to the jail kissed and lamented over the departure of the Detroit aliens. The prisoners had plenty of United States currency earned in the "city of opportunity."[9] The newspaper recapitulated the events that had led to the arrests, and summarized the reason the men were scheduled for deportation. The members of the Union of Russian Workers were said to have conspired against capitalism, organized government, and institutionalized religion.

An Associated Press account of the sailing of the Buford was printed in the Free Press on Monday, December 22. The "Soviet Ark" sailed before dawn, Sunday, with 249 radicals on board, including, Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. The transfer of the aliens from Ellis Island to the Buford was heavily guarded. A revenue cutter and two Army tugs formed an escort for the tug that carried the radicals to the Buford. The heavy guard was said to have been necessary to prevent attempts, by those reluctant to leave, to swim the half-mile to the shore of Staten Island.

A few of the aliens were reported to have wept and most of them were said to have been downcast, as they stepped on board the tug, in anticipation of the "grim

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[9] Ibid.

journey" to Soviet Russia. Ethel Bernstein, a young woman who left behind her finance, Samuel Lipman, sobbed "Good-bye, America," as the tug passed the Statue of Liberty.[10] Lipman was to serve a twenty-year term in the federal penitentiary at Atlanta for violating the espionage law. The other deportees were not as nostalgic as Miss Bernstein.

> "Long Live the Revolution in America," was chanted defiantly by the motley crowd on the decks of the steel gray troop ship as she churned her way past the Statue of Liberty. Now and then they cursed in chorus at the United States and the men who had cut short their propaganda here. . . . Over their heads, whipping in the wind, the Stars and Stripes floated from the masthead.[11]

The Associated Press report concentrated on the creation of a patriotic mood as well as on the objective reporting of the facts.

After the sailing of the Buford, the Free Press reported that federal officials in Detroit were anxious to deport the aliens remaining in the city, because the jail was crowded day and night by visiting friends and relatives. Most of the aliens in jail did not want to go to Russia, the Free Press said. Alexander Zaezoff, a leader of the Russian Union in Detroit, applied for a writ of habeas corpus to prevent his deportation. Zaezoff said he

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[10] Ibid., Dec. 22, 1919, p. 1.

[11] Ibid.

had not been allowed the advice of counsel or time to prepare his defense in the deportation decision. Arthur J. Tuttle, a Detroit judge, said that Zaezoff had presented his case and was to be deported with the other arrested aliens. The writ was denied.

Another Russian alien objected to his deportation because he had to sacrifice $1,500, in real estate and other holdings, in order to leave the country. The Free Press did not appear to consider the sacrifice of alien property an important matter. John A. Grogan, a U. S. internal revenue collector in Detroit, decided to assess the aliens for taxes before they left the United States. The aliens were reported to have earned substantial amounts of money while taking advantage of the "abnormal" wage allowances concomitant with the high demand for labor in 1917 and 1918.[12]

Detroit Free Press: Editorial Interpretation of the Buford Deportations

The Free Press printed two editorials pertaining to the Buford deportations. The first editorial questioned the usefulness of the melting pot concept. Frequently, the foreigner did not wish to become assimilated into American society. The Free Press recognized the legal right of foreigners to remain aliens. Even naturalization

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[12] Ibid., Dec. 23, 1919, p. 3.

would not change the sympathies, habits, or ideals of foreigners, if there was no desire on the part of the individual to become an American. The Free Press editors recommended further attempts by citizens to include the alien in the social life of the community. If the community took an interest in the alien, perhaps, the alien would evince a desire to become a part of the community.[13]

The second editorial expressed hope that the different factions in Russia would end the revolution there and reunite that nation. In the event of a victory for the anti-bolshevik forces, the deportees to Russia could become martyrs to the Soviet cause. If the bolshevik faction retained their control of Russia, the deportees would then be given the opportunity to "try their own medicine." The Free Press editors hoped that the deportees would "get as much enjoyment out of the role of patient as they did out of being the prescriber."[14]

Detroit Journal: News Reporting of the Buford Deportations

A news report in the Journal for Saturday, December 20, was optimistic about the prompt departure of Detroit's arrested aliens on one of the "mystery trains" going to

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[13]Editorial, ibid., Dec. 21, 1919, p. 4.

[14]Ibid., Dec. 23, 1919, p. 4.

the East coast. The Journal anticipated that the persons confined in Detroit would be the "government's guests" on the "Soviet Ark." Only those persons considered to be the most dangerous in plotting to overthrow the government would be eligible to take the "holiday cruise" at the expense of the United States.[15] There was no Sunday edition of the Journal to print a report on the day of the sailing. The Journal reported on Monday, December 22, that the Detroit radicals were still awaiting the trip to Russia, while their "comrades" sailed, cursing America. A second "Soviet Ark," which would accommodate the Detroit radicals, was expected to sail within a week.[16]

The news report in the Journal on the sailing of the Buford from New York was the same Associated Press story that was printed in the Free Press. On December 22, the Journal, also published an Associated Press story on the "attack" of the Ellis Island ferry by "Reds." A woman, who said that her husband had been deported to Soviet Russia on the Buford, led a crowd of about 150 people seeking to inquire about friends and relatives. The crowd attempted to reach the aliens, confined on Ellis Island, who still awaited deportation. A riot call was turned in;

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[15] Detroit Journal, Dec. 20, 1919, p. 1.

[16] Ibid., Dec. 22, 1919, p. 1.

the crowd was subdued into docility when police reserves, with drawn clubs, and coast guardsmen, with fixed bayonets, arrived.[17]

A week after the sailing of the Buford, the Journal reported that it was unlikely that the aliens still confined in Detroit, and in other cities throughout the country, soon would be deported. About two dozen anarchist cases were confined at Ellis Island, and there were not enough persons available for deportation to justify the fitting out of another "Soviet Ark." Heavy immigration, which taxed the facilities at Ellis Island, was cited as the reason for the delay in further deportations. On December 27, the Journal reported that within the previous forty-eight hours some 8,000 immigrants had arrived at the port of New York. About 1,200 were detained at Ellis Island for examination as to their fitness for admission into the United States. The personnel at Ellis Island was not large enough to accommodate an influx of additional aliens.[18]

Detroit Journal: Editorial Interpretation of the Buford Deportations

The Journal printed more editorials on the deportations and the alien problem than did the Free Press. An

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., Dec. 27, 1919, p. 1.

editorial cartoon on December 23, entitled "Trimming the Tree," related the alien threat to a holiday theme. Uncle Sam was depicted trimming a Christmas tree with ornaments labeled "industrial prosperity." He discarded the ornaments labeled "Reds" into a waste basket labeled "deportation," while exclaiming, "Don't think we'll need those trimmings." At the base of the Christmas tree, as the supporting foundation, rested America's progress.[19]

The following day, the Journal printed an editorial that encouraged the passage of restrictive immigration laws. The Journal editors objected to the rejection of only four immigrants out of every hundred who sought admission into the United States. "If America suffers colic pains as a result of its efforts to digest its alien population is it any wonder in view of the willingness that the country displays to swallow indiscriminately the human material which presents itself at our ports of entry?"[20]

The Journal editors frowned upon foreigners who came to the United States to earn money with the intention of returning to their countries of origin. The United States was extoled as the "land of plenty" and foreigners were warned "to think twice" before contemplating a return

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[19]Editorial, ibid., Dec. 23, 1919, p. 1.

[20]Ibid., Dec. 24, 1919, p. 4.

to their native lands.[21] The Journal lauded demonstrations of militant 100 percent Americanism in communities throughout the nation. An exhibition of patriotism in Louisville, Kentucky, caused the Journal editors to comment, "It proves that the average community has thousands loyal to the flag for every skulking terrorist anxious to tear it down."[22]

The formation of vigilance committees throughout the country, to deal with the radical menace, was cited by the Journal editors. Vigilance committees were said to come into being only where law enforcement was lax or absent. The Journal warned that vigilantes were as inclined to punish those who protected offenders of the law as the offenders themselves. "It would be wise for municipal and state officers to keep this fact particularly in mind now that vigilance committees are forming here and there . . .," the Journal editors said in an admonition negating fundamental democratic precepts.[23]

A "propaganda of right thinking" was needed in America, in the opinion of the Journal. Foreigners were frequently found in the reading rooms of public libraries. The libraries welcomed foreigners as an incentive to

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[21] Ibid., Dec. 26, 1919, p. 4.

[22] Ibid., Dec. 23, 1919, p. 4.

[23] Ibid., Dec. 26, 1919, p. 4.

Americanization. The Journal editors suspected, however, ". . . that there are as many influences in the reading rooms to the maintenance of the foreign point of view as to the American. . . . Much of our worry over the melting pot could be dissipated if we worked as earnestly . . . as the socialists, bolshevists, anarchists, and I. W. W.'s do to win their converts."[24] Thus, the Journal editors, as defenders of democracy, advocated that a "propaganda of right thinking" replace a divergence in ideas and opinions in the United States.

Detroit News: News Reporting of the Buford Deportations

A detailed account of the preparations of Detroit's aliens for the trip to New York and, thence, to Soviet Russia was printed in the Sunday News on December 21. The imprisoned aliens were notified by P. L. Prentis, chief immigration inspector in Detroit, to be ready to leave the Wayne County jail at any time. A special train was to pass through Michigan enroute to New York to accommodate Detroit's deportees. The transfer of the aliens was to be carefully guarded to prevent the escape of dangerous radicals. Statements of immigration officials, reported in the Sunday News, said that many of the aliens had criminal

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[24] Ibid., Dec. 23, 1919, p. 4.

records in their native lands. The aliens thus protested their deportation to Russia for fear of being tried for crimes previous to their admission to the United States.[25]

The Sunday News also reported on December 21 the passage of a bill by the U. S. House of Representatives to tighten the deportation law as applied to radical aliens. The bill provided for the deportation of all aliens affiliated with or who contributed either funds or personal service to any organization that advocated the overthrow of the government by force, the assassination of government officials, or the destruction of public or private property. A bill penalizing American citizens for the commission of similar acts was also to be presented to the House by the Judiciary Committee. Albert Johnson, a Representative from Washington state and chairman of the judiciary committee, predicted that later a bill would be proposed to limit the entry of foreigners by allowing them into the country only on a probationary basis. Representative Welty, a Democrat from Ohio, suggested that the collection of evidence and prosecution of alleged alien violators of the law should have been under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice, rather than the Department of Labor.

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[25]Detroit Sunday News, Dec. 21, 1919, p. 1.

The account on the sailing of the Buford in the News, on December 22, was the same Associated Press wire story that appeared in the Free Press and the Journal. The News, however, printed a lengthy, detailed report compared to the shorter versions carried in the Free Press and the Journal. As soon as they were informed that they were to be deported, the male deportees at Ellis Island organized the First Soviet Anarchistic Commune of America and elected Alexander Berkman grand commissary. Berkman was the figure of authority to the other deportees and his directives were readily obeyed. He was vehement in his denunciation of the United States. Emma Goldman was unconcerned about her deportation and slept while the other deportees celebrated and prepared for the trip. The three women, Emma Goldman, Ethel Bernstein, and Dora Lipkin, wore all black clothing, and showed no signs of defiance. They shared one large cabin, separate from the men, and were accompanied by Red Cross nurses who were to serve as matrons.

After the sailing of the Buford, officials in Detroit were reported to still be optimistic about the deportation of the aliens jailed there. The sheriff of Wayne County, in charge of Detroit's arrested aliens, refused visitors permission to see the prisoners as a precautionary measure intended to prevent delay in the transportation of the aliens from Detroit. On December 23, the

News reported that a second "Soviet Ark" would soon take the families of the anarchists, already deported on the Buford, to Soviet Russia. A second "Soviet Ark" never sailed, however.

Detroit News: Editorial Interpretation of the Buford Deportations

The News did not print any editorials on the deportations or the alien problem concurrent with the sailing of the Buford. A single editorial cartoon appeared in the News on December 24. The cartoon, entitled "He Must Be A Red," linked the popular preoccupation with the radical menace with the spirit of the approaching Christmas season. A surprised Santa Claus was shown being grabbed by a fat politician, labeled "Senate," who exclaimed, "Ah-ha! Whiskers and seditious literature." The Senator displayed a Christmas card with the message, "Peace on earth, good will toward men," as an example of the seditious literature. Santa's bag of gifts was scattered on the ground and his reindeer sadly looked on.[26]

None of the arrested aliens from Detroit was aboard the Buford. The three Detroit general circulation dailies reported officials in Detroit anxious about the prompt departure of the aliens confined in the city.

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[26]Editorial, News, Dec. 24, 1919, p. 4.

Neither the federal officials nor the newspapers, however, reported the eventual fate of the arrested aliens in Detroit. There were no interviews with the deportees, about their month-long confinement in Detroit jails, reported by any of the three newspapers.

The Free Press, the Journal, and the News published identical news reports about the conditions at Ellis Island, prior to the departure, and the sailing of the Buford from New York. The Associated Press neglected to report that of the 249 persons, fourteen were deported for defects unrelated to radicalism; 184 were deported merely for being members of the Union of Russian Workers; and fifty-one were deported for the expression of anarchistic beliefs.[27] Most of the members of the Russian Union were unaware of any revolutionary intent on the part of the organization. The aliens presumed that it was a legitimate labor union or a social club of their fellow countrymen.[28]

The secretary of labor directed that no alien having a wife or a child should sail on the Buford. These orders were complied with at all of the immigration stations, with the exception of the one at Ellis Island. The aliens at Ellis Island were given only a few hours notice of their imminent departure. There was no opportunity to

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[27] Post, Deportations Delirium, pp. 26-27.

[28] Ibid.

notify friends or relatives. The prompt, unexpected departure of the aliens left many of their wives and children in condition of financial need.

When the Buford arrived at Hango, Finland, provision was made by the United States government to send to the wives of the deportees the necessary papers to draw on their husbands' bank accounts and collect unpaid wages. Many of the women and children, however, had already endured a month of economic deprivation. These facts were not reported in the Associated Press accounts transmitted to member newspapers throughout the country, including the three Detroit dailies. The indifference of government officials and the newspaper press about the plight of the deported aliens and their families remaining in the United States contributed to an unaware general public.

CHAPTER IV

THE JANUARY RAIDS

Eight hundred men were confined from three to six days in the fifth floor corridor of the Detroit Federal Building. The men slept on a bare stone floor; newspapers and overcoats served as bedding. They had access to one toilet, one drinking fountain, and one sink. An open court in the center of the building, covered by a skylight, was the only source of illumination. The heat and stale air from the other floors rose to the top floor, where the men were confined. There were no outside windows to provide ventilation. The men ate whatever food friends or relatives brought to them, since federal authorities had made no provision for their feeding. They were denied communication with relatives or attorneys. In an examination room halfway between the fourth and fifth floors of the Federal Building, the men were interrogated. The prisoners were asked three or four questions by federal examiners to determine whether they should be detained or released.

Most of the men had been arrested in two separate raids on the House of the Masses, a building whose

ownership was in litigation. Claim to the property was asserted by both the Socialist and Communist parties. A restaurant operated by the Workers' Educational Society was on the first floor. Other floors contained classrooms, lecture, and social facilities.

The men, arrested as suspected members of either the Communist or Communist Labor parties, were seized by agents of the Department of Justice while they were using the facilities at the House of the Masses for social or educational purposes. Five hundred men were taken on the evening of Friday, January 2, while attending a dance, classes, or lectures in the hall. Passersby and persons eating in the restaurant on the ground floor were also arrested. A second raid on the House of the Masses, early Sunday morning, January 4, netted an additional 280 men suspected of radical activities by the Department of Justice.

Persons not released after examination at the Federal Building were transferred to precinct police stations or the Detroit Municipal Court Building. The "bull pen" at the Municipal Court Building housed 128 men for seven days. The "bull pen" was a cellar room, twenty-four by thirty feet in size, with one window, one toilet, a grated door, and a stone floor. Wooden benches, without backs, were the only furnishings in the room. The prisoners subsisted on one cup of coffee and two biscuits

given to them by jail attendants twice a day. They were also allowed to eat whatever food friends or relatives brought.

Conditions in the Municipal Court Building prompted an organized protest by officials of the city and a voluntary committee of citizens. This was the only civic protest in the history of the Palmer raids.[1] Mayor James Couzens and the Detroit health commissioner emphasized that the situation in the Municipal Court Building was deleterious to the public health. A citizens' committee composed of prominent lawyers, businessmen, and religious leaders organized to investigate the treatment of the prisoners and submitted a report to the Department of Labor. The committee included Frederick F. Ingram, chairman, a chemical manufacturer; S. S. Kresge, head of the five-and-dimestore chain; F. E. Brown, head of the Public Necessities Corporation; F. E. Steelwagen and Fred M. Butzel, attorneys; and Charles D. Williams, bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of eastern Michigan.

Louis F. Post, assistant secretary of labor, after evaluating the report made to him by the Detroit citizens' committee, concluded that the aliens had been unjustly detained.

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[1]Louis F. Post, The Deportations Delirium of Nineteen-Twenty (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1923), p. 140.

> Owing to the raiding and to the lack of communication with Russia, the Department of Labor was compelled to detain in custody, indefinitely, large numbers of aliens who had been convicted of no crime yet had been administratively ordered to be deported as undesirable residents . . . The only recourse of the Department was to keep them in prison or to parole them. The embarrassment was increased by the fact that in all probability many of these prisoners were in reality not undesirable residents even within the proscriptions of a drastic law.[2]

The City Council requested that Mayor Couzens ask federal authorities for the immediate removal of the prisoners confined in the Municipal Court Building. On January 13, permission was granted by government officials to transfer the men to the Fort Wayne Army barracks, near Detroit. More than three hundred men were detained at the barracks in subsequent months. The review of their cases by the Department of Labor was completed in June. The men were either cleared of suspicion or scheduled for deportation. Of the nearly five thousand men arrested in the nation-wide raids, fewer than three hundred aliens were deported to Soviet Russia on another government transport late in 1920.[3]

Detroit Free Press: News Reporting of the January Raids

The Free Press reported the arrest of the five hundred Detroit aliens, netted in the Friday night raid

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[2] Ibid., p. 142.

[3] Robert D. Warth, "The Palmer Raids," South Atlantic Quarterly, XLVIII (January, 1949), p. 18.

on the House of the Masses, in a page-one story with an eight-column banner headline on Saturday, January 3. A dance and five political meetings were being held in the House of the Masses on Friday night. Federal agents and fifty Detroit policemen interrupted the dance and battered down doors to gain entrance to the other rooms in the building. Persons in the hall were told to hold up their hands and were instructed to submit to police orders. "Heavy-featured, sullen prisoners" were taken to the Federal Building in patrol wagons. On the fifth floor of the Federal Building, while awaiting examination, the prisoners were said to have caused a "ceaseless clamor" of muttering, jeering, and singing of the "Internationale," and other revolutionary hymns.[4]

The arrest of another 280 alleged radicals, following the second raid on the House of the Masses early Sunday morning, was reported by the Free Press on Monday, January 5. The second raid was said to have blocked an attempt of the "disciples of red rule" to rally following the "disconcerting" raids on Friday night. Government operatives and city policemen made a forced entry into the building. Meetings and classes were interrupted and confusion ensued. There were isolated attempts at resistance, but these were quickly subdued by the government agents.

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[4]Detroit Free Press, Jan. 3, 1920, p. 1.

"Within fifteen minutes, the hundreds of new recruits to the ranks of the rebellious reds already in custody were being loaded into patrol wagons and taken to the Federal Building," the Free Press reported. The irony of the Sunday night raid was that a person in the House of the Masses called police headquarters for assistance, saying that "outsiders" were creating a disturbance there. Police headquarters informed the caller that they had knowledge of the "disturbance."[5]

The condition of the Federal Building was described as chaotic by the Free Press. Women and children waited on lower floors with packages of food for the prisoners. Police and government agents attempted to control the crowd. Sporadically, the visitors called to the prisoners on the fifth floor, trying to obtain information about their capture and confinement. There were intermittant periods of song, with "Internationale" being the favorite selection. The Free Press reported the conditions at the Federal Building with little sympathy for the prisoners or their inquiring relatives and friends.

> . . . what forced enthusiasm the reds had for defiant song had reached a low ebb after two nights spent in trying to sleep on stone flooring. There probably would have been little Sabbath chanting if the 280 new recruits had not been brought in. However, with the

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[5]Ibid., Jan. 5, 1920, p. 1.

> spirit of the revolutionary meetings that had just been broken up still strong upon them, these set up a din that their more worn fellows greeted as "songs of the soviet."[6]

The Free Press reported the prisoners comfortable despite the stone flooring and well-fed by the federal authorities, who were said to have provided sandwiches. The food brought by relatives was not necessary for the sustenance of the prisoners.

Several days after the raids, the news accounts in the Free Press began to manifest some understanding of the injustices endured by the prisoners under confinement in the Federal Building. Congestion was relieved somewhat by the release of seventy-five prisoners by Tuesday, January 6. The fifth floor corridor, however, still had a squalid appearance, "littered Tuesday with sprawling, shoeless, unkempt men."[7] There were between four and five hundred men using lavatory facilities sufficient for one hundred. Sleeping accommodations consisted of a stone floor and overcoats rolled up to function as pillows.

> The walls were lined with empty milk bottles and sleeping figures from whom all the bravado exhibited Sunday had vanished. Department of Justice heads, however, took strong exception Tuesday night to reports that the men taken in the raids were being mistreated or underfed.[8]

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., Jan. 7, 1920, p. 5.

[8] Ibid.

Arthur L. Barkey, chief of the federal agents in Detroit, said that the men were treated "better than in their own homes," and dismissed criticism of the conditions in the Federal Building.[9]

Many innocent persons had been seized, Friday and Saturday, by federal agents in the blanket raids. More than two dozen men, testifying under oath, said that they had never been in the hall and were enjoying soft drinks in the restaurant downstairs when the raid occurred. One man, who was taken as a prisoner, said that he had been passing the House of the Masses fifteen minutes before the raid and had stopped, out of curiosity, to see what was going on. He was arrested by agents of the Department of Justice and held in the Federal Building for more than two days before he was released.[10]

The raids were conducted without warrants for the arrest of the persons seized by the federal agents. A week after the raids, P. L. Prentis, chief immigration inspector in Detroit, received warrants from Washington for the arrest of 352 of the 400 persons still being held. Prentis explained to a reporter for the Free Press that these were not deportation warrants; they merely represented the authority for holding the prisoners pending the

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[9] Ibid. [10] Ibid.

decision of their cases by the Department of Labor.[11] Proceedings to release the prisoners through writs of habeas corpus were forestalled by the receipt of the warrants by federal authorities.

A sensational story in the Free Press, possibly to appease the public clamor aroused over the manner of detention of the prisoners, announced the departure of thirty-one aliens who were arrested in the November raids. The aliens were to be carried by train from Detroit to Ellis Island, where they would await deportation aboard a second transport to the Soviet Union. "A surging mass of aliens, all but hysterical in the emotion of the moment, acclaimed as martyrs the dozens of disciples of red rule as they . . . emerged from the jail with wide grins of greeting for the thousands who had assembled to accord them a rousing 'sendoff,'" the Free Press reported.[12]

Pandemonium ensued with the appearance of the prisoners. Police were described fighting through the crowd to escort the prisoners into waiting patrol wagons. Babies, held by women in the crowd, cried as they were crushed by the mass of people.

> . . . someone started "Internationale," the soviet anthem. In a moment it was on the lips of thousands . . . In this unique chanting, women were the leaders

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[11] Ibid., Jan. 10, 1920, p. 2.

[12] Ibid., Jan. 12, 1920, p. 1.

> . . . As they mouthed the foreign words of the soviet song their features were distorted by sobbing. . . . And, when they were not dabbling their tearfilled eyes with them, they were waving handkerchiefs in farewell to the reds. When the last of the patrols had been loaded, and was starting for the Michigan Central station, one disheveled woman flung herself from the crowd and dashed after the automobile, crying out in anguish. Policemen restrained her.[13]

The reporter for the Free Press wrung emotion and sentiment out of an uneventful departure.

A sober account in the Free Press on January 14 reported the removal of the prisoners from the county jail, precinct police stations, and the "bull pen" in the Municipal Court Building to Fort Wayne, where accommodations for three hundred men had been secured. Twenty-five ex-servicemen and members of the American Legion were selected to guard the prisoners at Fort Wayne. City officials complained that confinement of the men in the twenty-four by thirty foot "bull pen" had been a menace to the public health, the Free Press reported.

The City Council adopted a resolution, sent to immigration officials, requesting the immediate removal of the men from the Municipal Court Building. The Detroit Board of Health telegraphed a formal protest to Washington officials, complaining about the lack of sanitary facilities for use of the prisoners confined in the Federal Building. The short, terse news report did not elaborate

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[13] Ibid.

on the conditions under which 128 men had suffered in the "bull pen" at the Municipal Court Building for more than a week.

The interpretative news reports in the Free Press linked the federal raids with the necessity of repressing Communist inspired labor unrest. Communist agents were said to have infiltrated the conservative, well-established labor groups in the United States. The Communist party was trying to exert political influence by obtaining the support of labor groups for its candidates. Plans for a general strike among Detroit's industrial workers were said to have been forestalled by the federal raids.

> The plan here, as elsewhere throughout the country, would have been to precipitate a series of strikes and ultimately to weld these into one city-wide strike . . . any spring labor troubles here would have been the signal for an attempt to carry out Communist party plans in this city. . . . only the action of the government in "breaking the back" of the move here prevented such a crisis.[14]

Coupled with the threat of organized labor was the problem of the foreign worker and the Negro. The Communist Labor party directed its propaganda to foreign workers, the Free Press reported. The foreign workers were told by spokesmen for the Communist Labor party that the government in the United States would never consider their demands nor respect their rights. Foreign workers were thus

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[14] Ibid., Jan. 8, 1920, p. 3.

encouraged to join with the Communist Labor party in opposing the government. The greatest danger, however, was posed by attempts of the Communist and Communist Labor parties to organize the Negro to support plans for overthrowing the present political and economic system by force and violence. "Officials admitted this propaganda had gone to such a length that trouble may yet be expected among certain Negro communities," the Free Press reported following the Detroit raids.[15]

Detroit Free Press: Editorial Interpretation of the January Raids

The attempted bolshevik infiltration of organized labor had been a grave potential threat to the security of the United States, the editors of the Free Press asserted. The Bolshevists were said to have encouraged every strike, including the steel and coal strikes, as preliminaries to a general strike and eventual political upheaval. Lenin and Trotsky had "tens of thousands" of active agents in the United States agitating for a political revolution. "The scheme has been to conquer America from Russia just as Russia originally was conquered from Germany," the Free Press editors said.[16] The bolshevik threat was effectively

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[15] Ibid., Jan. 3, 1920, p. 3.

[16] Editorial, ibid., Jan. 5, 1920, p. 4.

thwarted, however, by the governmental policy of raiding radical headquarters and deporting all undesirable aliens.

After the January raids by federal agents, the Free Press anticipated that the bolshevik cause in the United States would gain few new adherents. The glowing terms of the bolshevik propaganda, "social revolution," "equality," and "the people in power," meant the confiscation of property, the adoption of children by the state, the nationalization of women, and the pander of virtue, in the opinion of the Free Press editors.[17] The appeal of the Bolshevists in the United States would wane with the realization of their real intent by the general public.

The administration's handling of the bolshevik problem was criticized by the editors of the Free Press. The administration had changed from a policy of indifference to one of antagonism. After many months of irresponsible neglect, government officials had passed into a state of semi-hysteria. The administration's demand for stricter legislation to combat radicalism posed a danger to individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution. "If every bill proposed or introduced in the last sixty days were made into law the people of the United States might eventually find themselves in almost as much peril

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[17] Ibid., Jan. 11, 1920, p. 4.

from autocracy and from the destruction of their constitutional rights as from bolshevism," the editors of the Free Press warned.[18]

A more pointed political barb was thrown at the Democratic party in an evaluation of the competency of Attorney General Palmer for the office of President of the United States. The attorney general, in authorizing the federal raids and deportations, was merely fulfilling the routine responsibilities of his office. The publicity attendant upon the federal raids increased the possibility that Palmer would win the presidential nomination from the Democratic party. The poor calibre of presidential aspirants from the Democratic party had been proved, in the opinion of the Free Press editors, by the eminent position accorded to Attorney General Palmer for his demonstration of ordinary ability.[19]

Socialism and bolshevism were defined differently by the editors of the Free Press. The Socialists were willing to work within the present system to institute political changes. The Bolshevists wanted to overturn the economic and political system in the United States through force and violence. The dispute between the Socialists and Communists over the ownership of the Detroit House of

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[18] Ibid., Jan. 9, 1920, p. 4.

[19] Ibid., Jan. 6, 1920, p. 4.

the Masses was unfortunate. The Communists had temporarily assumed a dominant position in claiming the organizational headquarters. It was possible, in the recent raids, the Free Press editors admitted, that many men had been arrested who had not realized the change in the use of the facilities at the House of the Masses.

Detroit Journal: News Reporting of the January Raids

The news report that appeared in the Journal on Saturday, January 3, following the Friday night raid on the House of the Masses, was similar to the story reported by the Free Press. The Journal elaborated upon the enormous amount of radical literature confiscated during the raids. Hundreds of thousands of pounds of pamphlets and handbills of an inflammatory nature, twenty-eight red flags, and nearly one hundred photographs of Communist leaders, including, Lenin and Trotsky, were seized. An arsenal of old-fashioned muskets, modern rifles and revolvers, and home-made bombs was also discovered by federal agents. "The offices of the United States Civil Service in the Federal Building Saturday morning resembled field headquarters of the Bolsheviki forces," the Journal reported.[20] Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Hungarians, and

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[20]Detroit Journal, Jan. 3, 1920, p. 1.

persons of other nationalities, in tousled attire, waited to be questioned by federal agents.

The arrival of the 280 men, arrested in the Sunday morning raid, to the Federal Building momentarily alleviated the depression that had settled upon the men captive since Friday. The new arrivals were greeted with songs and queries, the Journal reported. Many of the men paced the tile floors and begged the guards to notify their families of their detainment. Some of the prisoners wept and appealed to federal agents to allow them the opportunity to demonstrate their respect for the United States.[21] Hundreds of friends and relatives of the prisoners crowded the Federal Building. Many brought packages of food; others asked only to talk with the captives.

The news reports in the Journal did not record any instances of mistreatment of the prisoners by federal authorities; a plot to supply weapons to the prisoners, however, was disclosed. Two women had attempted to pass two packages, containing twenty-five razors for shaving, through the grating to the men.

> Precautions have been taken to prevent the revolutionists being given weapons with which to battle their way to liberty. Chief Agent Arthur L. Barkey declared if further attempts were made to smuggle arms or weapons to the prisoners he would prohibit food and tobacco, other than that provided by the government, being given to the suspects.[22]

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[21] Ibid., Jan. 5, 1920, p. 2.

[22] Ibid., p. 1.

Detroit had been a "hotbed of revolutionary activity" for many months, the Journal reported. Any demonstration of labor unrest in Detroit in the spring would have been the beginning of the radical revolt. Ignorant foreign workers were particularly susceptible to radical propaganda. The Communists had also attempted to organize the Negro in a movement to overthrow the political and economic system of the United States. Federal officials were said to still anticipate trouble from the Negro communities. Stronger laws, which would apply to both aliens and citizens, were necessary to deal with persons not eligible for deportation under existing legislation. "The round-up of reds was necessary to prevent a serious clash between authorities and disciples of soviet rule," the Journal reported.[23]

The conditions of detainment of the prisoners were ignored in the news reports appearing in the Journal for nearly two weeks. On Monday, January 12, a sensational headline introduced a lengthy story on the departure of the thirty-one aliens, held since the November raids, for Ellis Island. The Detroit "Reds" were said to have departed amid the cheers and jeers of the "wildest demonstration" in the city's history. They were hailed as

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[23] Ibid., Jan. 3, 1920, p. 1; Jan. 5, 1920, p. 1; Jan. 8, 1920, p. 2.

martyrs by thousands of persons of foreign birth. Police had to "battle" with "huge throngs" of aliens at the county jail and the Michigan Central Railroad station to maintain order.[24]

Many of the women present fainted and had to be rescued by police. The women outnumbered the men two to one. The prisoners wore fur-lined overcoats, silk shirts, and expensive suits and shoes, the Journal told its readers. They carried expensive suitcases and hand luggage. Six of the men were married. They were given twenty minutes to visit with their families previous to their departure.

> The men were literally surrounded by women and children, who clung to them until guards tore them away. The women wept, the children wailed, and the men attempted to comfort them in clumsy fashion. The spirit of bravado manifest at previous times had been broken.[25]

The following day, Tuesday, January 13, a short, inside-page story reported the prospective transfer of the prisoners from the precinct police stations and the Municipal Court Building to the Fort Wayne Army barracks. Federal officials had authorized the transfer of the men after receiving complaints from city officials about the detention of the 128 prisoners in the "bull pen" at the Municipal Court Building. The transfer of the prisoners

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[24] Ibid., Jan. 12, 1920, p. 2.

[25] Ibid.

was regarded by federal officials as expedient, as the "Reds" were using the criticism pertaining to the detention of the prisoners to further their cause.

The removal of some of the men to Fort Wayne was reported in a short page-two story on Wednesday, January 14. The release of other prisoners, with Liberty Bonds as bail, took precedence over the account of the removal of the men to Fort Wayne. Improper sanitary conditions and the protest of city officials to Washington were the brief reasons cited for the authorization of the transfer.

The Journal printed two news feature stories during the confinement of the prisoners. One appeared on the front-page of the Wednesday, January 7 issue. It was headlined, "Jaws Busy, Mind Blank." A sub-head explained, "That's the Way John, Typical 'Red,' Waits Deportation." John Manzchuk, one of the aliens seized in the raids on the House of the Masses, was sitting in the examination room on the fourth floor of the Federal Building eating a sandwich. A reporter for the Journal described the actions of the hungry man.

> He masticated it with the grinding molar motion of a cow. His mouth opened each time his jaws came apart, his lips curled away from each other. He ate without semblance of enjoyment, only with the animal knowledge that food is essential but not pleasurable. Back where he was born John probably would have been a serf, a farming serf, with a slumbering mind, a half-awakened consciousness, on the border- line between beast and man, standing just beyond the door from

> starvation, living in a hovel, sharing it with a family equally elemental in thought, soul and life.[26]

In Russia, John would not have known anything about political science or government, the reporter told Journal readers. He would have fought a constant battle against the elements of nature and political oppression. He had come "all the way from the hell of Russian serfdom," however, to the "comparative heaven of possible American citizenship." He was taught to read, write, and think in the United States; and knowledge had created "peculiar fancies" in his distorted mind.[27]

John was typical, the Journal story implied, of the hundreds of other radicals who were confined on the fifth floor of the Federal Building. The reporter for the Journal described in detail their ape-like appearance and barbarous habits. They were short and squat, with thick chests, square hands, and "rope-like" arms. They had black hair and bulging foreheads that protruded over deep-set eyes. Their faces were described as being flat and vacant. John and his companions had turned the fifth floor balcony of the Federal Building into a "smelly bedlam," the reporter observed.

> They and their . . . quarters looked alike, unkempt, dingy and dirty, with only half the dirt showing. . . .

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[26] Ibid., Jan. 7, 1920, p. 1.

[27] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

> They seemed undistressed by their cramped quarters, sleeping on stone floors, being deprived of nearly every convenience. Perhaps the absence of sanitation was familiar. Cleanliness might have been destructive of their distorted political ideas.[28]

The following day, the Journal printed another front-page feature story on the alien prisoners. The headline read, "Water Waste, We Calls It." A sub-head said, "Emory's Tears Over 'Reds' and Their 'I. W. W.' Stand on Wash Day Revealed." Emory Brooks, a rotund turnkey at the county jail, was charged with the responsibility of supervising the weekly bath day. All the prisoners were willing, even eager, to bathe, except the aliens confined since the raids of the previous weekend. "I. W. W." was said to mean "I won't wash." "You can shoot us, or take our food away, or do anything you want," the confined aliens were reported to have said, "but we will not take a bath."[29] The reporter for the Journal concluded the story surmising that the aliens would soon be on their way to Russia, where conditions would be similar to their customary mode of existence.

Detroit Journal: Editorial Interpretation of the January Raids

A bolshevik revolution in the United States was an impossibility, in the opinion of the Journal editors. The

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[28] Ibid., p. 2.

[29] Ibid., Jan. 8, 1920, p. 1.

Bolshevists, crowded into the great cities and industrial ghettos, had a limited perspective of American society. They envisioned society as being divided into only two classes, which consisted of a small number of capitalists and a huge proletariat. The Bolshevists did not consider the millions of American farmers, who would equate the nationalization of land with outright thievery, the Journal observed editorially. They did not consider the millions of youths who did not want to be adopted by the state; the youths who wanted only the opportunity to achieve for themselves. "They do not know that millions have been brought up from their mothers' knees with love for the country, with reverence for its traditions, with that within them which is roused to fighting pitch when the Flag is insulted," the Journal editors said.[30] The ordinary citizens of the United States, the farmers, small merchants, clerks, and mechanics, were the people who compelled the government to take action against those who threatened their cherished way of life.

The ordinary American citizen also had grievances. The school teacher and the policeman were both underpaid. These people, however, were anxious to work within the present political and economic system to improve their situation. The appeal of bolshevism was among the ignorant

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[30]Editorial, ibid., Jan. 5, 1920, p. 4.

and the foreign-born. An example of the mentality of the typical foreign worker was cited by the Journal editors. A foreigner, called John, was approached by a stranger who offered to sell him a "gold brick" in exchange for all of his savings. John eagerly consented and later found that he had purchased a box filled with worthless bits of paper. "With this example of John's intelligence, his sophistication, and his power of reasoning fresh in mind, we were not surprised to learn a few days ago that other glib strangers had 'sold' bolshevism to John and that he was entangled in the net thrown out to catch the Reds," the Journal editors remarked.[31]

"Parlor socialists" in the United States were said to advocate the release of the "political prisoners" seized in the federal raids. The "political prisoners" of the United States were described by the Journal editors as "draft-dodgers, slackers, anti-American plotters, espionage agents and disloyalists." The government should not compromise its position by yielding to appeals for amnesty for these people.[32]

A distinction between crime and the incitement to crime was not realized by the Journal editors. "In the law of God are the men who preach murder and arson as a

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[31] Ibid., Jan. 12, 1920. p. 4.

[32] Ibid., Jan. 13, 1920, p. 4.

necessary adjunct to political revision less criminal than the tools and dupes who commit the tangible overt acts?"[33] Reputable periodicals were responsible for much of the distorted information disseminated to foreigners and other persons unable to distinguish between fact and propaganda. Criticism of the government and its officers should be kept within the bounds of moderation and reasonableness, the Journal editors urged.[34]

Detroit News: News Reporting of the January Raids

The circumstances of the raids on the House of the Masses reported by the News, for three days after the raids occurred, were similar to the accounts printed in the Free Press and the Journal. Initially, reporters for the News might have encountered difficulties in obtaining information independent of the news released by federal authorities. On Tuesday, January 6, the News printed a front-page story that reported the objective facts of the confinement of the prisoners in the Federal Building. A careful job of investigative reporting by a member of the News staff was demonstrated by the accuracy of the account.

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[33] Ibid., Jan. 8, 1920, p. 4.

[34] Ibid., Jan. 9, 1920, p. 4.

The reporter described the detention of several hundred prisoners in the Federal Building. The men were confined between the walls and railings of the narrow fifth floor corridor. They slept on the stone floor; had access to one drinking fountain and a single toilet; and went without washing or shaving for the period of their confinement. The prisoners ate whatever food their friends or relatives brought, provisions for feeding them not having been made by federal officials. There were no windows in the corridor; the only light filtered down from an opaque skylight that covered the center of the building.

The suspects were questioned, fifteen at a time, to determine their citizenship, membership in the Union of Russian Workmen, Communist or Communist Labor parties, and their beliefs on the overthrow of the government by force. The examinations were conducted in secret. The findings were released only to immigration officials. The prisoners were not permitted to communicate with friends or relatives, nor were they allowed to engage attorneys for their defense.

> The efforts of the attorney-general thus to suppress radicalism by mass arrests, coupled with the size of the Detroit Department of Justice force and the absence of jail accommodations, brought about a condition Monday somewhat close to chaotic. . . . the small force of examiners in the face of the enormous number awaiting catechizing was forcing everyone to work at top speed, and this, as a result, made it impossible to get accurate figures on the percentages of citizens and aliens among the prisoners and the number released.[35]

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[35] Detroit News, Jan. 6, 1920, p. 1.

The raiding procedure was equally haphazard, the News reported. No one was immune under the attorney general's order for blanket arrests. During the raid early Sunday morning, police had entered the restaurant below the House of the Masses, forced the patrons upstairs, and then had arrested them with the other men in the hall. Twelve veterans of the World War, who later showed discharge papers to federal authorities, were also taken in the Sunday morning raid. Police were not content to confiscate the handbills, pamphlets, and books in the hall; they removed the shelves and the bookcases as well.[36] There were no examinations, at the time of the raids, to ascertain whether those captured were citizens or aliens, although only aliens were subject to deportation.

A report in the Sunday News on the departure of the thirty-one aliens, arrested in the November raids, to Ellis Island lacked the sensational details of the accounts in the Free Press and the Journal. The men were all members of the Union of Russian Workmen; and were anarchists, not Communists. The parting scenes between the men and their relatives showed little emotionalism, since none of the men was married. A statement of Alexander Bukovetsky, fluent young spokesman for the group, explaining their

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[36] Ibid., Jan. 5, 1920, p. 2.

detention from the point of view of the alien, was printed in the Sunday News on January 11.

> We haven't done any of the things that men are usually supposed to be put in jail for, but here we have been, crowded in this jail for two months as if we were thieves or murderers. We are all more than willing to go, provided only that we are sent to some point in Soviet Russia. We were told weeks ago that we were to be deported at once, and our families sold everything, and have been waiting ever since. They had to sell for practically nothing, of course, and we are all "broke," but we only ask to get started as soon as possible.[37]

The day after the departure of the aliens to Ellis Island, the News carried a four-column, four-inch photograph of the prisoners being escorted from the county jail to the waiting patrol wagons. In the picture, an orderly crowd, mostly men, watched anxiously as the aliens were led by police into the patrol wagons. The prisoners appeared to be silent and reserved. The crowd provided no evidence of mass hysteria. The photograph appeared without an accompanying story on the departure.[38]

The News printed a more detailed account of the confinement of the prisoners in the "bull pen" at the Municipal Court Building than did the Free Press or the Journal. Conditions in the Municipal Court Building, and in other places of detention in Detroit, were described as being "unbearable" and a "menace to the public health."

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[37] Sunday News, Jan. 11, 1920, p. 1.

[38] News, Jan. 12, 1920, p. 2.

The men confined in the "bull pen" at the Municipal Court Building slept on the stone floor and ate the food brought by friends and relatives. Many of the 128 men were described as being in ill health.[39]

The statement of Mayor Couzens, deploring the existence of such conditions in a "civilized city," was reported by the News. Dr. Henry F. Vaughan, commissioner of health in Detroit, explained to the City Council that the conditions in the Municipal Court Building were no worse than those in other places of detention throughout the city, including, the Federal Building. The City Council passed a resolution asking immigration officials for the immediate transfer of the prisoners to the Fort Wayne Army barracks.[40]

After the transfer of the prisoners to the barracks, the News printed a story on the commencement of hearings for the three hundred men. Three immigration inspectors served as a court; evidence was recorded by a stenographer. A deportation warrant was issued, if the three immigration officials decided that the alien should be deported. After the hearing, the alien was permitted to engage an attorney to review the evidence and object to the findings. The release or deportation of the alien was

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[39] Ibid., Jan. 13, 1920, p. 1.

[40] Ibid.

dependent upon the success or failure of the attorney's efforts. The proceedings were akin to those of a star chamber.[41]

An interpretative article in the News on Monday, January 5, questioned the constitutionality of further attempts by the government to regulate or suppress freedom of speech in the United States. Attorney General Palmer desired to make the advocacy of the overthrow of the American form of government, apart from force or any overt action, a crime. This measure would be opposed by many people in the United States "who see in it a vital blow, rather than a protection, to democracy," a News reporter told readers.[42] It was doubted that the Palmer proposal, or similar bills, could be passed without first modifying the Constitution.

The First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech was the most fundamental liberty protected by the Constitution of the United States. Freedom of speech was cherished by every democratic country in the world. In England, speakers could vehemently criticize any aspect of the monarchy or parliamentary government with no fear of suppression or punishment. The ability to initiate change through words, rather than by actions, constituted the "safety valve" of all democratic societies.

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[41] Ibid., Jan. 15, 1920, p. 1.

[42] Ibid., Jan. 5, 1920, p. 1.

> And it is this safety valve that Attorney General Palmer has now proposed to cut off, for the first time in peacetime in the United States, by the bill to make the mere preaching of the overthrow of the American government a crime. . . . The trouble is that if talk in favor of the Soviet can be construed as a crime, talk in favor of any other vital change in our government may be likewise a crime in the eyes of a particular official who may be delegated to construe the law in the future.[43]

Detroit News: Editorial Interpretation of the January Raids

The threat of an armed insurrection to overthrow the political and economic system of the United States was farfetched, in the opinion of the News editors.[44] The government of the United States was stable, secure, and in little need of protection by frenzied politicians. The fundamentals of government were based on ideals, traditions, and customs that had been developed throughout the ages. The desire for peace and order, the establishment of security and liberty, and a respect for merit and ability were permanent ideals that could not be overthrown by force. Officialdom, responsible for the functional implementation of these ideals, could be overthrown or changed, the News said editorially. In the United States, incompetent officials were removed from office by the casting of ballots at the polls, not by demonstrations of violence.

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[43] Ibid., p. 2.

[44] Editorial, ibid., Jan. 6, 1920, p. 4.

Bolshevism was intensely opposed by every politician who aspired to the presidential nomination from either political party. Bolshevism was not a problem in the United States. Possible presidential candidates should have explained their views on important political and economic issues. Industrial disputes, railroad management, the national budget, the exploitation of child labor, foreign relations, national education, the farm problem, and the high cost of living in the United States were the issues with which politicians should have been concerned, the editors of the News suggested.

> We have as much to fear from the black and devious ways of high finance as we have from the red and fiery ways of bolshevism. . . . The bugaboo of bolshevism is not an issue; it's a pretense behind which certain gentlemen hide because they do not care or do not dare to take up the responsibilities of discussing the real issues.[45]

The Americanization of foreign-born persons residing in the United States would be facilitated by the daily practice of American ideals by officials of the government and the established citizenry of the country. The extension of sympathetic understanding to the foreign-born by citizens of the United States was the best Americanizing influence. The Scandinavian, German, Slav, and Italian all had the potential to become good American citizens. "There has never been difficulty in assimilating people

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[45] Ibid., Jan. 8, 1920, p. 4.

of any extraction wherever they were surrounded by genuine American influences and ideals," the editors of the News said.[46]

An editorial cartoon in the Sunday News on January 11 suggested the best possible approach of federal officials in dealing with the radical problem. The cartoon was captioned, "The Antidote For Reds." A "Little Red School House" was depicted in desolate surroundings. The school house was isolated from the remainder of society by its location in a remote, barren area, covered with snow and secluded by tall trees. There were footsteps, imprinted in the snow, leading into the school house; none led outward. The isolation of radicalism from the remainder of the country was, apparently, the antidote to bolshevism, in the opinion of the News editors.

The conditions of confinement of the alien prisoners in Detroit following the January raids were among the worst in the nation. City officials and prominent citizens in Detroit protested against the inhuman treatment accorded to the victims of the federal raids. The Free Press and the Journal assumed the culpability of the arrested aliens in their news columns; and criticized the administration's handling of the raids, in their editorial columns, to further their own political self-interest.

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[46] Ibid., Jan. 9, 1920, p. 4.

The News was the only general circulation daily in Detroit to report an objective account of the conditions of confinement, to consider the point of view of the arrested aliens in its news columns, and to understand the position of the foreign-born prisoners in its editorial pages.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The First World War brought about a number of changes in the United States that prepared the nation for the Red Scare. Four million men had been inducted into the military service; many of them had been exposed to the killing and the societal disintegration on the European front. In the interim, many women entered the work force in the United States and a mass migration of Negroes from the South to work in Northern industries aggravated racial hostilities in the Northern cities.[1] Servicemen returned from the war to find Negroes holding good jobs in the big cities and foreign-born workers striking for higher wages, while they experienced difficulty in obtaining jobs. Unemployment, prices, and labor unrest were all rising.

Radical groups in the United States were encouraged by the success of the Bolshevists in Russia, and became unduly optimistic about an imminent world revolution. About fifty radical newspapers began publication in 1919;

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[1]Stanley Coben, "A Study in Nativism: The American Red Scare of 1919-1920," Political Science Quarterly, LXXIX (March, 1964), 61-62.

they continually assured readers that the United States was on the verge of revolutionary upheaval.[2] The left wing of the Socialist party split from the national organization at the convention in Chicago in September, 1919, to form the Communist and Communist Labor parties. Although the radical organizations were small in numbers and without funds, they were vociferous in their espousal of Marxian ideology and their prophecies of societal change. Persons of recent immigrant backgrounds predominated in the membership of the radical groups.

A series of bomb scares in April and May of 1919 added to the rising national furor over the threat of alien radicals. In April, thirty-six bombs, in little brown packages with the return address of Gimbel Brothers department store in New York, were mailed to prominent government officials and capitalists. Most of the packages were intercepted by post office workers before reaching their proposed destinations. The list of intended recipients included Attorney General Palmer, Postmaster General Burleson, Commissioner of Immigration Caminetti, Mayor Ole Hanson of Seattle, Senator Thomas R. Hardwick of Georgia, J. P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, and other government officials and prominent capitalists who were opposed to

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[2]John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925 (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 225.

liberal immigration laws, improved working conditions and wages for labor, and other measures for altering the status quo. A month later, there were a number of bomb explosions, one of which damaged the front of the house of Attorney General Palmer in the nation's capital.

The fear of foreign-inspired radicalism was intensified by the preponderance of strikes throughout the nation. The membership and the power of labor unions had increased during the war; and workers were committed to strive for better wages and working conditions in industry. There were 3,600 strikes in 1919 involving more than four million workers. It was convenient for government officials and prominent persons in industry to link the strikes to radicalism rather than to low wages and poor working conditions. A general strike in Seattle in February was followed by the Boston police strike in September, and the national steel and coal strikes in the autumn of 1919. Strikes from coast-to-coast received extensive coverage in the nation's newspapers and magazines.[3]

The aftermath of war hostilities, depressed economic conditions, numerous strikes, and bomb scares prepared the people and the press of the United States for the extensive radical raids of Attorney General Palmer in November, 1919, and January, 1920. A national mood of

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[3]Coben, "Nativism," pp. 66-67.

alien baiting ensued with the search for scapegoats upon whom the responsibility for the nation's ills could be placed.

> Mr. Palmer was in full cry. . . . He was distributing boiler-plate propaganda to the press, containing pictures of horrid-looking Bolsheviks with bristling beards, and asking if such as these should rule over America. . . . College graduates were calling for the dismissal of professors suspected of radicalism; schoolteachers were being made to sign oaths of allegiance; businessmen with unorthodox political or economic ideas were learning to hold their tongues if they wanted to hold their jobs. Hysteria had reached its height.[4]

National News Reporting and Editorial Interpretation of the Raids and Deportations, November, 1919 to January, 1920: the Atlanta Constitution, the New York Times, the New York World, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and the Washington Post

There were no radical raids in the city of Atlanta, Georgia, birthplace of the modern Ku Klux Klan. The Atlanta Constitution, "the standard Southern newspaper," a standard-sized, eight-column morning daily established in 1868, received news of the Palmer raids from the Associated Press wire service. On Saturday, November 8, the Constitution reported the arrest of radicals, allegedly active in promoting industrial unrest, in numerous cities throughout the United States. The following day, a

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[4]Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties (New York: Perennial Library of Harper & Row, 1964), pp. 48-49.

headline proclaimed that "war" was declared to free the country of radical aliens. The object of the raids was to prevent the violent overthrow of the government by the Union of Russian Workers, the Constitution reported. A short story on the November raids in Detroit, included in the national summary, said that "radical agitators" and "disciples of direct action" were detained in the city of Detroit pending their deportation.

The Constitution carried the same Associated Press news reports printed in the three Detroit newspapers on the Buford deportations. The departure of the Buford from New York was announced by the Constitution with the headline: "'Ark' On Ocean Loaded With Reds." The radicals were said to have left the country cursing the United States government.[5] An editorial, on December 23, said "good riddance" to Berkman, Miss Goldman, and their "fellow coagitators and fellow reds and firebrands." The greatest fault of the United States was its toleration of alien enemies, according to the editors of the Constitution. The government was congratulated upon the deportation of the radicals to Soviet Russia.[6]

Two eight-column banner headlines announced the nation-wide federal raids in January. A "revolutionary

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[5]Atlanta Constitution, Dec. 21, 1919, p. 1; Dec. 22, 1919, p. 1.

[6]Editorial, ibid., Dec. 23, 1919, p. 10.

plot was nipped by the raids," the Constitution reported. The heads of radical groups were said to have planned to turn the steel and coal strikes into a general strike, with the ultimate destruction of all organized government. On Monday, January 5, the Constitution reported Palmer's appeal to the Congress for more power to enable him to "smash" the "Parlor Bolsheviks." Short-haired women and long-haired men were said to be making trouble. The attorney general declared that he was unable to deal effectively with the radical menace unless the Congress approved an extension of his power.[7] The actions of Attorney General Palmer, "in behalf of law and order and public morals and decency in proceeding with a heavy hand against the undesirables and enemies of the government that infest this country," were applauded by the editors of the Constitution.[8]

The New York Times had been established as a newspaper aspiring to standards of national excellence. Adolph Ochs, publisher of the Times from 1896 until his death in 1935, had attempted to "give the news impartially, without fear or favor" and to make the newspaper a "forum for the consideration of all questions of public

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[7] Ibid., Jan. 3, 1920, p. 1; Jan. 4, 1920, p. 1; Jan. 5, 1920, p. 1.

[8] Editorial, ibid., Jan. 4, 1920, p. 4.

importance."[9] On November 8, the Times reported the federal raids on the Russian People's House in New York and other cities. Tons of seditious literature were said to have been carried away in New York; the Red flag was waved in the Bronx during a bolshevist celebration there at which a speaker threatened revolution in America. "Gangs" of foreign-born men and women were rounded-up by federal agents, to be held for deportation, in numerous cities. The arrest of twenty men in a hall used for anarchist meetings was reported on November 8 in the Times in a short story on the raiding in Detroit.

The proposed deportation of the aliens, arrested throughout the nation for plotting the overthrow of the government, was reported by the Times on Sunday, November 9. The Union of Russian Workers was said to be worse than the Bolsheviki in Soviet Russia. A report on the 250 additional aliens seized in Detroit was included in the national summary. Arthur Barkey, chief of the federal agents in Detroit, was said to have "broken the back" of the radical movement in that city.

The federal raids in November were insufficient to combat the radical menace. Immediate deportation of the arrested aliens, the punishment of native-born radicals,

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[9]Edwin Emery, The Press and America: An Interpretative History of Journalism (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 487.

and the cessation of radical publications was urged by the editors of the Times. "Hordes of ignorant aliens, speaking not a word of English, their minds subject without correction to what we regard as the mad Russian doctrine are in the United States," the Times observed editorially. The government and the general public must do more to eradicate the radical threat to American institutions.[10]

The sailing of the "Ark," with 249 Reds on board, to Soviet Russia was reported in the Times on Monday, December 22. The Times, proud of its reputation for objectivity, announced the departure of the Buford with a dramatic lead. Gratification at the departure of the "unclean spirits" on the Buford was expressed by the editors of the Times. The government had found a tedious, but effective method to purge American society of the "missionaries of revolution."[11]

The "simultaneous swoop" of federal agents on radical headquarters in cities throughout the country was reported by the Times on Saturday, January 3. Federal agents had prepared for the raids for six months by collecting evidence of the campaign to overthrow the government. The prisoners arrested for advocating revolution were said to be scheduled for deportation. The arrested

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[10]Editorial, New York Times, Nov. 11, 1919, p. 12.

[11]Ibid., Dec. 23, 1919, p. 8.

aliens had plotted a nation-wide general strike as the first step in the proletarian revolution, the Times reported.

A special bulletin from Detroit was printed in the Times on Sunday, January 4. The persons held in Detroit were said to be members of the Communist party, the I. W. W., or the Union of Russian Workmen. The prisoners had not been fed since their capture, but were alive with revolutionary spirit, the Times reported. The "Internationale" and other anarchist hymns were sung by those confined in Detroit. The arrested aliens were examined to ascertain whether they should be held by the federal or state governments, or released.

The "shrewdness" and "wisdom" of the raids by agents of the Department of Justice were praised by the editors of the Times. The Communists were said to have been spreading the doctrines of Lenin and Trotsky among labor organizations in the United States. One of their principal aims was agitation of the Negroes preliminary to the proletarian revolution. The aliens arrested by the federal agents should be shown no compassion in their hearings before the Department of Labor, the Times editors urged. "These Communists are a pernicious gang. . . . The more of these dangerous anarchists are arrested, the more

of them are sent back to Europe, the better for the United States."[12]

The New York World, purchased by Joseph Pulitzer in 1883, was a standard-sized, eight-column morning daily dedicated "to the cause of the people rather than that of the purse-potentates." One of the objectives of the World was to "expose all fraud and sham" and to "fight all public evils and abuses" in the course of bringing the news of daily events to the people.[13] The nation-wide raids on radical organizations were reported in the World on Saturday, November 8. Men and women were seized and literature was confiscated in the raids in New York, but no bombs or weapons were found by the federal agents there. The belief that the raids were to curtail a revolutionary plot was not substantiated by evidence, the World reported.

Many prisoners were clubbed by federal agents during the November raids in New York. A reporter for the World saw half a dozen bandaged heads during the few minutes he was on the fourteenth floor of the Park Row Building in New York where the prisoners were first taken for interrogation. Desks, furniture, and glass doors were broken, typewriters had been thrown on the floor and stamped on, and books and literature littered the floors

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[12] Ibid., Jan. 5, 1920, p. 10.

[13] Emery, Press and America, p. 377.

of the Russian People's House in New York. There were bloodstains on the floor of a room on the first floor of the building and a washbowl was half-full of bloody water. "The Russian People's House, following the raid, looked yesterday as if a bomb had exploded in each room," a reporter for the World observed.[14]

The use of the term "Soviet Ark" was avoided by the World in its reportage of the Buford deportations. On Sunday, December 21, the World printed a story on the proposed departure of the Buford to Soviet Russia. A reporter at the barge office in New York described those who waited to go to Ellis Island to visit with the deportees before their departure. An elderly woman, who had come from Chicago, wept as she explained her desire to see her daughter before the latter sailed on the Buford. Officials denied her permission to go to Ellis Island because she had neither a package for the deportee nor an appointment. The full farewell statements of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were printed by the World on Monday, December 22.

The editorial opinion of the World was moderate in tone. Government officials were urged to proceed with caution in the arrest of aliens suspected of radicalism. They should be taken into custody only for definite violations of the law with arrest warrents issued prior to

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[14]New York World, Nov. 9, 1919, p. 2.

their seizure. The indiscriminate raiding tactics of the agents of the Lusk Committee, organized in March, 1919 by the New York State Legislature to investigate radical activities, were deplored by the editors of the World.

> Search warrant procedure is entirely legal. But a search warrant which "incidentally" takes up more than 1,000 men because they "happened to be on the premises" plays into the hands of revolutionists everywhere.[15]

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, a standard-sized, eight-column evening daily, was established by Joseph Pulitzer in 1878; and the Post-Dispatch, like the World, was founded to "serve no party but the people" and to "advocate principles and ideas rather than prejudices and partisanship."[16] Associated Press wire stories were used by the Post-Dispatch in its news reports of the November raids and the Buford deportations. The news reports, consequently, reflected the same conservative bias of the Associated Press news-gathering agency that was printed in the three Detroit dailies and the Atlanta Constitution.

The aliens arrested in the November raids were said to be leaders in the Union of Russian Workers, an organization more radical than the Bolsheviki. The radical aims included the seizure of all means of production for collective use, the killing of government officials,

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[15]Editorial, ibid., Nov. 10, 1919, p. 10.

[16]Emery, Press and America, p. 373.

and the repudiation of God, according to the Associated Press story printed in the Post-Dispatch on Monday, November 10. The news reports on the sailing of the Buford in the Post-Dispatch were the same Associated Press stories that appeared in the three Detroit dailies. The day after the sailing of the Buford, the Post-Dispatch printed an Associated Press report on the disturbance at the entrance to the Ellis Island ferry caused by a woman whose husband had been deported to Soviet Russia. The same story had appeared in the Detroit press headlined as an "attack" of the Ellis Island ferry by "Reds."

A strong, independent editorial position was taken by the Post-Dispatch. The sailing of the Buford was pronounced a solemn event, by the Post-Dispatch editors, marking the end of America's policy of welcome to the people of other nations. If some of the aliens in the United States erred in their conceptions of American democracy, the general public and government officials were not exempt from blame for their transgressions.

> We of America are not wholly guiltless for this tragic voyage of the Buford. We must charge ourselves with neglect and, to a certain extent, with encouraging example. . . . We have got to do more than give the immigrant a job and let him thereafter shift for himself. We have got to Americanize him if we can. . . . one of the first things to be done in the task of Americanizing prospective Americans is for Americans to Americanize themselves--a fact worth serious consideration while the Buford plods back on its dismal voyage.[17]

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[17]Editorial, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Dec. 23, 1919, p. 24.

Radicalism did not pose a danger to American institutions or to democratic government. The majority of American citizens cherished democratic principles and respected American institutions. The danger to democracy in the United States was posed by the abuse of governmental power, the Post-Dispatch observed editorially. Many innocent persons were arrested by federal agents in the dragnet raids on organizations suspected of radicalism. "These persons, citizens or aliens, have just cause for complaint of government oppression and persecution," the editors of the Post-Dispatch said.[18]

Associated Press wire stories were also printed by the Post-Dispatch in its reporting of the January raids. The headlines proclaimed the attempted overthrow of the government by force, the efforts by Communists to organize the Negroes in the violent movement, and the plot of workers to turn the steel and coal strikes into a general strike preparatory to revolution. An interpretative article by the Post-Dispatch Washington correspondent, David Lawrence, differed from the pro-government bias of the Associated Press reports. Palmer had used the raids as a political expedient; however, the attorney general had little chance of gaining the presidential nomination from the Democratic party, Lawrence explained. The labor and

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[18]Ibid., Jan. 4, 1920, p. 2.

foreign-born vote constituted much of the political power of the Democratic party. In the November and January raids, many innocent persons had been arrested. The attorney general had forfeited the political respect of labor and the foreign-born by what would be construed as "systematic persecution not of acts but opinions."[19]

The Washington Post, owned by John R. McLean at the time of the raids, was a standard-sized, eight-column morning daily founded in 1877. Headlines in the Post during the November raids proclaimed the intent of the radicals in the United States to kill government officials, to open the jails, and to loot the homes of property owners. "Remove your dirty collars and move into luxurious palaces" was the propaganda distributed to American workers by alien agitators, the Post reported.[20] The government policy of raids on radical organizations and the deportation of alien agitators was applauded by the editors of the Post, "It is too bad that government officials are compelled under the law to go through deportation proceedings . . . A firing squad would be much more effective and impressive."[21]

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[19]David Lawrence, "Palmer's Raids Not To Liking of All At Capital," ibid., Jan. 5, 1920, p. 3.

[20]Washington Post, Nov. 10, 1919, p. 1.

[21]Editorial, ibid., Nov. 11, 1919, p. 6.

The Post printed the Associated Press reports on the departure of the Buford to Soviet Russia. The deportation of the 249 aliens on board the Buford was a trivial effort on the part of government officials to eliminate the Bolshevik menace from the United States, in the opinion of the Post editors. Thousands of American citizens remained to preach treason and to imperil the security of the nation. The enactment of legislation to punish American citizens involved in radical activities was needed, the editors of the Post said.[22] The deportees themselves exemplified the reasons for the passage of stronger anti-radical legislation.

> . . . they shook defiant fists at the Statue of Liberty and hurled anathema upon America as they passed down the bay and out of the waters of the United States. If any justification for the deportation law were needed, it was supplied in the attitude of the Reds on the transport Buford's decks.[23]

Documents seized in the January raids gave evidence of a conspiracy to overthrow the government. "Dangerous anarchists" and "radical agitators" were distributing "menacing propaganda" among the Negroes. The federal raids forestalled a radical revolt in the spring. The Reds had tried to turn the coal and steel strikes in the autumn into a revolution but had failed, the Post

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[22] Ibid., Dec. 24, 1919, p. 6.

[23] Ibid., Dec. 23, 1919, p. 6.

reported.[24] The need for more stringent legislation to deal with the radical menace was stressed by the editors of the Post. Attorney General Palmer was praised for his efforts of pursuing and punishing the Reds. "The attorney general, himself no alarmist, has laid before the American people a subject which demands their thoughtful consideration and has announced a policy for the ensuing year which invites the cooperation of every patriot," the Post commented editorially.[25]

News Reporting and Editorial Interpretation of the Raids and Deportations, November, 1919 to January, 1920: the National Periodical Press

The tenor of the times in late 1919 and early 1920 was described in an article in Current Opinion, a monthly magazine of national and international news published in New York. Strikes throughout the country had come to be regarded as portents of the impending revolution. The terms "Soviet," "General Strike," and "One Big Union" were symbolic of the intended destruction of the capitalist economic system and democratic government by anarchist instigators. Numerous strikes and bomb scares were forebodings of the radical revolution. The government and the

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[24] Ibid., Jan. 3, 1920, p. 1; Jan. 4, 1920, p. 1.

[25] Editorial, ibid., Jan. 2, 1920, p. 6.

established citizenry had rallied to combat the Bolshevik menace.

> Laws against the red flag and against criminal syndicalism are the order of the day in city councils and state legislatures. Businessmen have been paying for the insertion of full-page advertisements against Bolshevism in leading newspapers. . . . Governors, generals, mayors, and publicists of high and low degree have uttered their solemn warnings.[26]

The peak of the radical hysteria was reported by the Independent, a weekly news magazine published in New York. The November raids represented cognizance on the part of government authorities of the peril to the national security posed by alien radicals. The deportation of the 249 aliens on the Buford to Soviet Russia was only a preliminary step in the elimination of radicalism from the United States. There were still hundreds or thousands of dangerous anarchists, not apprehended by federal authorities, who were attempting to overthrow the government by force. After the January raids the national temper had been appeased somewhat. "The government of the United States has smashed its declared enemy the Communist party as an insect might be smashed by the hammer of Thor," the Independent reported. Nevertheless, the passage of stronger sedition and deportation laws was required to quell possible social unrest.[27]

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[26]"Is Bolshevism in America Becoming a Real Peril?" Current Opinion, LXVII (July, 1919), 4-5.

[27]"Raids on the Reds," Independent, CI (Jan. 17, 1920), 99.

The Literary Digest, a weekly news magazine published in New York, recapitulated the events of every week printed in newspapers throughout the country. A spectrum of opinion from conservative to liberal was presented. Newspapers in all parts of the country congratulated the government on facilitating the departure of the aliens on the Buford to Soviet Russia, the Literary Digest reported in December. The term, "Soviet Ark," was a common phrase in newspaper headlines throughout the country. A large segment of national opinion, including government officials and a major portion of the daily press, recognized the Buford deportations as "the beginning of serious warfare upon dangerous enemies of our institutions."[28]

In January, following the nation-wide raids of Attorney General Palmer, members of the Literary Digest staff telegraphed the newspaper editors in towns and cities across the nation where alien organizations had been raided. The editors were asked the extent of actual bolshevik activity in their respective communities. New York and Chicago were said to be centers of radical activity, according to federal officials. Newspaper editors in the two cities replied that there was no real threat to American institutions in their areas; similar replies were

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[28]"Shipping Lenine's Friends To Him," Literary Digest, LXIV (Jan. 3, 1920), 14.

received from the editors of newspapers throughout the country. The Detroit News did not note any instances of radical terrorism in the vicinity of Detroit.

> "Industrially the United States begins the new year with brighter prospects than in many years, despite the furor over the 'Reds,' of whose activities the average industrious citizen knows little and cares less. There are fewer strikes, fewer impending industrial disputes, and the general tone is most optimistic.[29]

The concensus of opinion of newspaper editors throughout the country, reported in the Literary Digest in January, 1920, indicated that bolshevism did not present a threat to American institutions in their specific localities.

National introspection on the purposes and procedures of the federal raids was encouraged following the January round-up in editorials which appeared in the Outlook, a weekly news magazine published in New York. Deportation and repression were only temporary measures to cope with the threat of radicalism. Many immigrants brought to the United States a hatred of governmental authority and of the church, because in the countries from whence they came these institutions were instruments of tyranny and oppression. Education in the workings of democratic government, opportunities for economic achievement, and the extension of justice and humanity to

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[29]"Extent of the Bolshevik Infection Here," ibid., LXIV (Jan. 17, 1920), 14.

foreign-born persons were the best guarantees against the general acceptance of bolshevik doctrines.[30]

The anti-American theories of the radicals in the United States were detested by the editors of the Outlook. The government was deserving of praise for its energy, skill, and patriotic purpose in the defense of American institutions, if these institutions were actually imperiled by radical agitators.

> If the government has evidence to show that the people whom it has arrested are inciting, or are in a conspiracy to bring about, a violent overthrow of the government, it is within its rights, and will receive the support of all good citizens. If, however, arrests have been made of men simply because they believe, and have tried to spread their belief, that the American form of government is not suitable for the times and ought to be replaced by another form, we do not think that such arrests will be supported either by public opinion or by the courts . . .[31]

An ultra-conservative position on the alien problem, the raids, and the deportations was taken by the editors of the Saturday Evening Post. A weekly magazine of fiction and feature articles, the Saturday Evening Post was edited by George Horace Lorimer and was published in Philadelphia. Free speech was one of the fundamental liberties guaranteed by the Constitution. The radical menace forced consideration of the abridgement of certain

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[30]"The Remedy For Radicalism," Outlook, CXXIV (Jan. 21, 1920), 99-100.

[31]"Arresting the Reds," ibid., CXXIV (Jan. 14, 1920), 53.

democratic freedoms by the government for the protection of the American people. The radical agitators were demanding the right of free speech to incite listeners and readers to "free love, free loot, free murder, and a free field to overturn the government by violence," the editors of the Saturday Evening Post asserted.[32]

The government was criticized for the amount of administrative red tape involved in the deportation of the radical aliens. The United States was in need of a deportation law that would actually deport undesirable foreigners. It was hoped, by the editors of the Saturday Evening Post, that many other ships would follow the Buford carrying undesirable aliens back to Soviet Russia. There was no room in America for agents of the Kaiser or of Lenin. Foreigners sought to destroy the government of the United States and limited the job opportunities available to native-born Americans.[33]

In conjunction with stronger deportation laws, the editors of the Saturday Evening Post urged the passage of restrictive immigration legislation. Subsequent immigration to the United States must be rigidly limited in volume and analyzed on the basis of race as to its suitability

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[32]"Sanctuary," Saturday Evening Post, CXCII (Feb. 7, 1920), 28.

[33]Ibid.

for assimilation. Most of the immigrants to the United States from Southern and Eastern Europe would never evolve beyond the vulgar habits of a peasant or a ghetto dweller. They could live in a democratic society and still be slaves to tradition. They were "narrow, suspicious, timid, brutal, rapacious" creatures who lived lives of fear and ignorance.

> People talk of these immigrants from Russia, from Hungary, from the Balkans, as if all they need to become Americanized is to learn not to keep the coal in the bathtub and to be taught a little pushcart English. They see the Negro problem; but they cannot grasp the Russian problem. They do not understand that many of these alien peoples are temperamentally and racially unfitted for easy assimilation; that they are living in an age two or three centuries behind ours.[34]

Collier's was another weekly magazine of fiction and feature articles, published in New York. The editorial interpretation of the alien problem, the raids, and the deportations that appeared in Collier's was substantially different from that printed in the Saturday Evening Post. The small number of radical aliens in the United States did not pose a threat to American ideals, traditions, or institutions, in the opinion of Collier's editors. The program of raids and deportations of the government gave free advertisement to the radical movement, created martyrs

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[34]"Self-Preservation," ibid., 28-29.

for their cause, and, in general, stifled currents of free opinion in the United States.[35]

The practice of democratic ideals and traditions by American citizens could replace the teachings of bolshevism and anarchy among the foreign-born. The Americanization of the foreigner involved at least a superficial understanding of his cultural values.[36] The government program of raids and deportations was interpreted by the editors of Collier's to be as much of a danger to American liberty as was radicalism.

> . . . we are against railroading or deporting men and women unless their treatment and their trial are beyond all question fair . . . We are just as much against the tyranny of un-American terrorism when it is in the hands of the conservatives as when it is in the hands of radicals.[37]

Lengthy, in-depth articles on literature, science, art, and politics were printed in the Atlantic Monthly. The prevalent mood of intolerance in the United States in late 1919 and early 1920 was discussed in an article by Graham Wallas, a visiting Englishman. Americans, despite their good-natured dispositions, had always tended to ignore the cultural traditions of the various minority groups in their country, Wallas explained. Since

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[35]"Seeing Red," Collier's, LXIV (Dec. 20, 1919), 16.

[36]"The Cure," ibid.

[37]"Two Thieves," ibid., LXV (Feb. 7, 1920), 14.

November, 1919, the attitude of American citizens toward minority groups had changed from one of non-recognition to overt hostility.

Freedom of assembly, speech, and writing were no longer cherished attributes of the American democracy. The tradition of political tolerance had been broken by the government policy of raids and deportations, Wallas said. The function of the press in the United States had changed from the championship of individual rights to the protection of the vested interests in society.

> No one now believes that a newspaper article always represents the serious and independent thought of the writer. . . . In paragraph after paragraph the professional eye misses those signs of exploring thought and considered statement which mark the effort of veracity. The writer, one feels, has merely been told to "boost" one cause or person, or to "knock" another.[38]

In March, an article in the Atlantic Monthly considered the problem of the Americanization of the foreign-born. Government officials were using the hunt for alien agitators to popularize their own political positions. The nation needed the wise enforcement of constructive legislation applicable to both natives and aliens. Foreign-born persons from Southern and Eastern Europe were as loyal, law-abiding, and hard-working as native-born Americans. There were no more criminals and traitors among the

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[38]Graham Wallas, "The Price of Intolerance," Atlantic Monthly, CXXV (January, 1920), 117.

foreign-born, as a group, than among American citizens. The government was pursuing an unfair policy in the persecution of foreign-born persons in the United States.

> The position of the foreigners here is analogous to that of the Christians in the days of persecution by the Roman Empire. They are treated, not as individuals, according to their deserts, but as a class, and the whole class is condemned.[39]

The editorial position of Scribner's Magazine, an illustrated monthly publication of fiction and feature content, reflected a middle-class, intellectual orientation. The editors of Scribner's distinguished between the past and present concepts of radicalism. The elevation of the brotherhood of man was the principal goal of the radicalism of the past. The present group of radicals was intent upon the elevation of the proletariat to the economic supremacy of mankind. In a misplaced emphasis on the wrong social goals, the new radicals were inviting much societal criticism and abuse. A time of normality would return with the completion of war reconstruction and the resumption of economic prosperity. The established political and economic groups would again feel secure with the return of the status quo. "That is the day against which we radicals of the second rank are keeping our powder dry," the Scribner's editors asserted.[40]

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[39]John Kulamer, "Americanization: The Other Side of the Case," ibid. (March, 1920), 423.

[40]"The Point of View," Scribner's, LXVI (September, 1919), 378-379.

The conditions of the alien confinement in Detroit received national notoriety through publication in the Nation, a liberal weekly magazine of opinion edited by Oswald Garrison Villard. In March, 150 aliens still were confined in Fort Wayne, uncertain as to whether they would be ultimately deported or released. The men scheduled for deportation faced indeterminate imprisonment; at that time, it was impossible to negotiate further deportations to Soviet Russia. Bail was from $1,000 to $10,000 in Liberty Bonds. Prisoners whose friends or relatives could not raise that amount of money could not expect to be released. The prisoners sent out an open letter of protest in early March to call public attention to their pathetic situation, the article by Frederick R. Barkley, one-time reporter for the Detroit News, said.

The wives and children of the prisoners were told by immigration officials that their husbands might be deported at any time. The wives expected to accompany their husbands to Soviet Russia and in preparation for the journey they sold all their belongings. The families of the prisoners had been living on aid from charitable organizations in Detroit since February 18. The protests of labor organizations, women's clubs, social workers, and unorganized citizens of Detroit had not resulted in "either the humane deportation of entire families or the release of these men so they can support their suffering dependents," Barkley concluded.[41]

[41]Frederick R. Barkley, "Improving on the Czar," Nation, CX (April 10, 1920), 459.

The advocacy of communism, unaccompanied by overt attempts to overthrow the government by force, was not a crime. The government raids and deportations from November, 1919 to January, 1920 resulted in the persecution of individuals for their opinions rather than for their actions. The arrested aliens were denied constitutional freedoms by government officials and were the subjects of prejudicial reporting by the nation's press.[42] The conditions of confinement of the alien prisoners in Detroit were deplorable, "if half of what is told about the condition of these men is true, Mitchell Palmer ought to be driven out of public life at once," the editors of the Nation asserted.[43]

The New Republic, a journal of opinion published weekly in New York, was also a liberal spokesman in defending the rights of the arrested aliens. Foreign residents of the United States were entitled to the protection of the First Amendment guarantees of free assembly, free speech, and due process of the law. Deportation for violations of the immigration law should be imposed only after a jury trial under due process of the law.[44] The

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[42] Ibid., CIX (Dec. 6, 1919), 707.

[43] Ibid., CX (March 27, 1920), 386.

[44] "The Anarchist Deportations," New Republic, XXI (Dec. 24, 1919), 97-98.

deportation of the aliens on the Buford to Soviet Russia would mark a sad chapter in American history for future generations, "on December 21, 1919, one hundred and thirty years after the foundation of the American government, the right of asylum was abolished, and the ancient institutions of banishment and exile reestablished," the New Republic editors commented.[45]

There was no danger of a bolshevik revolution in the United States because an overwhelming majority of the American people supported the democratic ideals and the capitalist institutions of the country. Criticism of the political, social, and economic system in the United States by a discontented minority could serve the useful function of informing the general public and government officials of inequities within the system. An interesting comparison was made by the editors of the New Republic between the beliefs of the Communist party and those of Attorney General Palmer.

> The Communist believes that the present government does not rest on the consent of the governed, and that it is only by the forcible suppression of radical criticism that it protects itself against violent overthrow. The belief, of course, is absurd, but Mr. Palmer has shown by word and deed that he shares it.[46]

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[45] Ibid. (Dec. 31, 1919), 127.

[46] "Deporting a Political Party," ibid. (Jan. 14, 1920), 186.

A decision of the Supreme Court of the United States held that information illegally obtained in the federal raids of November and January could not be used as evidence against the arrested aliens. The nation-wide raids authorized by Attorney General Palmer were thus unconstitutional and illegal, the editors of the New Republic concluded.[47]

Evaluation of the News Reporting and the Editorial Interpretation of the Palmer Raids, November, 1919 to January, 1920

A substantial portion of the newspaper and periodical press of the United States abdicated responsibility for the critical examination of the actions of government officials during the period of the Red Scare. A self-imposed censorship consistent with government policy was adopted by the press at the time of the First World War. President Woodrow Wilson had established a Committee on Public Information to function as a liaison between the government and the nation's newspapers in the dissemination of facts about the war. Editors agreed to refrain from publishing information that might aid the enemy under the voluntary censorship code.

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[47] Ibid. (Feb. 18, 1920), 326.

The Palmer raids of 1919-1920 were an outgrowth of the repressive atmosphere engendered during the war. Oswald Garrison Villard, editor of the Nation and champion of the aliens arrested in the federal raids, commented on the integrity of the nation's press during the Red Scare period.

> . . . we of the profession were merely agents of government propaganda, much of it lying and false, during the World War, but that has not ceased since the war. Government propaganda continues to be carried on. The departments in Washington cannot unlearn the lesson they learned in 1917-1918, and a portion of the Press still accepts government handouts without question.[48]

The Associated Press, sent government press handouts by the Department of Justice, passed this information on to member newspapers as the most reliable accounts of the raids and deportations. Palmer sent along letters to the editors of the nation's leading magazines to acquaint them with the radical menace. The attorney general offered to supply information on subversive movements in the United States free of charge. Full-page plates which elaborated on the dangers to American institutions posed by alien agitators were sent to newspaper editors throughout the country.[49]

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[48]Oswald Garrison Villard, "The Newspaper and the Government," in An Introduction to Journalism, ed. by Lawrence W. Murphy (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1930), p. 112.

[49]Robert D. Warth, "The Palmer Raids," South Atlantic Quarterly, XLVIII (January, 1949), 9, 18-19.

The responsibility of the press in a democratic society encompasses a dedication to the protection of individual liberties. The arrest and deportation of a large number of individuals was an effort by the government to purify America from foreign and radical influences. The newspaper and periodical press of the nation evidenced an apparent negligence in the printed disregard of the violation of the constitutional freedoms of a substantial body of individuals.

> The general press . . . found in the issue of radicalism an immediate substitute for waning wartime sensationalism and eagerly busied itself with reporting exaggerations instead of facts. . . . for the remainder of the Scare period the general press suffered a temporary lapse of accuracy and certainly did not fulfill its vaunted function in a democratic society of reporting the truth.[50]

During the November and January raids in Detroit, aliens were arrested without warrants and were detained under conditions detrimental to their health and well-being. Those arrested were told by federal officials that they could anticipate an expeditious deportation to Soviet Russia. The families of the prisoners sold their personal belongings expecting to accompany the deportees. The aliens arrested in Detroit were not deported following the raids. Their families were impoverished during the

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[50]Robert K. Murray, Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964), pp. 67-68.

confinement of the men in jails and other places of detention in Detroit. Ultimately, the families of the prisoners were given aid by charitable organizations in the city, while the men suffered continued confinement uncertain as to their fate.

The danger of radicalism was inextricably linked to the foreign-born in the news and editorial columns of the Free Press and the Journal in Detroit. In the reporting of the November and January raids, the two newspapers assumed the guilt of the arrested aliens and ignored the injustices suffered by the prisoners during the period of their confinement. There were no interviews with the arrested aliens or stories considering their position. Word choice in the headlines was often sensational and always pro-government. There was frequent use of adjectives, pejorative in meaning, and "judgment" words in the news reports of the raids printed both in the Free Press and in the Journal. The threat of organized labor, foreign workers, and Negroes to the security of the nation was reported in the news columns and emphasized in the editorial opinions of the two newspapers.

The News was the only general circulation daily in Detroit to summarize the legal basis for the raids and to print information on the position of the arrested aliens in its reportage of the raids. In January, the News printed a statement of one of the aliens who had been held

in Detroit since the November raids. The conditions of confinement of the prisoners in the Federal Building and the "bull pen" of the Municipal Court Building were also reported. The News attempted to report the facts without distortion or bias. The editors of the News doubted the existence of a radical threat to American institutions; exposed the political motivation of Attorney General Palmer behind the raids; and urged public tolerance and understanding of the foreign-born.

A press subservient to sensationalism, rather than socially responsible to the accurate reporting of the facts, can turn isolated prejudices into nation-wide fears through the biased reporting of specific events. In the post-World War I period, the press reflected the concerns of other institutions of society toward the alien element in the population. By consolidating these interests into one instrument of expression, the press had the potential to generally circulate sectarian prejudices throughout the entirety of the American population; thus, causing the mass reaction against the foreign-born evident in the Red Scare of 1919-1920. Fears and threats to vested societal interests evolved into national fears and threats to national ideals through mass circulation and repetition by a general press. The few examples of responsible reporting were exceptions, rather than the rule, in late 1919 and early 1920.

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