

# Anti-German Hysteria In Wisconsin

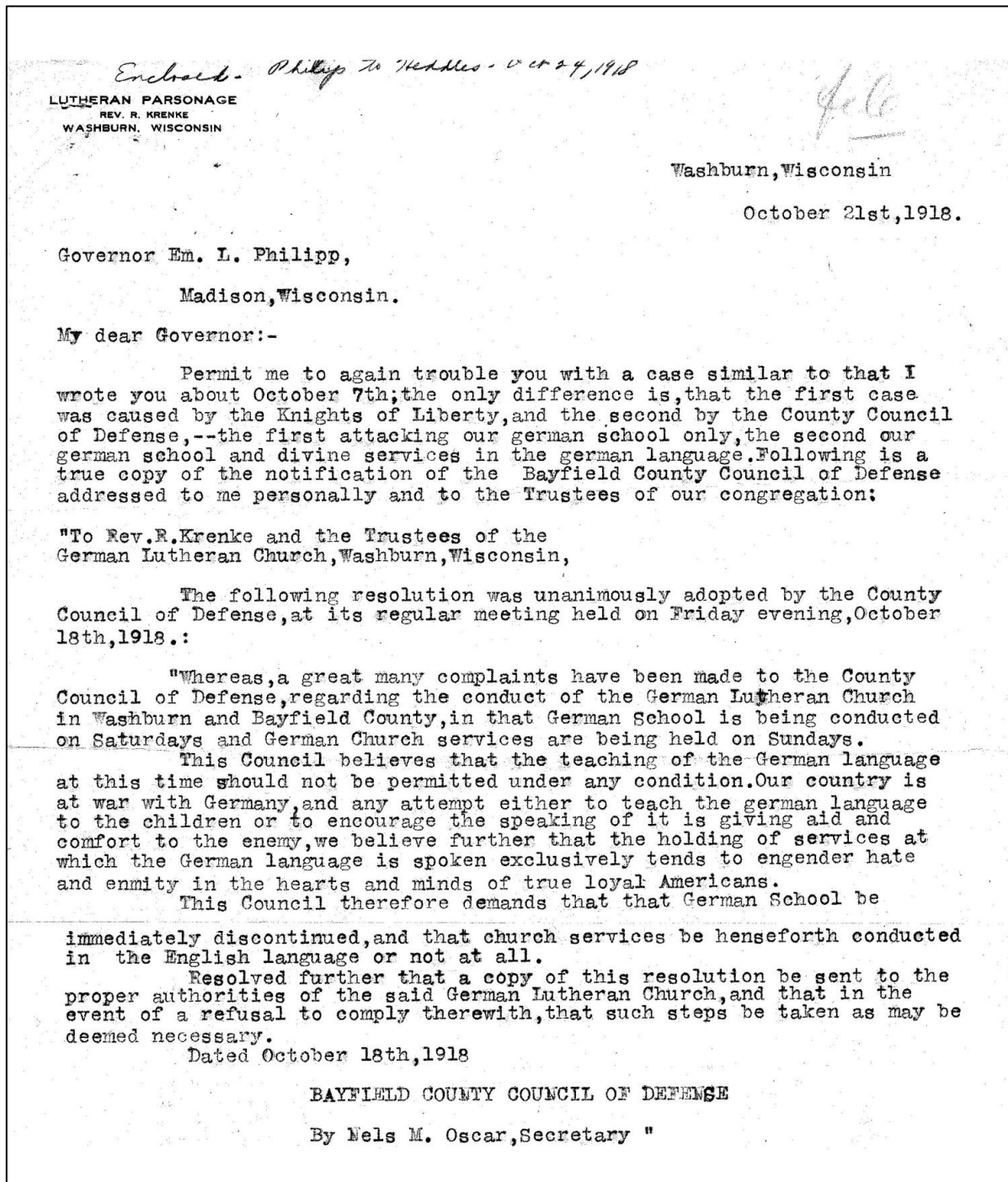
See a lesson plan related to this material on the [Wisconsin Historical Society website](http://www.wisconsinhistoricalsociety.org).



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

## Letter

"Correspondence from Pastor Krenke to Governor Phillip  
Emanuel L. Phillips Papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society"



See more classroom materials and lesson plans on the [Wisconsin Historical Society website](http://www.wisconsinhistoricalsociety.org).

"Correspondence from Pastor Krenke to Governor Phillip  
Emanuel L. Phillips Papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society"

LUTHERAN PARSONAGE  
REV. R. KRENKE  
WASHEURN, WISCONSIN

Permit me to call the attention of your Honor to the fact, that no assertion is made by the "Council" that either I or my congregation were not loyal, or that we favored German Propaganda, or that we used our school and services for such damnable purposes. In fact, I do not believe that such assertion could be made, by even our enemies, if we have such, with even a mere show of right and justice. We aim to do our full duty towards our government and to uphold same in all its undertakings, and to thus show our loyalty to our government. Our people very liberally bought Liberty Bonds, W.S.S., contributed to the Red Cross etc.--We are yet small in numbers, consisting of 32 communicant members,--members over 14 years of age. Most of these people are common laborers; but nevertheless they have subscribed more than \$1350.00 to the Third Liberty Loan. Concerning the Fourth Liberty Loan I have no complete figures yet, but the prospects are, that our people have exceeded their subscriptions to the 3rd Liberty Loan. And the younger children have nearly all bought and are still buying W.S.S., Thrift Stamps etc., the total amounting to more than \$300.

Concerning the demand of the "Council" I would state, that by complying with such demand nearly one half of the older people of my congregation would be deprived of their constitutional right to serve their God according to the dictates of their conscience and in such language as they are capable to understand,-- several being entirely unable to understand an english sermon, and others would have but a very

See more classroom materials and lesson plans on the Wisconsin Historical Society website.

"Correspondence from Pastor Krenke to Governor Phillip  
Emanuel L. Phillips Papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society"

LUTHERAN PARSONAGE  
REV. R. KRENKE  
WASHBURN, WISCONSIN

-3-

limited benefit and blessing of an english sermon on account of their deficiency in the english language. For this reason it certainly does not appear just and right to deprive them of their services and spiritual edification, and undoubtedly it is contrary to the word and spirit of the laws of our state and the constitution of our country. I will endeavor to obtain a hearing before the "Council", and will there particularly ~~emphasize~~ emphasize this point.

Now, my dear Governor, what procedure would you advise me further to take? Would I be asking too much of your Honor, in asking you, to call the attention of the State Council of Defense to this matter? Or would it not be advisable to do so?

In conclusion permit me to state that on September 29th my congregation passed a resolution to introduce monthly english services, and October 6th it passed a resolution to discontinue entirely our school for the present.

Thanking you in advance for an early reply, permit me to remain

Yours very truly



Washburn, Wis.



October 24, 1918.

Reverend R. Krenke,  
Washburn, Wisconsin.

My dear Pastor Krenke:

I have your communication of the 21st inst. The Council of Defense of Washburn County is entirely outside of its sphere when it attempts to dictate to you in what language you shall preach. There is no law either federal or state which forbids you to conduct your religious services in German; also your religious instructions and no person has a right to molest or in any way interfere with you in this matter.

I have stated many times from the public platform and in the press that I would tolerate no interference with religious services so long as the same are not used as a propaganda for our enemy. I have laid down this principle that in Wisconsin he who worships his Deity may do so in the language of his own choice and we shall adhere to that principle so long as I am governor of the state of Wisconsin.

This statement, however, must not be understood to mean that I would tolerate for a moment either in church or elsewhere the use of a foreign language for the purpose of promoting the interest of our enemy or in any way discouraging the cooperation of our people during the war. That, of course, is an entirely different matter.

I shall submit your letter to the State Council of Defense for its action. Yours truly,

October 24, 1918.

Mr. W. S. Heddles,  
Chairman, State Council of Defense,  
Capitol, C i t y .

My dear Mr. Heddles:

Please note the enclosed which indicates an action by the Washburn County Council of Defense which is entirely outside the province of that organization. Councils of Defense were organized as war aid institutions to create propoganda for the war and to promote such work as it is necessary to do in order to properly support the army and navy of the United States.

I regret that some councils have taken it upon themselves to run politics and have gone into other fields far from the intention of the law. It seems to me that there should be a general circular letter issued to the councils of the state calling the attention of the members to the fact that the law under which this institution was created confers no powers upon them except to carry on necessary war work and whenever the councils exceed the authority conferred upon them by statute they not only are acting unlawfully but they are injuring the cause for which they were created.

Political interests must be left with the people. Any council that attempts to become political loses the cooperation of all who are opposed to its political policy and



W. S. Heddles -2-

it immediately drops to the level of a political organization.

The enforcement of the espionage act is the business of the United States government and rests with the United States District Attorney. All the councils should attempt to do in that connection is to give the United States District Attorney any information that it may have concerning the violation of the law. Any interference on the part of the councils with the constitutional right of freedom of religion is in violation of the organic law under which we live and cannot be tolerated for a moment, nor would such action be sustained by the courts.

I also note that in some cases councils of defense have undertaken the bond sales and are guilty of injudicious acts in connection with the same. Again I call attention to the fact that strong-arm methods, of any other form of force if attempted, are in violation of the law and are contrary to the policy of the government.

I trust that the central organization will keep the county councils within their proper sphere. I ask this in the interest of the better service which the councils may render.

Yours truly,