



PROJECT MUSE®

---

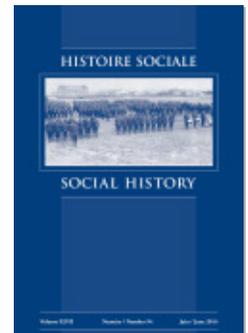
“Be British or be d-d”: Primary Education in Berlin-Kitchener, Ontario, during the First World War

Mario Nathan Coschi

Histoire sociale/Social history, Volume 47, Number 94, Juin/June 2014, pp. 311-332 (Article)

Published by Les publications Histoire sociale / Social History Inc.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/his.2014.0033>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/553736>

# “Be British or be d–d”: Primary Education in Berlin-Kitchener, Ontario, during the First World War

MARIO NATHAN COSCHI\*

*Prior to the First World War, the sizeable ethnic German population of Berlin, Ontario, was praised by Anglo-Canadians and even Governors General for having positive racial qualities and for forming the most desirable type of citizens. During the war, however, owing to their ethnicity, these same people were judged to have failed in their duties of citizenship, measured now in supporting the war effort with manpower, money, and enthusiasm. Public schools in Berlin sought to compensate for the supposed failings, as citizens, of the city's residents. Although they had previously supported an understanding of Canadian citizenship that accepted Germans, schools now sought to make students ashamed of their German heritage and taught a version of Canadian citizenship that stressed Anglo-conformity and rejected German ethnicity as one of its components.*

*Avant la Première Guerre mondiale, les Canadiens-anglais et même certains gouverneurs généraux faisaient l'éloge des nombreux résidents allemands de Berlin (Ontario), dont ils appréciaient les qualités positives et qu'ils dépeignaient comme des citoyens du meilleur calibre. Au cours de la guerre, cependant, on leur a reproché, en raison de leur origine ethnique, de manquer à leur devoir de citoyenneté, devoir qui se mesurait maintenant à l'aune de la participation humaine, financière et morale à l'effort de guerre. Les écoles publiques de la ville ont alors cherché à pallier les lacunes supposées des résidents. Bien qu'ayant auparavant défendu une définition de la citoyenneté canadienne inclusive pour les Allemands, elles se sont mises à dénigrer la culture allemande et à préconiser une version de la citoyenneté canadienne insistant sur la conformité anglo-idéale et rejetant toute trace d'ethnicité allemande.*

“BE BRITISH. Do your duty or be despised.... Be British or be d–d.”<sup>1</sup> These words were uttered by the fiery and aptly named Sergeant-Major Granville Blood in an address to the citizens of Berlin, Ontario, during the First World War. While

\* Mario Nathan Coschi is a PhD candidate at McMaster University. He dedicates this paper to his father. The Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation's Heritage Research Award provided financial support for this research.

1 “Sergt. Major Blood's Straight Talk to Citizens,” *Berlin News Record*, April 17, 1916, p. 2.

perhaps not expressed in such stark terms, the same message, which equated being British with fulfilling the duties of Canadian citizenship, was preached in many English-Canadian schools at the time. One primary purpose of state-directed education was to shape the nation's youth into upstanding, model citizens. Studying what was taught in schools thus helps to reveal how citizenship was defined, whom it included, and what its duties and responsibilities were. Schools, however, did not simply reflect the definition of citizenship. They were also places where the definition of citizenship could be contested and debated. Since, at the start of the twentieth century, 70 per cent of Berlin's population was of German origins, the city presents a unique case for studying the education for citizenship of a non-British, non-French Canadian social group.<sup>2</sup>

In discussing citizenship, I am referring to more than just the legal definition. At the time of the First World War, the legal category of "Canadian citizen" did not actually exist; Canadians were British subjects. Still, discussions in Berlin-Kitchener of the place of Germans in Canada frequently made reference to "Canadian citizenship." Bryan S. Turner defines citizenship as "that set of practices (juridical, political, economic, and cultural) which define a person as a competent member of society, and which as a consequence shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups."<sup>3</sup> I examine the practice of citizenship at a local level and the means by which persons or groups, in this case ethnic Germans, were included or excluded from the category of citizen. To follow a strictly legal definition of citizenship would imply that the criteria for inclusion, as well as the rights and duties accruing to those deemed citizens, were uniform across Canada. In practice, however, there could be a great deal of variance.

In her study of citizenship policy in Canada during the Second World War, Ivana Caccia states that wars create anxiety about a nation's identity and "a heightened urge to reinforce its cohesiveness, re-examine the imagined boundaries of its nationhood, and accelerate the process of nation-building."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, studying Guelph (Ontario), Lethbridge (Alberta), and Trois-Rivières (Quebec) during the First World War, Robert Rutherford asserts that the local level was "a crucial plane of experience on which national-level 'realities' were lived."<sup>5</sup> Primary schooling in Berlin-Kitchener and debates surrounding it are an example of a national reality, in this case concerns over creating a cohesive national identity towards efficient prosecution of the war, experienced at a local level.

Prior to the war, the prevalent understanding of Canadian citizenship in Berlin included German ethnicity as an acceptable and even vital component. During the war, however, every instance in which the city's residents supposedly fell short in

2 *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911 Volume II: Religions, Origins, Birthplace, Citizenship, Literacy and Infirmities, By Provinces, Districts and Sub-Districts* (Ottawa: C. H. Parmelee, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1913), p. 374.

3 Bryan S. Turner, "Contemporary Problems in the Theory of Citizenship" in Bryan S. Turner, ed., *Citizenship and Social Theory* (London: SAGE Publications, 1993), pp. 2-3.

4 Ivana Caccia, *Managing the Canadian Mosaic in Wartime: Shaping Citizenship Policy, 1939-1945* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), p. 3.

5 Robert Rutherford, *Hometown Horizons: Local Responses to Canada's Great War* (Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), p. xxii.

their duties of citizenship, now measured in contributions of money, manpower, and enthusiasm, was blamed on the city's Germanness. Elementary schools in Berlin worked to rectify these deficiencies by taking aim at their apparent root. School officials tried to replace students' pride in their German heritage with British ideals and even make them ashamed to be German. Thus they articulated a definition of Canadian citizenship that differed from the one taught prior to the war in the city's schools, one that now rejected German ethnicity as one of its constituent parts.

### **Germans as Canadian Citizens: Berlin Prior to the First World War**

In the decades prior to the First World War, a frequent refrain from Berlin's German community was that, although they wished to maintain the culture and traditions of the land of their ancestors, they were loyal Canadian citizens and British subjects. John Motz, the editor of the local German-language newspaper, in fact claimed that any person who did not respect the culture of his ancestors "cannot be a good citizen of the land in which he resides."<sup>6</sup> Historians have characterized the decades prior to the First World War as a period that emphasized Anglo-conformity as necessary for acceptance in the mainstream of English-Canadian society.<sup>7</sup> Howard Palmer, for example, states that Anglo-Saxons were regarded as the pinnacle, and all other groups were judged based on how far they strayed from this ideal.<sup>8</sup> Berlin's Germans did not challenge the Anglo-conformist dogma by articulating a vision of cultural pluralism in Canada. Instead, they reinterpreted it and made room for themselves by arguing that "German" and "British" were two parts of the same whole. The German community's claim to Canadian citizenship was based upon an understanding of history that portrayed Germany and Britain as allies, celebrated the familial relations between the German and British royal families, and praised the town's Germans for contributing to the prosperity of Berlin and, by extension, Canada. Pseudo-scientific racial theories asserted that the Teutons, racial cousins of the Anglo-Saxons, had fostered this prosperity because they were by nature a thrifty and industrious people. Remarkably, this claim to Canadian citizenship was conceded. Ethnic German celebrations in Berlin were regularly attended by representatives of the town's Anglo-Canadian population who parroted back the rhetoric of the German elite, while public figures who visited Berlin did not fail to heap praise upon the Germans.

On May 2, 1871, for example, Berlin and neighbouring Waterloo held a great Peace Jubilee to commemorate the end of the Franco-Prussian War, attended by as many as 12,000 people. During the festival, the Union Jack and the Dominion Standard flew alongside German flags and decorations, demonstrating supposed harmony.<sup>9</sup> While the programme of the festival was dominated by patriotic

<sup>6</sup> "The Big Sangerfest," *Globe* [Toronto], August 14, 1897, pp. 13-15.

<sup>7</sup> Howard Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century" in Gerald Tulchinsky, ed., *Immigration in Canada: Historical Perspectives* (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Ltd., 1994), pp. 297-298.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 301-302.

<sup>9</sup> "The German Peace Festival," *Globe* [Toronto], May 3, 1871, p. 4.

German songs, it closed with the singing of “God Save the Queen.”<sup>10</sup> The crowd was addressed by a delegation representing the English-speaking population, who reflected upon the common ideals shared by the German and British peoples and proclaimed that together they were working to turn Canada into a great nation.<sup>11</sup> Member of Parliament Charles Magill also expressed pleasure at seeing that the “good characteristics” of the German people had been transplanted in Canada.<sup>12</sup> The above-mentioned speech by John Motz was delivered in 1897 at the unveiling of a bust of Kaiser Wilhelm I in Berlin’s Victoria Park. Local industrialist Louis Jacob Breithaupt, who also spoke at the event, pointed out that the late Kaiser and Queen Victoria were blood relations and called for a statue in her honour to be erected as well.<sup>13</sup> Canada’s Governor General, the Earl Grey, was present in 1911 when Queen Victoria’s statue was finally unveiled. The Governor General praised Berlin for its prosperity, which was “only natural to expect from a German community,” and asserted that it was “a well-known fact that those of German descent made the best class of citizens.”<sup>14</sup> Noting the familial relations between the German and British royal families and the supposedly cordial relations that existed between their two empires, the Earl Grey even went so far as to speak of a single “Anglo-Teuton race.”<sup>15</sup> Additionally, every year, members of the German community gathered to celebrate the birthday of the German Kaiser. In January 1914, as was typical, the proceedings began with a toast to King George and the singing of “God Save the King.” The speeches that followed proclaimed the loyalty of Berlin’s Germans and maintained that they were responsible for the city’s success. Turning to Europe, they portrayed the Kaiser as an agent of peace who worked to cultivate good relations between Germany and Britain.<sup>16</sup>

Germans also regularly served on civic bodies such as the city council and public school board. From these positions, they promoted their definition of Canadian citizenship, which accepted ethnic Germans at its core. Berlin’s public schools therefore bolstered this consensual understanding of citizenship, its ultimate expression coming in the schools’ German-language classes. Historians have argued that schools during this period were seen as an essential tool for assimilating the children of immigrants and fostering Anglo-conformity.<sup>17</sup> Luigi Pennacchio, for example, argues that Toronto’s schools instilled in students

10 University of Waterloo, Doris Lewis Rare Book Room [hereafter UW], Breithaupt Hewetson Clark Collection, GA24, Section 2.5.3, L. J. Breithaupt Diaries, May 2, 1871.

11 Kitchener Public Library, Grace Schmidt Room [hereafter KPL], W. H. E. Schmalz Collection, MC.15.1a, “German Peace Festival 1871, Address of the English Deputation to the Managing Committee.”

12 “The German Peace Festival,” *Globe* [Toronto], May 3, 1871, p. 4.

13 “The Unveiling,” *Berlin News Record*, August 13, 1897, p. 2.

14 “Berlin Welcomes His Excellency Earl Grey,” *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, May 29, 1911, p. 1; “Vice-Royalty Loyally Received by the Citizens of Berlin,” *Berlin News Record*, May 29, 1911, p. 1.

15 “Earl Grey Delivers Eloquent Address at Unveiling Yesterday,” *Berlin News Record*, May 30, 1911, p. 1.

16 “The Kaiser’s 55<sup>th</sup> Birthday,” *Berlin News Record*, January 28, 1914, p. 1.

17 See, for example, Paul Axelrod, *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 83-87; Marilyn J. Barber, “Canadianization Through the Schools of the Prairie Provinces Before World War I: The Attitudes and Aims of the English-Speaking Majority” in Martin L. Kovacs, ed., *Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1978); Raymond Huel, “The Public School as a Guardian of Anglo-Saxon Traditions: The Saskatchewan Experience, 1913-1918” in Kovacs, ed., *Ethnic Canadians*.

what he calls “the four cornerstones of British-Canadian citizenship: imperial patriotism, Protestantism, the English language, and cleanliness.”<sup>18</sup> In the schools of Berlin, however, the German language was one cornerstone of the local version of Canadian citizenship.

Schooling in Berlin was initially conducted entirely in German, starting in 1818 when Bishop Benjamin Eby first began holding classes.<sup>19</sup> Education in German began to decline in the latter half of the nineteenth century as Berlin’s Germans, who had no desire to segregate themselves from the surrounding population, came to see knowledge of English as vital to their success in Canada and increasingly sent their children to English-language schools.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, with the 1871 *School Act*, schools in Ontario were put under more centralized control by the Department of Education, which encouraged instruction in English over other languages. Thomas Pearce, school inspector for Waterloo County from 1871 to 1912, opposed instruction in German on the grounds that learning German and English at the same time confused children, stunting their progress. In 1871, Pearce complained to Egerton Ryerson, the Minister of Education, that the Germans of his county were “a brave and highly intelligent people, but exceedingly sensitive on the question whether their language is to be continued in their schools.” This criticism aside, Barbara Lorenzkowski claims that Pearce was not antagonistic towards the Germans, instead finding them generally receptive to the development of mass schooling, and so he tolerated their desire to maintain German-language classes.<sup>21</sup> In the ensuing three decades, enrolment in German classes continued to decline. Falling enrolment did not reflect a decline in the identification of Berlin’s residents as ethnic Germans, however. During this period, Berlin’s Germans first started celebrating the Kaiser’s birthday, began holding *Sängerfeste* (German song festivals), and founded many cultural institutions such as the Concordia Club, suggesting that the ethnic community was, in fact, flourishing. Additionally, despite dwindling enrolment in German classes, the 1901 census reported that nearly 90 per cent of Berlin’s residents of German origin claimed German as their mother tongue, suggesting that many learned German in the home as opposed to the formal setting of the classroom.<sup>22</sup> Berlin’s Germans did not wish to abandon their ethnicity even though they wished to become Canadians; they sought to make “German” and “Canadian” compatible.

In June 1900, Pearce investigated the supposedly poor reading level at Berlin’s high school and in his report blamed the continued teaching of German in the public schools.<sup>23</sup> In response, the leaders of Berlin’s German community formed the *Deutsche Schule Verein*, or German School Society, to lobby for the

18 Luigi Pennacchio, “Toronto’s Public Schools and the Assimilation of Foreign Students, 1900-1920,” *Journal of Educational Thought*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1986), p. 39.

19 Thomas Pearce, “School History, Waterloo County and Berlin,” *Waterloo Historical Society Annual Report*, vol. 2 (1914), p. 41.

20 Barbara Lorenzkowski, “Languages of Ethnicity: Teaching German in Waterloo County’s Schools, 1850-1915,” *Histoire sociale / Social History*, vol. 41, no. 81 (May 2008), pp. 7-9.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

23 “School Board Meeting,” *Berlin News Record*, June 7, 1900.

continuation and improvement of German-language classes in Berlin. Countering Pearce, they resolved that students

... in learning the German language will on that account be no less loyally and affectionately devoted to the fair Dominion of Canada and her institutions but doubly fitted to appreciate the blessings of true liberty, justice and equality, and for their broader education prove themselves better citizens, evincing the fact that one may be a true and loyal son of Canada and at the same time a good German scholar....<sup>24</sup>

With the cooperation of the Berlin public school board and the Ontario Department of Education, German was made an optional subject in Berlin's public schools, textbooks were approved and purchased, and German was even included on high school entrance exams.<sup>25</sup> The *Deutsche Schule Verein* was influential with the Berlin public school board, which generally heeded the society's requests to improve German classes by hiring new teachers and constructing rooms to be used exclusively for German teaching.<sup>26</sup> By 1911, the *Deutsche Schule Verein* had achieved considerable success in its mission. It reported that 80 per cent of Berlin's elementary school students were enrolled in this optional subject, which members claimed was "a valuable supplement of Public School education in our polyglot country."<sup>27</sup>

Much like the ethnic German celebrations that actively courted the participation of Anglo-Canadians, these classes were not only meant for children of German ancestry. The *Deutsche Schule Verein* encouraged non-German parents to enrol their children as well and awarded prizes each semester to the top two students of German parentage and the top two students of English parentage in each class.<sup>28</sup> As a result, by 1907, roughly one-quarter of the students enrolled in these classes were of non-German parentage.<sup>29</sup> Even membership in the *Deutsche Schule Verein* itself was not limited to people of German ancestry. The initial meeting in 1900 was open to "all citizens whether of German or British descent" who felt that German-language classes were desirable and beneficial.<sup>30</sup> Thus, prior to the First World War, as John Motz stated and members of the German community repeatedly stressed, Berlin's Germans did not wish to be "a sectional State in this land."<sup>31</sup> Rather, they claimed to be, and were accepted as, loyal citizens.

At the same time as German-language classes were flourishing in Berlin's public schools, in 1912 the Ontario government introduced Regulation 17, which banned

24 "German in the Public Schools," *Berlin News Record*, June 23, 1900.

25 Lorenzkowski, "Languages of Ethnicity," p. 31.

26 Waterloo Region District School Board [hereafter WRDSB], *Minutes of the Berlin Public School Board, 1898-1908*, March 31, 1903, p. 267; July 11, 1905, p. 378; and July 10, 1906, p. 425.

27 "Teaching of German," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, April 5, 1911, p. 2; "Board Could Not Decide on Name for New School," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, June 24, 1911, p. 5.

28 KPL, Henry Bowman Collection, MC.24.1a, Newspaper Clippings, "Prize Winners," 1908.

29 Herbert Karl Kalbfleisch, "German or Canadian?" *Waterloo Historical Society Annual Report*, vol. 40 (1953), p. 27.

30 "Public Meeting Tonight," *Berlin News Record*, June 22, 1900, p. 1.

31 "The Big Sangerfest," *Globe* [Toronto], August 14, 1897, pp. 13-15.

French-language instruction after the first form, eliciting a passionate protest from Franco-Ontarians, most notably in Ottawa. While Berlin's Germans had long watched such developments warily, prior to the war, they were not subjected to the same draconian measures as were Franco-Ontarians. Because Berlin's Germans sought to learn English and integrate into Canadian society, while still retaining their Germanness, they faced less interference than the Franco-Ontarians, who resisted integration as a particular threat to their culture, language, and religion.<sup>32</sup>

### **The War in the Schools: Lessons in Patriotism, Citizenship, and Duty**

The war years were a tumultuous time for Berlin. On August 22, 1914, vandals tore down the bust of Kaiser Wilhelm I in Victoria Park and tossed it into the adjacent lake. This act, which was roundly condemned, proved to be a portent of what was to come. Throughout the conflict, riotous mobs and acts of vandalism directed at the city's German community were regular occurrences. On February 15, 1916, soldiers of the 118<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which was being raised in Berlin, as well as some civilians, raided the Concordia Club, destroyed and burned much of the property, and carried off the bust of Kaiser Wilhelm I, which was being held out of sight in the club's storage room.<sup>33</sup> Those who participated in the raid were not punished; instead, blame was found to lie with the club for supposedly being pro-German.<sup>34</sup> Less than one month later, on March 4, 1916, members of the battalion assaulted a Lutheran minister whom they accused of being disloyal. The ringleaders were given suspended sentences rather than the fine of \$100 and six months in jail the offence normally called for.<sup>35</sup> On May 19, 1916, citizens voted by a narrow margin to change the name of the city; the more patriotic Kitchener was chosen as the replacement the following month in a vote marked by low turnout and a high number of ballots spoiled in protest. Supporters of the name change used intimidation to prevent their opponents from organizing a strong campaign, to scare them away from voting on the plebiscite, and also to prevent the opposition from having enough scrutineers to man the polls. For the plebiscite as well as the municipal elections the following January, supporters of the name change succeeded in getting many of the city's residents declared aliens and removed from the voters' list. This move took place even in advance of the federal *Wartime Elections Act* of September 1917, which disenfranchised those of enemy alien ancestry who had been naturalized fewer than 15 years previously.<sup>36</sup>

32 Robert M. Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 88-89; Lorenzkowski, "Languages of Ethnicity," p. 20.

33 "Soldiers Break Loose and Wreck German Club Rooms in Concordia Hall," *Berlin News Record*, February 16, 1916, p. 1.

34 "Stirring Speeches Delivered at Two Recruiting Meetings," *Berlin News Record*, February 21, 1916, p. 1; John English and Kenneth McLaughlin, *Kitchener: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 1983), p. 121.

35 "Magistrate Weir Gives Sentence to Soldiers in Tappert Case," *Berlin News Record*, March 8, 1916, p. 1.

36 "Name of Prussian Capital Cast Off," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, May 20, 1916, p. 1; "Result of Name Vote Received in Silence," *Berlin News Record*, June 29, 1916, p. 1; "The Other Side: An Appeal For British Fair Play," *Berlin News Record*, July 22, 1916, pp. 6, 7; "Court of General Sessions Hearing Applications For Naturalization Papers," *News Record* [Kitchener], 22 December 1916, p. 1.

Berlin-Kitchener was not the only city to experience such tensions and conflicts over the presence of persons of enemy ancestry. In Toronto, as Ian Miller states, despite initial pleas of tolerance, residents became increasingly agitated by the presence of “enemy aliens,” and Germans and Austrians were blamed for acts of mob violence directed against them. City council also moved that any enemy aliens using seditious language be deported and that steps be taken to prevent them from immigrating to Canada after the war.<sup>37</sup> James Pitsula describes similar violent and repressive acts directed against Regina’s sizeable German population during the First World War.<sup>38</sup> Social reformers, Pitsula argues, also equated the war in Europe with their own war at home to Canadianize foreigners.<sup>39</sup> Like Berlin-Kitchener, Regina experienced a conflict over foreign-language instruction in schools. In this debate, there was a consensus that schools should be used to enforce Anglo-conformity. The dispute was over whether the process should be gradual or immediate.<sup>40</sup>

Berlin-Kitchener differed from these other cities in that ethnic Germans not only formed a majority of the population but had also won acceptance in the mainstream prior to the war. Thus the Germans of Berlin-Kitchener were not a powerless, marginalized ethnic group. Actions against them could not be carried out indiscriminately, but instead occasioned debate over the place of ethnic Germans as Canadian citizens, even if, as will be seen, the voice of dissent was muffled, but not muzzled, by the war.

On February 8, 1915, W. G. Weichel, Member of Parliament for Waterloo North, spoke in the House of Commons in defence of the Germans in his riding. He proclaimed their loyalty and reiterated the belief that they had been integral to Berlin’s prosperity and that their thrift and frugality made Germans the most desirable citizens. Germans, he argued, should not be made to forsake their heritage, any more than people of Scottish or Irish descent should be made to forsake theirs.<sup>41</sup> Despite the protestations of Weichel, Berlin’s civic leaders, and members of the German community that it was possible to be a proud German and good Canadian citizen, Berlin’s Germans were accused of failing to uphold their duties as citizens and even of being disloyal. In February, 1916, for example, the *Toronto Daily Star* published an article titled “A Pro-German Party Exists in Berlin, Ontario,” which claimed that there were as many as 500 families that secretly toasted the Kaiser.<sup>42</sup> The *Berlin News Record* denounced the claims made by the *Toronto Daily Star* as misleading.<sup>43</sup>

37 Ian Hugh Maclean Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief: Torontonians and the Great War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), pp. 31-32, 64-65.

38 James M. Pitsula, *For All We Have and Are: Regina and the Experience of the Great War* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2008), pp. 39-43.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

41 W. G. Weichel, House of Commons Canada, *Canada Hansard*, 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 5<sup>th</sup> Session, February 8, 1915), pp. 8-9; “Where are Berlin’s Flags?” *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, August 10, 1914, p. 1; “Unwarranted Reflections,” *Waterloo Chronicle-Telegraph*, September 9, 1915, p. 2.

42 “A Pro-German Party Exists in Berlin, Ontario,” *Toronto Daily Star*, February 9, 1916, pp. 1, 4.

43 “Wrong Impressions Conveyed by Toronto Star,” *Berlin News Record*, February 10, 1916, p. 1.

In response to accusations of disloyalty against the city and the majority of its residents, Berlin's schools redoubled their efforts to instil a patriotic spirit in their students and even acted as a watchdog for the city's patriotism. On August 20, 1914, the board decreed that, when the schools opened, their flags would be hoisted and kept flying until the war was over.<sup>44</sup> The *Daily Telegraph*, which had been critical of the city two weeks earlier for not flying the Union Jack over city hall and the post office, praised the school board for its action. The newspaper called the Union Jack "the flag of freedom and liberty" and declared that Berlin's children "cannot be too strongly impressed with the importance of keeping it flying."<sup>45</sup> At the annual convention of the Waterloo County Teachers' Association in October 1915, the teachers prepared a petition to the Minister of Education requesting that a pledge of allegiance be created and used in schools across Canada. Their suggested pledge read, "I pledge loyalty to my flag and to the Empire for which it stands, the British Empire with liberty and justice for all."<sup>46</sup> Later, in July 1917, the school board petitioned the city to have an American flag placed alongside the other Allied flags in the council chamber where the board met, in recognition of the American entry into the war.<sup>47</sup> The following month, the public school board resolved that all students would be required to salute the Union Jack upon entering and exiting the school.<sup>48</sup>

At a time when schools in other cities were scaling back their Empire Day celebrations, deeming those of earlier years too ostentatious for wartime, Berlin-Kitchener's were becoming more extravagant and expensive.<sup>49</sup> Although school board chairman Arthur Pequegnat had promised Mayor J. E. Hett that the board would attempt to keep costs down, and despite the fact that Berlin's teachers were instructed to teach children that practising thrift was a "patriotic duty," the budget for Empire Day celebrations almost doubled from what it had been prior to the war. The venue, meanwhile, was moved from the grounds of the public schools to the statue of Queen Victoria in Victoria Park.<sup>50</sup>

Empire Day in 1915 began with a procession of all the city's public schools from Market Square to Victoria Park. Each student carried a small Union Jack, while at the head of each school was a large Union Jack.<sup>51</sup> Once they had arrived at the park, the statue of Queen Victoria was decorated with a wreath and the children sang patriotic songs such as "Rule Britannia," "John Bull's Children," and "The Maple Leaf," while only a few metres away sat what remained of the

44 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin Public School Board, 1908-1915*, August 20, 1914, p. 309.

45 "Where are Berlin's Flags?" *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, August 10, 1914, p. 1; "Flying the Flag," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, August 22, 1914, p. 2.

46 "National Pledge For School Children Endorsed By Teachers," *Waterloo Chronicle-Telegraph*, October 21, 1915, p. 2.

47 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, July 19, 1917, p. 150.

48 *Ibid.*, August 30, 1917, p. 156.

49 "Urges School Children to Remember Soldiers," *Globe* [Toronto], May 23, 1916, p. 9; "Kiddies Give \$12,000 in Soldiers' Comforts," *Globe* [Toronto], May 24, 1916, p. 8.

50 "Important Matters Discussed By Berlin Public School Board," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, February 19, 1915, pp. 1, 2; WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, October 22, 1915, p. 49; and May 20, 1915, p. 29.

51 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, May 20, 1915, p. 29.

monument to Kaiser Wilhelm I.<sup>52</sup> The children also listened to addresses from various speakers on patriotic and war-related topics. Arthur Pequegnat regaled them about the meaning of the Union Jack, which he said stood for personal liberty and freedom, while Reverend J. W. J. Andrew extolled upon the religious significance of the war.<sup>53</sup> Reviewing the Empire Day festivities in 1915, the *Berlin News Record* approvingly noted, “No better method of inculcating in the hearts of the young a love of their native land, a respect for its institutions and a reverence for the flag could have been followed.”<sup>54</sup>

The duties of citizenship, however, entailed more than simple flag-waving. Across the nation, citizens were urged to donate money to causes such as the Canadian Patriotic Fund. At the start of the war, Berlin responded enthusiastically to the Canadian Patriotic Fund’s calls; Berlin and Waterloo were on record as donating the most money per capita.<sup>55</sup> During his speech in the House of Commons, where he defended the Germans of Waterloo County, W. G. Weichel emphasized their enthusiastic contributions, stating that, for the people of Waterloo County, Germans included, “patriotism meant duty in the highest sense.”<sup>56</sup> As the war dragged on, however, donations began to dry up, not only in Berlin-Kitchener, but across Canada. By the middle of 1917, war-weary Canadians were calling for the Canadian Patriotic Fund to be supported by taxes instead of private donations. Exasperation with the fund was expressed strongly in Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta.<sup>57</sup> Under constant national scrutiny, Berlin-Kitchener laboured to keep up its donations.<sup>58</sup>

Public schools also compelled their students to contribute to the war effort. Teachers led the way by example. In September 1914, they voted to donate one day’s salary, which was to be divided evenly among the Canadian Patriotic Fund, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, and the Red Cross.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, the school board also approved a request by the Patriotic Fund Committee to place boxes for donations in Berlin’s schools. So that students were not being asked to contribute blindly, school principals were to explain the fund’s purpose.<sup>60</sup> Students were generally well informed about the purpose of their donations and also why it was important that they, as good citizens, donate. On Empire Day 1915, Reverend J. W. J. Andrew told Berlin’s schoolchildren that “true citizenship means service and sacrifice.”<sup>61</sup> The following month, schools held a major fundraising campaign called “self-sacrifice week.” According to the *Waterloo Chronicle-Telegraph*, this

52 “Empire Day Celebrations Big Success,” *Waterloo Chronicle-Telegraph*, June 3, 1915, p. 3.

53 “Empire Day Exercises Were Enjoyed By Large Gathering,” *Berlin News Record*, May 27, 1915, pp. 1, 2.

54 “Empire Day,” *Berlin News Record*, May 27, 1915, p. 4.

55 English and McLaughlin, *Kitchener*, p. 118.

56 W. G. Weichel, House of Commons Canada, *Canada Hansard*, 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 5<sup>th</sup> Session, February 8, 1915, p. 9.

57 Desmond Morton, *Fight or Pay: Soldiers’ Families in the Great War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), p. 196.

58 Patricia P. McKegney, *The Kaiser’s Bust: A Study of War-Time Propaganda in Berlin, Ontario, 1914-1918* (Wellesley, ON: Bamberg Press, 1991), pp. 109-110.

59 “Teachers Give a Day’s Salary,” *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, September 26, 1914, p. 4.

60 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin Public School Board, 1908-1915*, September 25, 1914, p. 314.

61 “Empire Day Celebration Big Success,” *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, May 27, 1915, pp. 1, 4.

campaign, which garnered \$80 in donations, was to teach students “a lesson in practical patriotism.”<sup>62</sup> Students were not even exempted from doing their duty over the summer holidays; schools taught that patriotic responsibility lasted year-round. For this reason, in June 1915, the Berlin public school board approved a plan to ask students to raise “one mile of coppers,” which were to be donated to the Red Cross Fund once schools reopened.<sup>63</sup> As the war continued, students were subjected to repeated appeals for patriotic donations. At Trafalgar Day in October 1915, schools made contributions to the local chapter of the IODE.<sup>64</sup> The next fall, students were asked to contribute to the Servian Relief Fund.<sup>65</sup>

Students were also urged to find ways of raising money from the community. One such way was by holding concerts. A concert held in February 1916 raised \$200 (equivalent to \$4,000 in 2013) for the Red Cross. Naturally, the songs the students sang at this concert were standard patriotic selections such as “Rule Britannia,” “Never Let the Old Flag Fall,” and “God Save the King.”<sup>66</sup> In January 1917, the students at Courtland Avenue School gathered one ton of old newspapers and magazines to donate to the Red Cross.<sup>67</sup> Schools also found ways for students to contribute their labour to the war effort. In March 1918, the Public School Board endorsed the “Soldiers of the Soil” programme. Sponsored by the Canada Food Board, the programme utilized students, largely boys over the age of 12, for farm labour, making them a critical resource at a time when Canada’s adult males were being called to serve in Europe.<sup>68</sup>

The ultimate contribution a community could make, however, was measured in enlistment, not money. Member of Parliament W. G. Weichel contended that it was “natural” for British and French Canadians to serve in the Canadian contingent because they were fighting for their own blood. The Germans from Waterloo County, however, were not drawn by blood, but rather by a sense of duty. Therefore, the number of Germans serving from Waterloo County was an indication of the depth of their loyalty and devotion as citizens.<sup>69</sup> In the early stages of the war, while enlistment was still strong, using those numbers to measure patriotism seemed to prove that the Germans of Berlin were good citizens. Later, when the government was desperately seeking men willing to fight and there were few to be found in Berlin, the declining numbers were evidence of disloyalty.

On November 1, 1915, Robert Borden’s government made the decision to increase Canada’s armed forces from 150,000 to 250,000 men. Two days earlier, W. G. Weichel had informed Minister of Militia and Defence Sam Hughes that Waterloo County was willing to raise two new regiments.<sup>70</sup> The riding of Waterloo

62 “Berlin Children Give Generously,” *Waterloo Chronicle-Telegraph*, June 24, 1915, p. 3.

63 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, June 17, 1915, p. 34.

64 KPL, IODE Princess of Wales Chapter Collection, MC.119.3.4, Financial Statement.

65 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, November 23, 1916, p. 111.

66 “School Concert Was Big Success,” *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, February 25, 1916, p. 1.

67 “Courtland Ave. School Pupils Do Fine Work,” *Waterloo Chronicle-Telegraph*, January 25, 1917, p. 3.

68 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, March 21, 1918.

69 W. G. Weichel, House of Commons Canada, *Canada Hansard*, 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 5<sup>th</sup> Session, February 8, 1915, p. 9.

70 “One Regiment of Possibly Two Offered From Waterloo County,” *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, November 1, 1915, p. 1.

North was thereby granted the 118<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Filling the battalion became another important measure of the city's patriotism. In the eyes of some, it was the only measure of patriotism; fundraising and flag-waving were meaningless unless they were backed up by enlistment. At a recruiting rally held on January 31, 1916, Lieutenant Dancey informed the crowd, "The whole of Canada is watching to see if Berlin and North Waterloo are going to prove their patriotism in men and not money. Unless your Battalion is brought to full strength, Canada will judge you as being pro German and not British."<sup>71</sup>

The citizens of Berlin, however, were reluctant, and recruitment was exceedingly slow. The city's newspapers followed the recruiting situation closely, reacting with dismay at its lack of progress and urging citizens to do their patriotic duty. In January 1916, the *Daily Telegraph* reported on the dismal levels of recruiting and speculated that people in Berlin did not understand the necessity of filling the 118<sup>th</sup>.<sup>72</sup> An editorial in the *News Record* regarding the name change debate argued that it would be a better and more productive show of loyalty to fill the battalion than to change the name of the city.<sup>73</sup> Soon other cities began to criticize Berlin for its poor recruitment. In December 1915, the 118<sup>th</sup> Battalion resorted to press-gang tactics to bolster its struggling recruitment campaign, verbally and even physically accosting the city's male residents and hustling them into recruiting offices. When the Twin City (Berlin and Waterloo) Trades and Labour Council denounced these methods, which Colonel W. M. O. Lohead of the 118<sup>th</sup> euphemistically referred to as a "personal approach," other cities were quick to censure Berlin for being pro-German.<sup>74</sup> The city of Stratford, for example, said that the actions of the Trades and Labour Council called the entire city's loyalty into doubt, while this evidence was all the *Toronto Daily Star* needed to claim that there was a pro-German faction in Berlin.<sup>75</sup> In November 1917, when a crowd of anti-conscriptionists prevented Robert Borden from speaking at a campaign stop in Kitchener, a disgusted *Toronto Globe* reported that many of those who had shouted down the prime minister were not only of military age, but were also German.<sup>76</sup> The anger and disappointment over Berlin-Kitchener's failure to fill the 118<sup>th</sup> Battalion certainly did not abate when 238 of the 540 who did enlist were found to be physically unfit and were rejected.<sup>77</sup>

While the Germans of Berlin-Kitchener were blamed for the poor recruiting record of the 118<sup>th</sup> Battalion, historian Nikolas Gardner assigns responsibility to Sam Hughes and the Department of Militia and Defence for poor decisions and

71 "Lieutenant Dancey – Soldier and Orator – Tells Berlin that Eyes of Canada Are Upon Her Today," *Berlin News Record*, January 31, 1916, pp. 1-2.

72 "Recruiting in Berlin and Waterloo is Far From Being Satisfactory," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, January 8, 1916, p. 1.

73 "Changing the Name of the City," *Berlin News Record*, February 14, 1916, p. 4.

74 "Recruiting Methods," *Berlin News Record*, December 18, 1915, p. 4; "What People are Saying and Doing in Recruiting Work," *Berlin News Record*, January 24, 1916, p. 1.

75 "Stinging Criticism of Berlin Comes From Neighbouring City," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, January 31, 1916, p. 1; "A Pro-German Party Exists in Berlin, Ont.," *Toronto Daily Star*, February 9, 1916, pp. 1, 4.

76 "Kitchener Anti-Conscriptionists Howl Down Sir Robert Borden," *Globe* [Toronto], November 26, 1917, pp. 1, 6.

77 McKegney, *The Kaiser's Bust*, p. 166.

questionable methods that placed inexperienced men in charge of recruitment.<sup>78</sup> Gardner notes that this problem was widespread, as a great many communities across Canada experienced difficulty finding recruits in 1915 and 1916, not just Berlin-Kitchener or the province of Quebec, also charged with lack of enthusiasm.<sup>79</sup> He states that three-quarters of units met the same fate as the 118<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which was broken up because it was under strength and its men distributed as reinforcements.<sup>80</sup> Because of the city's Germanness, however, the ire of the Canadian people was focused on Berlin-Kitchener, and its residents were accused of being pro-German. In response to the recruiting situation in Berlin-Kitchener and continuing accusations, the city's public schools became increasingly militaristic.

Prior to the war, militarism was not as evident in Berlin's schools as it was in other cities in Canada.<sup>81</sup> The ultimate example of militarism in Canada's schools was the cadet movement. In the years before the war, in what Desmond Morton describes as "the moment of Canadian militarism," schools across the country set up cadet corps to provide military training for their male students. The movement really took off in 1909 when Lord Strathcona established a trust to fund the cadets in Canada's schools.<sup>82</sup> That year, the Berlin public school board set up a committee to study the prospect of participating in the new programme. The committee recommended against establishing cadet corps in Berlin's schools, opting instead to recommend that all male students over the age of 10 years be given 45 minutes of drill weekly. The board agreed with this less militaristic substitute for cadet training and adopted the committee's report.<sup>83</sup> Records do not indicate why the board members decided against establishing cadet corps. Both of Berlin's daily newspapers, however, portrayed the decision positively as the adoption of drill training, rather than negatively as the rejection of the cadet movement.<sup>84</sup> In other cities, cadets were a central part of Empire Day celebrations. In Toronto, the cadets paraded in formation to Queen's Park, where they were inspected by dignitaries such as the Governor General.<sup>85</sup> By contrast, in Berlin, celebrations prior to the war centred on exhibitions of the physical training carried out by the schools' drill instructors.<sup>86</sup> In February 1914, just months before the start of the war, after

78 Nikolas Gardner, "The Great War and Waterloo County: The Travails of the 118<sup>th</sup> Overseas Battalion," *Ontario History*, vol. 89, no. 3 (1997), p. 220.

79 *Ibid.*, p. 233.

80 *Ibid.*, p. 220.

81 Mark Moss argues that, in the years before the First World War, militarism was an inherent part of the schools of Ontario and contributed to the great rush to the colours at the start of the war. Similarly, Robert Stamp contends that militarism was an essential component in Empire Day celebrations, which the Boer War had played an important role in popularizing. See Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. vii; Robert Stamp, "Empire Day in the Schools of Ontario: The Training of Young Imperialists," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1973), p. 39.

82 Desmond Morton, "The Cadet Movement in the Moment of Canadian Militarism," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 13, no. 2 (1978), pp. 62-63.

83 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin Public School Board, 1908-1915*, December 28, 1909, p. 47.

84 "Physical Culture to be Introduced into Schools," *Berlin News Record*, December 29, 1909, p. 1; "Children Will Be Drilled," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, December 29, 1909, p. 1.

85 "Empire Day Was Loyal Observed," *Globe* [Toronto], May 24, 1905, p. 12.

86 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin Public School Board, 1908-1915*, April 8, 1912, p. 172.

being petitioned by students at Victoria School, the Berlin public school board reconsidered setting up cadet corps in the city's public schools. The board chose to take no action, as the proposal had not been sanctioned by Principal Carmichael of Victoria School. At the same meeting, the board, which was temporarily joined with the high school board, voted 7-2 against using a grant from the Strathcona Trust to construct a room for target practice at the Berlin and Waterloo Collegiate Institute. The school board, however, was not entirely opposed to military training in schools. At this meeting, it also approved a request for more money for prizes to be awarded to the best drilled class, with the chairman noting that it was "a worthy cause."<sup>87</sup>

During the war, militarism in Berlin-Kitchener's public schools was newly encouraged and even celebrated. In November 1915, just after Berlin was assigned the 118<sup>th</sup> Battalion, James L. Hughes, chief inspector of schools and brother of Sam Hughes, spoke at the Berlin and Waterloo Collegiate Institute. He admonished the city for not having cadet corps in its schools, especially when there were numerous grants available from the provincial and federal governments, as well as the Strathcona Trust. Berlin and Waterloo Collegiate Institute, he said, was the only high school in Ontario without a cadet corps; he urged the high school administrators, as well as the city's public and separate school boards, to organize one.<sup>88</sup> The Berlin public school board took no action until January 1916, when the controversy surrounding the 118<sup>th</sup> Battalion was becoming fevered. At this monthly meeting, the board established a committee that included two board members as well as the principals of the various public schools to investigate the idea.<sup>89</sup> The committee's report, presented at the board's March 1916 meeting, stated "That your Committee is strongly of the opinion that greater attention must be paid to the physical training of the boys attending the schools of this city," and therefore recommended that cadet corps be established in all schools for boys 10 and older. Acting on the report, the school board established a committee to investigate the costs and methods of organizing cadet corps to set them up as soon as possible.<sup>90</sup> At the next meeting, the public school board established a joint committee with the collegiate board to find a physical culture instructor to run the cadet corps in the public schools as well as the collegiate institute.<sup>91</sup>

Whereas before the war the public school board had twice dismissed the prospect of organizing cadet corps in the schools, the cadets suddenly became the most popular topic of discussion at successive meetings. After hiring several physical culture instructors on an interim basis, in September 1917, the joint committee selected Delbert B. Unger to be the instructor on a permanent basis at

87 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin Public School Board, 1908-1915*, February 19, 1914, pp. 278-279; "Board of Education Talks of Adding to Victoria School," *Berlin News Record*, February 20, 1914, p. 1.

88 "Strongly Urges Cadet Corps," *Waterloo Chronicle-Telegraph*, November 18, 1915, p. 14.

89 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, January 19, 1916, p. 66. The two board members on the committee were Allan A. Eby and George M. DeBus.

90 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, March 23, 1916, p. 75. Four of the ten board members in 1916 were on the board in 1914 when they had last discussed and rejected the idea of organizing cadet corps in Berlin's schools.

91 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, April 20, 1916, p. 81.

a salary of \$1,300 per year, with each school board paying half.<sup>92</sup> He was replaced in September 1918 by Sergeant-Major Michael H. Phillips, a returned soldier, at a salary of \$1,250, with each board once again paying half.<sup>93</sup> The importance that the school board attached to the cadet corps was such that these salaries ranked the physical culture instructors among the highest-paid teachers in its employ.

On May 18, 1917, the public school cadets received their first official inspection by Captain A. C. Barclay. Although they still lacked uniforms, Captain Barclay stated that he was impressed by the progress that they had made after only two months of training. He expressed his hope that, when he inspected them the following year, there would be 450 cadets, not just 228. Barclay also claimed that the point of the cadets was not to make boys into soldiers, but rather to mould them into “strong and upright men.”<sup>94</sup> Schools, however, were teaching that a strong and upright man would be willing to make the ultimate and most noble sacrifice: to serve and possibly die for his country. In 1917 Kitchener’s public schools unveiled honour rolls listing former students who were serving overseas, and students were informed that loyalty and sacrifice were essential to preserve freedom.<sup>95</sup>

Since the category of “citizen” was exclusively male, the education for citizenship was inherently gendered. In October 1917, a “Boys’ Work Conference” was held in Kitchener, which brought together 300 educators from Kitchener and the surrounding area. The purpose of the conference was to encourage the proper development of boys so that each could become a “strong, intelligent, useful and dependable citizen.”<sup>96</sup> Women, however, had an important role to play in allowing men to fulfil their duties as citizens. Along with calling on men to do their duty and enlist, recruiting appeals also implored women not to hold their men back from doing so.<sup>97</sup> In schools, meanwhile, girls were taught that they were responsible for producing the next generation of male citizens.

During the war, especially in light of the shocking rate of physical unfitness among recruits—with some estimates as high as 50 per cent—education in health and eugenics took on increased importance in Berlin’s public schools. Both topics were perceived to have military implications that could affect the future of the British Empire. The standard textbook, *The Ontario Public School Hygiene*, taught that “if nations or individuals break the rules of health, they will be punished.”<sup>98</sup> The textbook claimed that, in the Boer War, poor health had resulted in Britain

92 *Ibid.*, September 20, 1917, p. 158.

93 *Ibid.*, September 19, 1918, p. 213.

94 “Public School Cadets Made Excellent Showing at First Official Inspection To-Day,” *Daily Telegraph* [Kitchener], May 18, 1917, p. 1.

95 “Roll of Honour Was Unveiled at Kitchener School,” *Waterloo Chronicle-Telegraph*, June 21, 1917, p. 3.

96 “The Boys’ Work Movement,” *News Record* [Kitchener], October 19, 1917, p. 4; “Opening Session of Boys’ Work Conference Took Place Last Evening,” *News Record* [Kitchener], October 20, 1917, p. 1. Speeches delivered at the conference frequently discussed the education of boys using military terms such as “Allies” and “the front.”

97 “City Council Speaks Plainly to Parents, Sisters and Sweethearts,” *Berlin News Record*, January 18, 1916, p. 1.

98 A. P. Knight, MA, MD, *The Ontario Public School Hygiene* (Toronto: The Copp Clack Company Limited, 1910), p. 2.

losing far more soldiers than it should have. In contrast, the Japanese had defeated Russia in 1905 because of their forces' superior health.<sup>99</sup> The startling implication was that, if the British Empire did not practise good health, its forces would likewise be defeated by a lesser race—such as the Germans now represented.

The study of eugenics, which was in vogue in Canada at the start of the twentieth century, became even more popular during the First World War, when people became concerned that Canada's best citizens were dying in France while those of non-British ancestry, the feeble-minded, depraved, and immoral remained at home breeding.<sup>100</sup> *The Public School Hygiene* taught that good parents produced children who were strong, healthy, and moral, while bad parents produced weak, depraved, and immoral children.<sup>101</sup>

These subjects were seen as important for both boys and girls, even though only the boys could become soldiers. A strong, healthy child first required a strong, healthy mother. As well, since the mother was in charge of the household, she needed to be well acquainted with the laws of health, lest she raise an unhealthy family.<sup>102</sup> Thus, while cadet training was for boys only, girls received physical training of their own. In February 1916, at the same time the board was still investigating the idea of organizing cadet corps, it nonetheless provided its assistance to Stephanie W. Jones, the instructress of physical culture for girls, to enrol in a summer course sponsored by the Strathcona Trust.<sup>103</sup>

### **Attacking the Source: The Campaign to Eradicate Germanness**

It did not matter that, over the course of the war, enthusiasm, donations, and enlistment all across Canada waned; owing to the ethnicity of the majority of its residents, Berlin was singled out for having failed in its duties. At a recruiting rally in January 1916, a speaker referred to Berlin's Germanness and stated, "There is an element here that is a menace to this city and a disgrace to this Country. This element must be weeded out before its rotten influence can do any more harm."<sup>104</sup> To produce good citizens, then, Berlin's schools needed to force their students to abandon their German ethnicity and become like their Anglo-Canadian neighbours.

When, in 1915, the Berlin public school board decided to eliminate German-language classes from the curriculum, the reasoning they provided centred on the role of schools in the moulding of good citizens. The first sign of concerted opposition to German-language classes came at the February 1915 school board meeting, when trustee Allan Eby, a descendant of the man who had supposedly

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>100</sup> Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), p. 43.

<sup>101</sup> Knight, *The Ontario Public School Hygiene*, pp. 226-229. The textbook gave an example of two notorious American eugenics cases, involving the Jukes and the Edwards families, to illustrate this point. The former was comprised of several generations of criminals, drunks, and vagrants, while the latter was known for being noble, virtuous, and honest.

<sup>102</sup> Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1978), p. 12.

<sup>103</sup> WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, February 18, 1916, p. 68.

<sup>104</sup> "Lieutenant Dancy – Soldier And Orator – Tells Berlin That Eyes of Canada Are Upon Her To-Day," *Berlin News Record*, January 31, 1916, pp. 1, 2.

given the city its name, informed the board that he had been asked whether German classes were mandatory. Chairman Arthur Pequegnat responded that they were not, while trustee George DeBus opined that German classes were a hindrance to Berlin's students.<sup>105</sup> At a special meeting on March 2, trustee Charles Ruby presented a report that claimed that the majority of Berlin's children would not complete their public school education by the time they reached the official age of leaving school. This was particularly problematic, according to Ruby, because Senior Fourth was the grade in which one "acquires the greatest knowledge of the practical affairs of the world in which he is to spend the rest of his natural life." As a solution, he proposed condensing the work done in the lowest grades by eliminating "optional subjects," particularly the study of German, since, unlike English, it did not "fit them for becoming useful citizens."<sup>106</sup> Chairman Pequegnat and trustee Gustave Albrecht supported Ruby's report. Pequegnat asserted that Berlin's schools should provide "a thorough English education," rather than instruction in a foreign language, while Albrecht voiced the opinion that, although he was of German heritage himself, German should be taught privately in the home, not in public schools.<sup>107</sup> The board deferred decision on this controversial issue until the next regular meeting; it had become abundantly clear, however, that the pre-war view of German-language classes had been largely overturned in favour of a growing consensus that they impeded the formation of good citizenship.

In the intervening weeks, the *Daily Telegraph* published an editorial supporting the elimination of German classes. Referring to conflict over the French school question, which was then reaching a fevered pitch, with the Ottawa Separate School Board being placed under trusteeship of the provincial government after urging teachers and students to walk out in protest of Regulation 17, this editorial suggested that teaching multiple languages promoted animosity between races.<sup>108</sup> The *Deutsche Schule Verein*, meanwhile, met on March 16 to plan its defence of the classes. Its members stuck to the now outmoded understanding of Canadian citizenship. Mayor Hett spoke of the great contributions the "thrifty" Germans had made to nation-building in Canada, and all speakers agreed that knowledge of more than one language was beneficial. School board trustee A. L. Bitzer, for example, read from old board minutes in which the inspector had praised the study of German as being "of great use to children after they leave school."<sup>109</sup> Louis Sattler, another trustee, stated that he would rather eliminate physical education from the curriculum. Such an opinion would have been untenable one year later, when a high rate of rejection due to physical fitness would hinder efforts to fill the

105 "Important Matters Discussed by Berlin Public School Board," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, February 19, 1915, pp. 1, 2.

106 WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, March 2, 1915, pp. 16-17.

107 "Complete Public School Education for Berlin's Boys and Girls," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, March 3, 1915, pp. 1, 4.

108 "Crowding the Curriculum," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, March 9, 1915, p. 2; Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario*, p. 89.

109 "Ratepayers Enter Protest Against the Proposed Action of School Trustees," *Berlin News Record*, March 17, 1915, pp. 1, 2.

118<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He also disputed Ruby's contention that the public schools were providing an insufficient education, since they were consistently rated among the best in the province.<sup>110</sup>

On March 18, representatives of the *Deutsche Schule Verein* were permitted to address the public school board. The speakers urged the board to postpone the decision until after the war and defended the loyalty of Berlin's German Canadians. Former Mayor W. H. Schmalz insisted that, although they wanted to maintain their native language, they were loyal British subjects. Mayor Hett and Louis Jacob Breithaupt agreed, reiterating that knowing many languages was beneficial.<sup>111</sup> Trustee Bitzer claimed that British officers were hindered by knowing just one language while German officers benefited from knowing several.<sup>112</sup> Despite these protestations, the board voted 5-3 to eliminate German-language classes. In the aftermath, the *Berlin Daily Telegraph* lamented the need to discard this tradition but stated that schools should focus on "subjects upon the degree of mastery of which the quality of his equipment for Canadian citizenship depends."<sup>113</sup> In short, German ethnicity and Canadian citizenship could no longer coexist.

At the 1915 Empire Day celebrations, Sattler and Pequegnat reinforced this message. Addressing the students gathered in Victoria Park, Pequegnat stated that, in times of peace, people could debate whether they were nationalists or imperialists. In times of war, however, when "our boys are at the front dying under poisonous gasses, falling under German bullets and being crippled by German shrapnel," there was no debate: Canadians had to stand entirely for the empire.<sup>114</sup> Pequegnat's message had important implications for Berlin's German Canadians. Although he spoke specifically of differences between Canadian nationalists and imperialists, the principle that the war made imperative a strict loyalty to the Empire meant that Berlin's Germanness could no longer be countenanced. Later in the proceedings, Louis Sattler hoisted the Union Jack upon a flagpole that had historically held the German flag. Sattler remarked that he did this of his own accord to demonstrate the loyalty of Berlin to the British Empire.<sup>115</sup> The message that both men conveyed was that, during this time of national emergency, there was no room for debate over the nature of Canadian citizenship.

In a letter to the *Berlin News Record* on February 26, 1916, William Henry Breithaupt, brother of Louis Jacob Breithaupt, opposed the proposed change of the city's name. He declared "We are of German descent, and are not ashamed of it," insisting that the German-Canadian community was fully loyal to Canada and the British Empire. He drew from the common understanding of history and race upon which the pre-war understanding of citizenship in Berlin was

110 "Delegation of German Teaching Supporters to Wait on Board," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, March 17, 1915, p. 1.

111 "Teaching German Language in Berlin's Public Schools Will Be Eliminated After Present Term," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, March 19, 1915, pp. 1-3.

112 "Board of Public School Trustees Decide to Eliminate Study of German Language From Public School Curriculum," *Berlin News Record*, March 19, 1915, pp. 1, 4.

113 "German in the Schools," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, March 20, 1915, p. 2.

114 "Empire Day Celebration Big Success," *Berlin Daily Telegraph*, May 27, 1915, pp. 1, 4.

115 "Empire Day Exercises Were Enjoyed by Large Gathering," *Berlin News Record*, May 27, 1915, pp. 1, 2.

based. Breithaupt credited the city's growth to its German residents' admirable qualities and reminded Canadians that the British and German royal families were related and that Berlin Ontario's connection to Germany went back over a century, predating the German Empire with which they were at war.<sup>116</sup> Days later, on March 1, 1916, W. G. Cleghorn, chairman of the North Waterloo Recruiting Committee, responded to Breithaupt's letter. Cleghorn argued that Berlin's success was not due to the attributes of its German residents, but to the bountiful paradise where they had chosen to settle. He added that, even though there had been no German Empire when Berlin was first founded, it was still named after the capital of Prussia, which was responsible for "the most diabolical crimes and atrocities that have marred the pages of history."<sup>117</sup> During the war, Berlin's schools similarly attacked the understanding of history and race upon which the Germans had hitherto based their claim to Canadian citizenship.

In February 1915, the board approved subscribing to fourteen copies of *The Children's Story of the War*, a monthly pamphlet series that described the heroic exploits of the Allies.<sup>118</sup> These pamphlets blamed Germany for the war, claiming that the Kaiser had been plotting and scheming for years, even as he proclaimed himself an agent of peace.<sup>119</sup> Germany had long desired to build an empire at Britain's expense. The two were therefore longstanding rivals, not allies.<sup>120</sup> These pamphlets ignored the previously celebrated familial ties between the German and British royal families. In one of the few instances when this connection was recognized, the author claimed that the German leader Otto von Bismarck had despised Queen Victoria, even though she was a relative of the Kaiser, because he felt that the proper role for women was domestic, cooking, raising children, and attending church.<sup>121</sup> *The Children's Story of the War* also negated the arguments of men such as William Henry Breithaupt that Berlin's connection to Germany predated the formation of the German Empire. The pamphlets claimed that, although Frederick the Great had advanced Prussia, "he had done it by craft and cunning and violence, and at the cost of untold misery and suffering."<sup>122</sup> Germany had therefore always been morally bankrupt.

Accompanying this reinterpretation of European history was a refashioning of the role played by Germans in local history. At Empire Day in 1918, after praising Britain for sacrificing to save the world from German militarism, Reverend C. A. Sykes observed that many of the students in attendance were of German descent. These people, Sykes contended, had left Germany, fleeing from violence to find the freedom and liberty of British institutions in Canada; he was confident that they

<sup>116</sup> William Henry Breithaupt, "The Proposed Change of the City's Name," *Berlin News Record*, February 26, 1916, p. 6.

<sup>117</sup> W. G. Cleghorn, "Recruiting Committee Responds to Mr. Breithaupt's Letter," *Berlin News Record*, March 1, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>118</sup> WRDSB, *Minutes of the Berlin-Kitchener Public School Board, 1915-1920*, February 18, 1915, p. 12.

<sup>119</sup> Sir Edward Parrott, *The Children's Story of the War* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1915-1918), no. 3, pp. 130, 154.

<sup>120</sup> Parrott, *The Children's Story of the War*, no. 13, p. 172.

<sup>121</sup> Parrott, *The Children's Story of the War*, no. 2, p. 123.

<sup>122</sup> Parrott, *The Children's Story of the War*, no. 1, pp. 44-47.

would rise up and defend the Allies.<sup>123</sup> Prior to the war, Germans were praised for their contribution to the city's prosperity. During the war, these same immigrants were portrayed as paupers and refugees rather than entrepreneurs, and no mention was made of the positive traits such as thrift or tenacity that they brought with them. These positive racial attributes were no longer associated with Germans; more often, Germans were demonized.

Schoolchildren, like the rest of the Canadian population, were bombarded with stories of atrocities supposedly committed by Germans, which depicted Germans as uniformly malevolent rather than industrious. *The Children's Story of the War* was one conduit through which atrocity stories reached Berlin-Kitchener's public schools. One issue devoted an entire chapter, "Deeds of Shame and Horror," to these gruesome tales. The pamphlets claimed that German soldiers murdered babies in their mothers' arms, tortured young girls and women, and executed defenceless old men.<sup>124</sup> Along with these individual acts of shame, the tactics employed by the Germans were condemned as being uncivilized. Of the gas attack at Ypres, the author reported, "The Germans were about to sound the deepest depths of their infamy and try to poison those whom they could not beat in a fair fight."<sup>125</sup> No longer was it acceptable to speak of an Anglo-Teuton race. *The Children's Story of the War* deliberately contrasted the two, juxtaposing stories of British valour and honour with tales of German treachery.<sup>126</sup>

*The Children's Story of the War* also depicted German immigrants as being potentially disloyal rather than ideal citizens, although it did not mention German Canadians specifically. The pamphlets claimed that, when Germany invaded Luxemburg, residents were shocked to find that German immigrants who lived among them and worked regular jobs had been acting as spies, finding the best places for the invaders to occupy. They also accused German Americans of cheering when the Lusitania was sunk and attempting to stir up animosity between Britain and the United States.<sup>127</sup> Berlin-Kitchener's Germans were forced to refute a similar accusation that they had celebrated the sinking of the Lusitania.

## Conclusion

Very little resistance arose to the actions of Berlin-Kitchener's public school board during the war. The city's Germans saw themselves as loyal Canadian citizens and so did not object to the flag-waving and saluting, the fundraising for patriotic causes, or even the proliferation of militarism in the public schools. The only protest came at the elimination of German-language classes, which Germans regarded as an attack on their place as Canadian citizens. Thus trustee

123 "Stirring Address Delivered by Rev. C. A. Sykes st Decoration of the Queen Victoria Monument," *Daily Telegraph* [Kitchener], May 25, 1918, pp. 1, 10.

124 Parrott, *The Children's Story of the War*, no. 5, p. 257.

125 Parrott, *The Children's Story of the War*, no. 18, p. 192.

126 One story claimed that, during a retreat, a wounded British soldier begged a German for water but was rebuffed. Later, that same British soldier came across the same German, who was now wounded and begging for water. The British soldier shamed the German by giving him a drink (Parrott, *The Children's Story of the War*, no. 7, p. 117).

127 Parrott, *The Children's Story of the War*, no. 3, p. 164, and, no. 17, pp. 78, 85-86.

Sattler saw no contradiction in defending German-language classes and then taking an active part in Empire Day celebrations a few weeks later, while Louis Jacob Breithaupt did not see an incongruity in being vice-president of the Berlin branch of the Canadian Patriotic Fund as well as a member of the *Deutsche Schule Verein* delegation to the school board. Even this protest was meek, since many Germans, such as trustee Albrecht, had come to realize that the pre-war definition of citizenship could no longer be countenanced.

The definition of Canadian citizenship was the product of negotiation between the different groups who claimed access to it. The different parties taking part in this negotiation, however, were not equals. Germans and other non-Anglo-Saxon ethnic groups were negotiating from a subordinate position of power. Germans did have a distinct advantage over other ethnic groups in that they were regarded as being members of a fellow Northern European race, cousins of the Anglo-Saxons. Therefore, prior to the war, a local variation of Canadian citizenship that accepted ethnic Germans at its centre was possible. During the war, a time of national emergency, the space for negotiation was narrowed considerably, and this community was forced to adhere more closely to the dominant definition of Canadian citizenship.

The debate over the definition and content of Canadian citizenship was not an arcane matter, of concern to a small handful of elites. As Bryan S. Turner notes, the set of practices that defined people or groups as citizens had material consequences. The Germans of Berlin-Kitchener, Ontario, whose citizenship was denied during the First World War, felt these consequences.

In her book *Parades and Power*, Susan G. Davis contends that, in nineteenth-century Philadelphia, the right to access public spaces for the purpose of self-representation was restricted to citizens, namely white men.<sup>128</sup> During the First World War, Berlin-Kitchener's Germans were denied this right, which they had enjoyed, virtually uncontested, for decades. Residents no longer gathered annually to celebrate the Kaiser's birthday, and public celebrations no longer proudly proclaimed the ethnicity of the majority of the city's residents.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, the fact that the Concordia Club had previously hosted a fundraiser for the 118<sup>th</sup> Battalion was not enough to prevent it from being ransacked.<sup>130</sup>

Most significantly, many Germans were denied some of the most basic rights of citizens, the right to vote and the right to protection under the law. The men disenfranchised in Berlin in 1916 had voted in previous elections, paid taxes, and served as jurors; many had actually held public office. Some claimed to have applied for naturalization decades earlier but were unable to present documents to demonstrate that the process had been completed, others had come to Canada in infancy and were under the belief that they had been naturalized through

128 Susan G. Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), pp. 45-46.

129 "City Fittingly Welcomes Vice-Regal Party," *News Record* [Kitchener], June 13, 1918. When the Governor General visited Kitchener in June 1918, there was no delegation representing the city's German community as there had been during previous visits by Canada's governors general prior to the war. Additionally, the speeches delivered during the event made no mention of the ethnicity of the majority of the city's residents.

130 "Sergeant's Smoker Draws Big Crowd Varied Program," *Berlin News Record*, October 29, 1915, p. 1.

their parents, and others had seen no reason to go through the formal process of naturalization since they had already been enjoying the rights and duties of citizens, in some cases for decades.<sup>131</sup> Although they had been citizens in practice prior to the war, during the war their citizenship was denied because of their ethnicity. Four short, albeit turbulent, years were not enough to force this German community to assimilate. Once the war had ended, when the definition of Canadian citizenship was not so rigid, they sought new ways to harmonize their distinctiveness with a broader understanding of Canadian citizenship.

131 "The Other Side: An Appeal For British Fair Play," *Berlin News Record*, July 22, 1916, pp. 6, 7; "Court of General Sessions Hearing Applications For Naturalization Papers," *News Record* [Kitchener], December 22, 1916, p. 1.