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"Orgelsdorf": A World War I Internment Camp in America

On 12 December 1918 Richard Goldschmidt enjoyed a cultural experience he would never forget. He played violin in a performance of Beethoven's *Eroica* under the direction of Karl Muck, one of the world's premier maestros. Goldschmidt was only an amateur musician, albeit a fervent one. He was a forty-year-old scientist and academician and came upon this opportunity fortuitously and under unexpected, painful circumstances. Muck himself had originally planned an academic career and had completed a doctorate in classical philology before turning to music and establishing himself as a conductor in Vienna, Bayreuth, and Berlin. From 1912 until March 1918 he had been director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. His musical hallmark was meticulous examination of the composer's intentions and unrelenting adherence to his score. Such purism was unusual in an age of revived Romanticism and more appealing to sophisticated audiences than to casual listeners. There were some music fanciers with impeccable taste in the audience that evening. There was also a mixed array of businessmen, technicians, miners, quarry workers, labor agitators, seamen, and others who attended the concert more for relief from boredom than for a profound esthetic experience.

All were silent when Muck took the podium; they remained so through the early passages. Then the music began to create a special rapport between orchestra and audience. Heads began to move, legs and bodies shifted in response to rhythmic and melodious passages or out of random agitation. Everyone listened intently to the sounds of the music but most soon lost themselves in reveries of real or imagined joys and triumphs—in the past or at home. Somehow the music seemed to find each person's private anguish and weariness of spirit and to transform them into eloquence and hope. Hope was not readily welcomed in this crowd. Hard experience had taught the men to avoid, even to fear hope. Yet the music prevailed and carried them away from the dreary present. When the music ended, the men applauded raucously and without restraint. Years later, Goldschmidt wrote, "I do not think that a

symphony ever created a more profound impression than this upon thousands who had probably never before heard classical music."[1]

Karl Muck had enjoyed musical triumphs and had many more before him, but this occasion was special because Muck, Goldschmidt, the entire orchestra, and all but a few members of the audience were prisoners. They were inmates in an internment camp for "dangerous enemy aliens" in a remote place with a name difficult for Germans to pronounce. It was located on the grounds of Fort Oglethorpe, a United States Army post just inside the northwest border of Georgia, a few miles southeast of Chattanooga, Tennessee. To express derision and contempt for it, the inmates called the place "Orgelsdorf."[2]

Fort Oglethorpe was one of three main centers selected to house interned German nationals when the United States declared war against Germany on 6 April 1917. Prior to that—between August 1914 and April 1917—the United States had been bound by the Hague conventions on the rights and duties of neutrals and by international custom to prevent regular use of its harbors by belligerent naval units. When the British forced several German warships to take refuge in American harbors (including Guam and the Panama Canal Zone), the United States was bound to limit their stay in American waters or to intern the ships and crews. As the Germans were hopelessly outclassed by the British units in the area, departure would have been suicidal and could have ended only in their destruction or surrender. They therefore submitted to internment in American territory for the duration of the hostilities. The ships were assigned permanent moorings and placed under American authority. The crews were also interned and in most cases permitted to live on board their own ships during the period of American neutrality. After the breach of American-German relations in February 1917 the men were removed to camps in the interior. The declaration of war in April 1917 converted the status of interned naval crews to prisoners of war and entitled them to treatment defined in the Hague conventions of 1907. This placed them under the care of the War Department. There were about fourteen hundred men in this category.[3]

German merchant ships caught by the outbreak of war in American waters had been permitted freedom of movement consistent with American neutrality, but as British patrols dominated the shipping lanes in the high seas, German cargo ships and crewmen of military age dared not venture from American waters. By April 1917 there were sixty-seven German and fourteen Austrian merchantmen in American ports plus twenty-three German ships in Philippine harbors. Their crews either lived on board or took advantage of a lax immigration administration and sought quarters elsewhere. Some obtained employment on other ships and departed. Others obtained onshore employment, which was relatively easy to find before 1917, especially in major port cities with sizeable German-speaking elements.[4] But anti-German sentiment swelled during the last months of American neutrality and German-born American citizens and German nationals became vulnerable.

Immediately upon the declaration of war, American authorities, ignoring protective clauses in the Hague convention, detained and confined the merchant crewmen.[5] There were about twenty-three hundred men in this category of interned aliens.

As civilians, the merchant seamen did not have the protection of prisoner-of-war status. Since most of them were men of military age, the British blockade prevented their deportation to Germany. They were left under the authority of the Immigration Service of the Labor Department. Once removed from their ships, they were confined temporarily at immigrant stations at Ellis Island, Gloucester (New Jersey), New Orleans, Angel Island (San Francisco), and Gallups Island (Boston). Neither the War Department nor the Labor Department had a clear policy or plan as to what to do with their new charges.

Another category of "alien enemies" to be confined were those who had broken the law or were judged too dangerous to remain at large in American territory. They were under the authority of the Justice Department. Even before the United States entered the war, German nationals and German-American citizens had to endure harassment, discrimination, and open violence. Surveillance and arrest of suspicious persons increased drastically when the United States broke diplomatic relations with Germany on 3 February 1917. Before the declaration of war on 6 April, the nation was mentally prepared for large-scale actions against a German threat within the American homeland.

Two weeks before the declaration of war, the Justice Department prepared to invoke a long-forgotten federal statute that provided legal sanctions against dangerous alien enemies in America. An act of 1798 designed originally to control French agents and later used against British subjects in the War of 1812 provided that, in case of declared war or imminent invasion, "all natives, citizens, denizens, or subjects of the hostile nation or government, being males of the age of fourteen years and upwards, who shall be within in the United States and not actually naturalized, shall be liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed, as alien enemies."[6] Once war was declared, this law was used to control and intimidate German civilians until Congress passed the more explicit Espionage Act of June 1917, the Trading with the Enemy Act of October 1917, and the Sedition Amendment and Sabotage Act of April 1918. Meanwhile, on the day Congress declared war against Germany, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation forbidding alien enemies the right to possess firearms, bombs, or other explosives, to use airplanes or wireless or any signaling apparatus. They could not enter any area within a half mile of any fort, arsenal, aircraft station, navy yard, munitions factory, or any locality designated by the president as "prohibited." If they already resided in such zones they would have to move. They could be summarily arrested if there should be reasonable cause to suspect that they were aiding or were about to aid the enemy, violate a criminal law or presidential regulation, or if their being at large would

endanger the public peace and safety.[7] By the end of the war there were sixty-three hundred persons of this category arrested on federal authority and an unknown number arrested by local and state officials.[8]

Although Wilson had given assurances that Germans who behaved properly had nothing to fear, Assistant Attorney General Charles Warren thought it best not to take chances. He declared: "It seems to me the height of folly to wait until these German aliens commit crimes before we arrest them. I believe that the wise policy is to avert trouble and not try to remedy it after it has happened."[9] Attorney General Thomas W. Gregory detected the public zeal for drastic action against "the Hun" and extended federal authority to a citizen's secret surveillance network of unpaid, volunteer deputies in an organization called the American Protective League (APL). It claimed to have over 250,000 members who spied out disloyalty with reckless enthusiasm. With its membership consisting largely of business and professional men, the league concerned itself heavily with alleged disloyalty in organized labor. The Socialist party and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or "Wobblies") received the most intense scrutiny, especially after July 1917, when the attorney general ordered the arrest of all German members of the IWW.[10] The league, along with a few zealous naval and military intelligence officers began to dominate the anti-German campaign.[11] Local law enforcement officers made thousands of arrests, often treating their captives with cruelty and disregard for legal rights before turning them over to the federal government for official action. Having encouraged volunteerism, the Justice Department then had to restrain excessive patriotic vigilantism on the "home front."

More by improvisation than design, a set of special internment camps materialized more rapidly than methods for administering them. The War Department selected three army posts to intern its naval prisoners of war. These were Fort Douglas in Utah and Forts McPherson and Oglethorpe in Georgia. The Justice Department had federal prisons at its disposal and considered leasing space in state prisons to house its captives, the dangerous alien enemies. Under pressure from the State Department, which feared reprisals against Americans stranded in Germany, the Attorney General repudiated these options. He left the internees in local jails and immigration facilities for the short term, while negotiating arrangements to build subcamps for civilians on the grounds of the three forts. Ultimately, the War Department concentrated most of its naval prisoners of war at Fort McPherson, leaving Fort Douglas and Fort Oglethorpe for the internment of civilians.[12] The army retained administrative control of these forts and the civilians detained within them were under military regulations.

The Labor Department concentrated its interned seamen in a single camp. For this it purchased an old mountain resort hotel and grounds at Hot Springs, near Asheville, North Carolina. It was a pleasant area and the men applied their practical skills to build barracks, houses for canteens and recreation, a church, flower gardens, and other amenities. Administration by

Labor Department officials was mild enough to earn criticism from zealous patriots for allowing enemy personnel to live too well.[13] There were few if any escape attempts and only a single strand of rope (later a wire fence) separated the camp from the platform of the railroad station.

Yet critics deplored the hiring of local civilians as guards since they could not be trusted to use their weapons effectively in case of need. The army took over administration of Hot Springs in July 1918 so soldiers could be used as guards. However, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker emphasized army training for combat in Europe and considered guard duty at government facilities a drain on resources. He arranged for construction of new barracks at Fort Oglethorpe and transferred most of the Hot Springs internees there in the autumn of 1918.

However, an epidemic in Hot Springs delayed this migration. The water supply was inadequate and the men got into the habit of drinking polluted water piped in from the French Broad River for other purposes. The ensuing outbreak in typhoid took the lives of twenty-nine men.[14] There had been a milder outbreak of typhoid at Fort Oglethorpe camp the year before, probably as a result of primitive sanitation facilities in the hastily constructed internment camp adjacent to the regular army base camp. It was several months before indoor showers and latrines and an emergency hospital-barracks could be constructed for the inmates. Sanitation conditions at Fort Oglethorpe had improved by the time most of the "Hot Springers" arrived, but no precautions could restrain the world pandemic of influenza, which visited the camp in the late autumn of 1918. It killed twenty-six men and put hundreds more in the hospital.[15]

Fort Oglethorpe was an army post at the site of the Civil War battle of Chickamauga, close to Lookout Mountain where another major battle had taken place. In its first stage of construction, the internment camp consisted of twenty-two wooden barracks surrounded by double rows of barbed wire located on about sixty acres of flat plain that became oppressively hot and dusty in summer and miserably damp and muddy in winter. Inmates constructed the camp buildings, fences, roads, and the like according to standard army plans. The end products provided shelter that was less than comfortable and certainly not handsome. There was not a single tree in the camp and the main street was so rough and muddy that the inmates called it "Rio Grande de Orgelsdorf" and "Chemin des Dames" after the shell-tortured ridge in France.[16] Before construction of a connecting road, the prison camp was a five-minute walk from the main street of the base camp, within earshot of the railroad line between Chattanooga and Atlanta. The wailing signals of the passing trains reminded the internees—mostly city folk—of the remoteness of their place of exile and their want of freedom enjoyed by others.

The first inhabitants of Fort Oglethorpe were 390 officers and men from the light cruiser *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* and other German naval vessels along with fifty-six merchant seamen whose ships had been interned in the Panama

Canal Zone and ninety-eight interned civilians. The camp evolved with the changes in American policy. By June 1918 the naval and merchant seamen were removed to Fort McPherson. At that time "Orgelsdorf" was occupied by 840 civilian aliens. The number eventually grew to more than four thousand. Most of them were German but there were now 150 Austrians and other nationalities. The camp was divided by barbed wire into three compounds called Camps A, B, and C.

Camp A was known as the "millionaires' camp." It housed ninety internees with the means to pay for their own care, including some *Prominente*, as they were called in the camp, considered too influential or knowledgeable to be at large and merchant ship officers transferred from Hot Springs. They lived in two barracks buildings with individual partitioned rooms and a separate wash house. Their food was purchased, prepared, and served by German cooks and ship stewards hired by the "millionaires." There was even dinner music played on a piano in the dining hall. No one in Camp A was required to work except those employed by the more affluent inmates. Not all Camp A inmates were actually millionaires. Richard Goldschmidt, for example, received through the Swiss legation a monthly stipend of thirty-five dollars, which enabled him to live there.[17]

Camp B was much more crowded and uncomfortable. Here 667 men occupied seven standard hundred-man barracks with unpartitioned sleeping quarters on each of two stories. There were thirteen of these barracks but half of them were reserved for incoming Hot Springs internees and more were under construction in June 1918. Before the year was over the influx of the Hot Springers and newly arrested civilian internees quadrupled the camp population. The men complained that the barracks were too hot in the summer when one hundred men were crowded into them, but the commandant of Fort Oglethorpe could do nothing about this. Food was generally adequate although there were some "meatless and wheatless" days and accusations of corruption. If the men wanted to supplement their diet they could earn extra money by working on the road or in a nearby rock quarry and buy extra food in the camp canteen. This option was not open to the men in Camp C.

Camp C was a punishment barracks. When Swiss commissioners charged to inspect Fort Oglethorpe visited on 3-4 June 1918, they found eighty-three inmates, about 10 percent of the entire camp population at that time, existing on half rations in Camp C for having refused to "volunteer" for employment in the rock quarry. The men were in fact on strike.

War Department regulations required enlisted men and civilians to perform unpaid "work necessary for their comfort or for the upkeep of their prison barracks." With permission they could volunteer for paid work outside the camp under supervision of camp authorities. At Fort Oglethorpe there were only two opportunities for such work: in the rock quarry or on the access road connecting the camp to the public road. Before the issue of new orders on 28 March 1918, the established rate of pay was $1.00 per day for

regular workers and $1.25 for supervisors. On that date the War Department reduced the pay scale to twenty-five cents (thirty-five cents for supervisors). This change was based on reciprocal negotiations with Germany concerning pay for prisoners of war but it came as a shock to the internees and they protested loudly.

On 20 April the executive officer of Fort Oglethorpe headquarters responded with the following notice:

> The Commandant has directed me to inform you that all those men who are willing to continue to work on the roads outside, in the rock-pit, as usual, pending definite information regarding the cut in wages, can give their names into the Executive Office by 12 noon this date.
> Those men who want to work outside and try to do right will be protected to the full limit against abuse by those who want to make any trouble for them.
> The remainder of the men *or all* if none consents to work will be placed on half rations, be confined to the Main Stockade and all privileges taken away from them for an indefinite period.[18]

The commandant admitted to neutral camp inspectors that he was trying to isolate troublemakers, mainly those who belonged to "international organizations such as the I.W.W." The upshot was a storm of protest whereby 130 men refused to do any work, including mandatory camp work for the prisoners' comfort or maintenance of facilities. The commandant tried to clarify his orders, asserting that he had not intended to punish anyone for failing to volunteer, but only for disobeying orders to do mandatory camp maintenance. The Swiss commissioners negotiated a settlement on 4 June but there were still sixty men in Camp C at the end of the month. As a matter of principle, these men remained in Camp C on half rations, without mail or canteen privileges rather than work on buildings or other facilities intended not for their own comfort or upkeep, but for newly arrested persons or those transferred from Hot Springs.[19] The protesters were in a minority but they kept Camp B in turmoil as they directed inmates' discontent against heavy-handed administrative practices. They also compelled the commandant to permit more self-regulation among the internees.

There had been an internee committee from the beginning, but it functioned only in Camp A under the leadership of Carl Heynen, the former German consul general at Mexico City. On the recommendation of the Swiss inspection commission, an expanded committee was established to represent Camp B as well. However, this had the effect of increasing rather than resolving friction in the camp. The administrative officers of Fort Oglethorpe preferred to deal with senior inmates in each barracks. Since the determination of seniority privileges was more difficult among civilians than

among military personnel, this caused rivalry and distrust between the committee and barracks seniors. "Orgelsdorf" seethed with discontent throughout the summer and autumn of 1918. The camp magazine *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel* printed the mixed-language slogan:

In B lebd nur das Herdenfieh
In A die Creme von Germany.[20]

The inhabitants lamented the injustice of their confinement in a constant barrage of letters to the Swiss legation, which was charged with protection of German interests in the United States. They complained of monotonous diet, overcrowded barracks that were too hot in summer and cold in winter, rough and sometimes cruel army guards, inadequate sanitation facilities, and abrupt, incompetent medical care. They even complained of the Swiss commissioners themselves and accused them of being unsympathetic to their plight. They demanded to know why their own government had not aided them by applying reprisals against Americans held in Germany and Austria.[21]

Psychologically, confinement in such a camp produced anxieties, impatience, shifting moods, diminished ability to concentrate, and eccentric behaviors that were already being diagnosed as "barbed-wire sickness."[22] Camp officials were generally unsympathetic and, in responding to complaints, exhibited eccentricities of their own. When one prisoner broke his glass eye, he made an official complaint that it would not have happened if he had not been required to work in the rock quarry. The camp doctor said the inmate had dropped the eye himself but condescended to exempt the man from work in dusty places in the future. Another inmate washed his hair in his own urine to convince American and Swiss authorities that he was insane. The camp physicians reported him as quite normal. Complaints that the canteen had not been enlarged in spite of increases in the number of internees elicited the response that the inmates administered the canteen and should order more goods. However, the executive officer did forbid the sale of "luxury items" such as sugar and coffee. Internees complained that camp censors held up delivery of their letters to the Swiss legation and punished them for making legitimate complaints. The American commandant denied this but retained his right to punish those who made false reports.[23]

The inmates quarreled among themselves as much as with the camp administration, a sure symptom of barbed-wire sickness. Camp B men complained that the "millionaires" were not required to work and that thieving German bakers and kitchen workers were responsible for food shortages. The merchant seamen detested the "former jailbirds, thieves, and tramps they call Hobos" and joined others in condemning the IWW men. Tunnelers and other would-be escapers were regularly betrayed. *Reich* Germans resented Austrians because the Americans were less hostile toward them.[24] Professional jealousies also flared up among the *Prominenten*, especially the musicians.[25]

Orgelsdorf became a small town. Hated by its citizens, it was nevertheless a community. The common bond was the arbitrary concentration of its population in a remote location because someone with authority regarded them as "dangerous enemy aliens." Interned merchant seamen had been sent to Fort Oglethorpe to settle an administrative problem at Hot Springs camp. The IWW men were swept into camp by a wave of anti-radicalism merged with anti-foreignism. Neither of these groups had much in common with those they called *Prominente* or "millionaires."

Wealthy businessmen such as Rudolf Hecht, a cousin of Otto Kuhn of Kuhn, Loeb & Co. and Ernst Fritz Kuhn, also a banker, were considered too influential and knowledgeable to return to Germany or remain at large in America. The same was true of Professor Jonathan Zenneck, a radio specialist who had installed the transmitter at Sayville, Long Island. E. Karl Vietor was in the tobacco business in Richmond, Virginia, where he had been honorary consul of Germany. Among the allegedly dangerous journalists was Count Albrecht Montgelas, a former editor with the *San Francisco Examiner*, the *Chicago Examiner*, and contributor to *American Art News* and *Studio*. Waldemar von Nostitz had been editor of the *Cleveland Waechter und Anzeiger*, which had printed a justification of the *Lusitania* sinking.[26]

Why scholars and musicians were sent to Fort Oglethorpe is more difficult to explain. Dr. Karl Oscar Bertling held the Master of Arts degree from Harvard and was an authority on Ralph Waldo Emerson and the New England Transcendentalists. Perhaps his books on the military system of Germany and German-American relations caused him to be denounced. Hanns Heinz Ewers was a widely-traveled novelist, poet, literary critic who praised Edgar Allen Poe for his exploration of altered states of consciousness. He was denounced as a German propagandist, which was certainly true during the period of American neutrality. In 1915 Ewers had published a book of German war songs in Munich that included translations of American, Yiddish, and Irish poems directed against England and Russia.[27] Otto Wille and the entire band of the German Red Cross group that had fled Japanese conquerors at Tsingtao, China, were probably detained because no one could think of a better alternative. Richard Goldschmidt had been a biology researcher with a temporary appointment at Yale when he was arrested.[28] Like the others, Ernst Kunwalt was puzzled about his designation as a dangerous enemy alien. What could be dangerous about this piano virtuoso, conductor of the Cincinnati Orchestra, music director of the Cincinnati May Festival, member of the Optimists Club, and honored designee of *Who's Who in America* for 1918-19?[29] And Karl Muck? How could the maestro of the Boston Symphony Orchestra menace the security of the United States? Muck had been falsely accused of refusing to play "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the opening number of a concert and, of course, of spying for Germany.[30]

Historians usually characterize the outbreak of anti-German feeling and action during the First World War as hysteria or paranoia. Such clinical

language seems appropriate when one reads that miners in Thermopolis, Wyoming, hanged a stranger who toasted the Kaiser; that an Albany, New York, brewery discharged an Austrian worker who failed to salute the flag; that U.S. Army Private Otto Ludwig was sentenced to seven years hard labor for speaking disrespectfully of President Wilson and the flag; that a sergeant was interned at Fort Oglethorpe for telling his sister he hoped not to fight against his native land; that the Episcopal Church adopted a resolution advocating the death penalty for propaganda; that a Lutheran minister in Corpus Christi, Texas, was publicly whipped for praying in German.[31]

However, hysteria is not a complete diagnosis of the implacable war spirit that took anti-German form between 1914 and 1919. Confluence of a long trend of antiteutonism in America and the quickening of antiradical feeling no doubt contributed to the excesses of those years. The concept of total war may also add to our grasp of the topic. Total war embraces the notion that the great wars of the twentieth century have pitted whole nations against one another without distinctions between civilian and military and without limits or restraints on extension of violence or choice of weapons. Total war is conflict so grand in scale that it draws all of society to its service and imposes total commitment of everyone to annihilate the enemy. Total war is not only a clash between governments and armed forces but a clash of entire cultures and societies. It displays a fierce, implacable war spirit among civilians as well as soldiers. This appears to be inspired by government propaganda but may take on a populist dynamic that pushes authorities beyond their original intentions.[32]

Something like this happened in America during the First World War. Eager groups of patriotic citizens, picturing themselves as soldiers of a new sort, tried to fight against the culture of the foe while soldiers of a more conventional sort fought on more conventional battlefields. Imagining the German language itself to be the instrument of "Hun" power in America, they lashed out against the German-language press, school instruction, church services, and publications. Many states forbade the teaching of the German language and public book burning was widespread. The Louisiana legislature banned all use of the German language. Following the National Security League and the American Defense Society, the Georgia Federation of Women's Clubs sponsored a "Speak English, Please" indoctrination project.[33]

The list of other skirmishes on the cultural battlefields on the home front can be extended indefinitely. Some examples: In the *Atlantic Constitution* the Reverend Newell Dwight Hillis denounced Johann Wolfgang von Goethe as a "universal prostitute," whose renowned drama *Faust* "reeks with his philosophy of fleshliness. One of the inevitable results was the excesses and cruelties of this war."[34] A *New York Times* review praised Vicente Blasco Ibanez's book, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* for showing that "the war was inevitable from causes deep in the German national character and education."[35] The public safety director in Pittsburgh forbade Austrian and German music, including performances by the beloved Austrian violinist Fritz

Kreisler. Wagner's music was suppressed in New York and Chicago but Cincinnati continued to permit Brahms, Wagner, and Beethoven because these composers were somehow "democratic in their outlook."[36] The governor of Maryland threatened violence if Maestro Karl Muck should perform in Baltimore, the home of "The Star-Spangled Banner."[37] In the context of this spirit of war between cultures, it seemed proper that scholars, journalists, and artists of enemy nationality should be fought, that cultural "heroes" of enemy nationality should be removed from public view and concentrated in a few places where they could be watched and controlled.

This concentration of talent created the extraordinarily sophisticated cultural community that called itself Orgelsdorf. When they were not working or writing eloquent letters of protest, the burghers of Orgelsdorf created sport clubs and recreational competitions, a school, a schedule of public lectures, a serious theatrical group that staged Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* and Hermann Sudermann's *Stein unter Steinen*, a comedy production group called "Gitter-Palast Theater" [Iron Bars Palace Theater], several choral societies, at least three orchestras, and a literary journal. Erich Posselt wrote: "All of those who have spent more than a short time behind barbed wire are more or less crazy and peculiar things grow out of their lame imaginations." But those with hobbies, however strange, are more fortunate than the idle ones, "whose brains are more certain to petrify."[38]

Sports helped keep the players in sound physical condition and the exertion protected them from the dulling effects of boredom. Chess tournaments were conducted at three class levels. An improvised school offered courses in Italian, Arabic, Physiology, Physics, Spanish, and Japanese. Its founder, Wilhelm Steinforth, was called "Rektor der Universität Oglethorpe."[39]

Ten editions of the camp magazine *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel* appeared between 15 October 1918 and May 1919. It was edited jointly by "a kind of Bohemian" named Erich Posselt and Hanns Heinz Ewers, the only professional writer in the camp. It was printed on poor quality paper in thirty-page editions of about one hundred copies and sold for twenty-five cents by barracks chiefs and in the canteen.[40] *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel* was conceived as a community effort and any profits were used to aid inmates without financial means. The journal introduced itself with the boastful rhetoric one might have heard from a local chamber of commerce: "We Orgelsdorfers make up the greatest internment camp in the United States and we regard it as our duty to provide a camp newspaper that measures up to this fact."[41]

The name *Eulenspiegel* referred to the fictional character known for his merry pranks; the cover displayed an owl (*Eule*) clutching a mirror (*Spiegel*) while perched in the *O* in "Orgelsdorf." In the final edition, the owl spread its wings and soared to freedom above a cluster of flames. Illustrations were handsomely crafted linoleum and cigar-box woodprints of camp scenes and characters, ships, women, and imaginary comic figures. *Eulenspiegel* featured

humorous dialect verse and prose, serious intellectual discourse and meditations, commentary on events inside and outside the camp, music criticism, and art history.

The magazine was subject to censorship and topics relating to German national feeling had to be addressed with care, especially since many inmates represented themselves as loyal to America. Otto Schaefer described the Strasbourg and Cologne cathedrals as expression of the German heart and soul. He also wrote a patriotic poem encouraging homesick and weary comrades to overcome the anguish of silent moments and to look to the east. The cosmopolitan Albrecht Montgelas challenged this in an eloquent verse advising one first to look inward for the cause of the sickness, then "go with head held high to the east, west, north, or south, wherever your own drive and destiny may call you . . . plant the oak-tree roots of friendship of nations for the good of your own people and for the healing of the world."[42]

Montgelas knew and respected American art and published in *Eulenspiegel* a critique of nineteenth-century American painting, especially the connection between Germany and the Hudson River School and the influence of a Munich painting exhibit at the San Francisco World's Fair.[43]

Ernst Fritz Kuhn knew American music but had a low opinion of it. He wrote a critique of ragtime, which he said was not music at all, but only rhythm that, like most American music, came from Negroes before it was discovered by whites such as Louis Hirsch and Irving Berlin. "Is rhythm American? No. Listen to old Hungarian folk music. Syncopation? It was done a hundred times better by Brahms and Liszt." Kuhn also wrote sarcastically about the Boston Symphony Orchestra's quest for a replacement for Karl Muck. Americans would not tolerate an American conductor so it had to be a politically acceptable foreigner. Cincinnati snapped up the violinist Isaye to replace Ernst Kunwalt. Sir Henry Wood turned down the offer to conduct the orchestra because removal of the Germans took out almost all the brass, some woodwinds, and the best violinists. Arturo Toscanini would not be available until 1919. According to Kuhn, Pierre Montieux was not interested. The symphony finally got the "undistinguished" Henri Rabaud, whose opening selection was Beethoven's *Eroica*! Kuhn also published informative short articles on Claude Debussy, Arnold Schönberg, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and Richard Strauss in *Eulenspiegel*.[44]

For some the experience of captivity induced humility and feelings of helplessness. B. Nientiedt closed his "Riddle of the Waves" ("Wellenrätsel") in this vein:

> Of eternal waves out of eternal expanses
> Out of eternal spaces in eternal times—
> What are you, little Man, in the dance of the waves?
> A puny craft soon to be shattered.[45]

Referring to the influenza epidemic, Fritz Waern's verses deplored the ego that drove men to behave like supermen until a tiny poisonous insect brought fever, delirium, and apprehension of death. Appeal to the self was in vain and the "great and mighty ego was a great and mighty nothing."[46]

Erich Posselt was less humble and reasserted intense national feeling in his memorial for comrades who died of influenza: "There may be one consolation for us who have been touched and then bypassed by the icy breath of death: that they died as Germans. They were here as Germans, just as we are. And one would be a scoundrel if unwilling to give his life for that!"[47]

When the war ended in November 1918, spirits rose at the prospect of prompt release. The *Eulenspiegel* exulted:

> Oh barbed wire, Oh corned beef!
> Just now I love you true and deep;
> I can no longer hate you.
> My eyes are wet, the tears do run;
> But for a buxom Rhenish lass
> I'd leave you in a minute.
> Farewell to colonel and lieutenant
> And to all of Dollar Land.
> I understand it well and clear
> You will praise the Lord
> When we are safely on ship board
> But I still want out of here![48]

But not yet! The United States government waited for the signing of peace treaties. It extended the blockade of German seaports and held its internees for another six months. Thereafter, transportation shortages, lingering security anxieties, and administrative insouciance kept the burghers of Orgelsdorf in place for many months until a repatriation agreement was signed in May 1919. A deportation act followed shortly. Even so, three hundred were still in army camps a year after the armistice. The last two hundred were released in March and April 1920 and the camps closed.[49]

Fort Oglethorpe was called an internment camp, which it certainly was. But it was more than that. The German and Austrian civilians held there were not just constrained from leaving the country, they were concentrated to be controlled and disciplined for imagined affronts to the American nation. Compared to internment policies in Europe where some 400,000 aliens were held by enemy governments, the American detainment programs were minuscule.[50] The miseries of the inmates cannot be compared to the vast inhumanities of the Soviet labor camps or concentration and extermination camps of Nazi Germany. Nevertheless Forts Douglas and Oglethorpe set a precedent and probably provided administrative experience for America's far

more extensive venture in internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.[51]

Epilogue

What happened to those who endured the experience? Karl Muck returned in bitterness to Germany and took up his baton at Bayreuth where he flourished as a premier interpreter of Wagner until 1931. His last performance was a Wagner piece at a Hitler rally in Dresden in 1933.[52] Hanns Heinz Ewers resettled from his world travels in Germany and became a leader of the Reichsverband Deutscher Schriftsteller, which the Nazis dissolved in 1935. Meanwhile in 1932, upon direct request from Hitler, Ewers had written an official biography of Horst Wessel, the street fighting storm trooper whom Joseph Goebbels transformed into a demigod. He then converted this ideological potboiler to a stage play and film script. Ewers neglected to delete the fact that Horst Wessel had lived with a prostitute, which offended the moral sensitivities of some high-ranking Nazis. Ewers became a pawn in a sharp little conflict over ideological priorities between Alfred Rosenberg and Goebbels, which pushed him to the fringes of the German literary community.[53]

Jonathan Zenneck returned to his post as ordinarius for physics in the Technische Hochschule in Munich.[54] Karl Oscar Bertling became the director of the Amerika-Institut in Berlin. Albrecht Montgelas became editor of the nationalistic *Vossische Zeitung* and wrote a biography of Abraham Lincoln. E. Karl Vietor was deported but found his way back to Richmond and by 1928 was again in the tobacco business.[55]

Richard Goldschmidt traveled widely and enhanced his international scientific reputation as director of genetics research in the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Biologie in Berlin. Being Jewish, he fled Germany in 1936 and returned to the United States. There he became an American citizen and completed his career as professor of zoology at the University of California at Berkeley. Goldschmidt published nineteen books and 267 articles, not including a travel account and two sonnets in the *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel*.[56]

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Notes

[1] Richard B. Goldschmidt, *In and Out of the Ivory Tower: The Autobiography of Richard B. Goldschmidt* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1960), 176. For Karl Muck's career, see Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Conductors* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 216-22.

[2] See *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel* (Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia). Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, collection Ts European War: Prisoners and Prisons, O 68. (The only

known file of this inmate-produced magazine of literature and culture was donated to the Hoover Institution by Richard Goldschmidt.) See also United States National Archives (NA), Record Group 407, Box 23: World War I Prisons and Prisoners—Prisoners of War and Alien Enemies in the United States, Subject File (short-form citation: NA RG 407/23).

[3] See reports on camp conditions by inspection teams of the Legation of Switzerland. Copies of these are in NA RG 407/73 and in the German Bundesarchiv-Koblenz (BA) Bestand R 85: Restakten des Auswärtigen Amtes: Rechtsabteilung und Handelspolitische Abteilung (Residual documents of the Foreign Office: Legal Section and Trade Policy Section), Aktenband Nr. 4611-13 (short-form citation: BA R 85/4611-13). For this study I have used the German editions in BA R 85.

For statistics and discussions of conditions affecting German nationals and German-Americans in the United States during World War I, I have relied on William Barnes Glidden, "Casualties of Caution: Alien Enemies in America 1917-1919" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois-Urbana, 1970); Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* (De Kalb, IL, 1974); Richard B. Speed III, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War: A Study in the Diplomacy of Captivity* (New York, 1990), 155-66; Alan Kent Powell, *Splinters of a Nation: German Prisoners of War in Utah* (Salt Lake City, 1989), 13-38; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925*, 2d ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 217-22; and Clifton James Child, *The German-Americans in Politics, 1914-1917* (Madison, 1939).

[4] Erich Franke, "Amerikana," an undated, nine-page typescript by a former inmate of Fort Oglethorpe, BA Bestand R 67: Archiv des Ausschusses für deutsche Kriegsgefangene des Frankfurter Vereins vom Roten Kreuz/Archiv für Kriegsgefangenenforschung (Archives of the committee for German prisoners of war of the Frankfurt Association of the Red Cross/ Archives for prisoner-of-war research), Aktenband 533 (short form: BA R 67/533). See also Jörg Nagler, "German Enemy Aliens and Internment in World War I: Alvo von Alvensleben in Fort Douglas, Utah: A Case Study," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 58 (1990): 388-405.

[5] Howard S. Levie, *Prisoners of War in International Armed Conflicts*, vol. 59 of *Naval War College International Law Studies* (Newport, RI, 1977), 63.

[6] Quoted in Glidden, 26.

[7] Presidential Proclamation No. 1364, 6 April 1917, *Papers on Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1918, Supplement 2, 165-68.

[8] Higham, 210. Speed, 160, says the total was 4,000.

[9] Glidden, 26.

[10] Higham, 211, 221.

[11] Ibid., 211-12.

[12] The 870 civilian internees at Fort Douglas came from the area west of the Mississippi River. Powell, 13-38.

[13] Dr. Carl P. Huebscher and Consul Charles Vuilleumier [Swiss commissioners], Inspektions-Bericht, Internierungslager Hot Springs, N. C., 4-5 December 1917, BA R 85/4611.

[14] Inspektions-Bericht Hot Springs, 26-29 August 1918, BA R 85/4612; Glidden, 327.

[15] Inspektions-Bericht, Fort Oglethorpe, 3 October 1917, BA R 85/4611; Dr. Ballerstedt (Marine-Stabsarzt und Transportführer der Tsingtauer-Transporte) to Chef der Admiralität (Berlin), 31 October 1919, BA R 85/4613; Glidden, 327.

[16] Inspektions-Bericht Fort Oglethorpe, 3 October 1917, BA R 85/4611. See *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel*, New Year's edition, 1919, and the second issue, ca. 1 November 1918, which has a woodcut print of the main street.

[17] Goldschmidt, 175; Inspektions-Bericht, Fort Oglethorpe, 3-4 June 1918, BA R 85/4612; Franke, "Amerikana," BA R 67/533.

[18] Inspektions-Bericht, Fort Oglethorpe, 3-4 June 1918, BA R 85/4612.

[19] Ibid.

[20] [Only livestock lives in B/In A the creme of Germany.] *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel*, no. 2 (ca. 1 November 1918).

[21] In addition to reports by Swiss camp inspectors, conditions were also reported after repatriation by Dr. Ballerstedt (see note 12) and in Gustav Meyer to Anton Meyer-Gerhard (Reichs-Kolonialamt Berlin), 14 October 1919, both in BA R 85/4613; also Franke, "Amerikana," BA R 67/533.

[22] A. L. Vischer, *Barbed Wire Disease: A Psychological Study of the Prisoner of War* (London, 1919); see also Speed, 37.

[23] Inspektions-Bericht Fort Oglethorpe, 3-4 June 1918, BA R 85/4612.

[24] Glidden, 354; Franke, "Amerikana," BA R 67/533; Fred S. Hockenheimer's appeal for parole denounced the IWW. NA RG 407/12.

[25] For example, see Schonberg, 218, for rivalry between Karl Muck and Ernst Kunwalt.

[26] Glidden, 217-19, 221-24 has biographical notations on prominent internees. See also *Wer ist's* 9 (1928) for Bertling, Ewers, Goldschmidt, Montgelas, Muck, Vietor, and Zenneck; *Who's Who in America* 10 (1918-1919) for Ernst Kunwalt; NA RG 407/12 for Carl Heynen and Karl Muck.

[27] Hanns Heinz Ewers, *Deutsche Kriegslieder* (Munich, 1915), and *Edgar Allen Poe* (Munich, 1906; English translation, New York, 1917). Ewers also wrote numerous works including *Führer durch die moderne Literatur* (Berlin, 1910), *Der gekreuzigte Tannhäuser und andere Grotesken* (Munich 1917), and a number of grotesque tales, including *Alraune: Geschichte eines lebenden Wesens*, *Vampir*, *Ameisen*, *Die Besessenen*.

[28] Goldschmidt, 173-84.

[29] Louis R. Thomas, "A History of the Cincinnati Orchestra to 1931" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1972), 424-32.

[30] Schonberg, 217-18. James J. Badal, "The Strange Case of Dr. Karl Muck, Who was Torpedoed by *The Star-Spangled Banner* during World War I," *High Fidelity Magazine* 20 (October 1970), 55-59, has excellent pictures. See also Alan Howard Levy, "The American Symphony at War: German-American Musicians and Federal Authorities during World War I," *Mid-America: An Historical Review* 71 (1989): 5-13.

[31] *New York Times*, passim. 1917-18.

[32] The concept of "total war" is regularly applied to World War II and more loosely to the two world wars to express the similarities or bonds of continuity between those two conflicts. Raymond Aron, *The Century of Total War* (Garden City, NY, 1954), 18-19, 28, regards total war as a blend of democracy and industry that emerged late in the nineteenth century to be activated by World War I. Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare* (New York, 1980), 223, discusses the "sense of indissoluble national unity and common cause" on what is called "the home front."

[33] Luebke, 243, 250-53; *Atlanta Constitution*, 1 December 1918.

[34] *Atlanta Constitution*, 1 and 3 December 1918.

[35] *New York Times*, 8 December 1918, sec. 7, p. 3.

[36] Thomas, 426-27.

[37] Badal, 57.

[38] *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel*, no. 5 (15 December 1918).

[39] Ibid., 10 (5 May 1919).

[40] Goldschmidt, 175.

[41] *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel*, no. 1 (15 October 1918).

[42] Ibid., no. 3 (15 November 1918). Dann blickt auf, und geht erhobenen Haupts / Nach Osten, Westen, Norden, Sued—wo immer / Der eigne Drang, das Schicksal euch mag rufen / . . . Saet ihr der Voelkerfreundschaft Eichenwurzel: / Dem eignen Volk zugut, der Welt zur Heilung!

[43] Montgelas, "Amerikana," *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel* nos. 4, 5 (15 December 1918), and New Year's 1919 edition.

[44] Ibid., nos. 2, 3, 4, 5.

[45] Ibid., no. 3. Von ewigen Wellen aus ewigen Weiten, / Aus ewigen Raeumen in ewigen Zeiten— / Was bist du, o Menschlein, im Tanze der Wellen? / Ein winziger Kahn und wirst bald zerschellen.

[46] Ibid., no. 2. Grosses gewaltiges ICH—Grosses gewaltiges NICHTS.

[47] Ibid., no. 3.

[48] "Abschied," ibid., no. 5.

[O Stacheldraht, o Corned Beef
Jetzt lieb ich Euch erst wahr und tief,
Ich kann Euch nicht mehr hassen!
Mein Aug wird feucht, die Traene rennt,
Doch um ein dralles, rheinisch Kind
Will ich Euch gerne lassen.
Herr Oberst und Herr Leutenant
Lebt wohl mitsamt dem Dollarland.
Ich kann es wohl verstehen,
Dass ihr drei Kreuze heimlich macht
Hat man uns erst an Bord gebracht,
Doch gerne moecht ich gehen!]

[49] Glidden, 397-402.

[50] Speed, 141.

[51] Jörg Nagler, "Surveillance and Internment of German Enemy Aliens in the United States during World War I," a paper delivered at the annual symposium of the Society for German-American Studies, Indianapolis, 27 April 1990.

[52] Schonberg, 222.

[53] Joseph Wulf, *Literatur und Dichtung im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (Vienna, 1983), 113, 157, 162-65, 230. His books about Horst Wessel included *Horst Wessel: Ein deutsches Schicksal* (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1932) and *Stürmer! Ein deutsches Schicksal nach dem Buche "Horst Wessel"* (Stuttgart, 1934). Ewers also wrote *Warum haßt man die Deutschen?* (Zürich, 1919) plus an ironic little book with comical drawings about his relatively alcohol-deprived existence at Fort Oglethorpe: *Die traurige Geschichte meiner Trockenlegung* (Berlin, 1927).

[54] *Wer ist's* (Berlin 1928).

[55] Ibid.

[56] Leonie K. Piternick, ed., *Richard Goldschmidt: Controversial Geneticist and Creative Biologist: A Critical Review of His Contributions* (Basel, 1980); *Wer ist's* 9 (1929).