

Herman Hoeksema, Courtesy of Archives, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

While most Americans are familiar with the incarceration of Japanese-Americans during the Second World War, few are familiar with the reaction of various state and local governments against use of the German language in World War One. Ironically, while few historically German denominations were still speaking German, many recent Dutch immigrants found themselves mistakenly targeted. And if their local church happened to forbid the display of symbols and images….

The First World War sparked a wave of hyper-patriotism in the United States that had impacts on ethnic institutions with broadly Germanic roots. The federal government, under President Woodrow Wilson, set off the nativist campaign by having Congress create the War Propaganda Committee, whose purpose was to promote patriotism in the citizenry and ferret out “traitors” with pro-German sympathies. Since Dutch, linguistically a Low German language, was confused in the popular mind with Duits or Deutsch (High German), Netherlanders tended to be painted with the same brush.

Twenty-seven states enacted sedition laws far more severe than the national model, most targeting Germans. Iowa Governor William Harding in May 1918 unilaterally issued a “Language Proclamation” that prohibited the use of any tongue but English on the streets, in stores, in telephone conversations (all phones were then open party lines), and in all worship services. The latter proviso presented the greatest hardship for the recent Dutch immigrants and their clerics could only preach in Dutch. Under the governor’s edict, they had to struggle to use English or stand down. Most chose the former course and fumbled for words. The Iowa governor later offered one concession; clerics could provide parishioners with English translations of sermons. In Sioux County ministers of the Reformed Church in America (RCA), an English-speaking denomination, collectively took the step of pledging to “address their immigrant congregations henceforth ‘in the English language and in the presence of the Stars and Stripes.’”1

Such conciliatory gestures did not assuage hyper-patriots bent on rooting out disloyalty. War hysteria gave the nativists the opportunity to even the score. In some locales, anti-Dutch sentiment boiled over into mob action. Ministers found burning crosses on the parsonage lawn and farmers lost barns to the torch. In the vicinity of Pella, Iowa in 1918, several Christian schools were set afire in what became known as the “Hollander Fires.” Supporters managed to extinguish the flames at the Sully Christian School, leaving only minor damage, but the Peoria Christian School and adjacent Christian Reformed Church burned to the ground. In nearby New Sharon, the Reformed Church was set ablaze and the pastor, Edward Huibregtse, found dynamite under the parsonage that had failed to explode because of a defective fuse.2

Events in Peoria took an ugly turn in May 1918 when a young thug brutally beat James Hietbrink, the Christian school principal, as he walked home from the village general store. The flash points, apparently, were decisions not to unfurl the American flag over the school, buy war bonds, or sign food pledges. The school was bursting at the seams, due to the high birthrate among the Dutch, while four nearby public schools were “almost without pupils” and three “will shortly be closed.” Birthrates among the Ameri-cans were as low as among Dutch they were high. Follow-ing the attack, the school board immediately suspended classes, and county authorities or-dered the school to remain closed. Some weeks later, state education officials rescinded the order as illegal and allowed the school to reopen.

Dutch leaders saw the troubles rooted in “old and deep-rooted jealousy caused by the prosperity of the Holland-Americans.” Dutch farmers around New Sharon received threatening letters in the mail to “leave or be burned out.” American farmers, it was reported, hired thugs to set fires for $50 or $100 per “job.” The big barns of two farmers, G. Vos and an unidentified church elder, who had two sons serving in the army, were burned down one night. Another Hollander lost a new house he was about to occupy. At the deepest level, it was a cultural clash between Dutch Re-formed immigrants and Yankee Protestants, who lived in close physical proximity but in entirely separate social worlds.3

Hollanders elsewhere also found themselves at risk during the wartime hysteria. In Holland, Michigan, Edward Reimink was ousted by a unanimous vote of the members of the North Laketown Farmers’ Club because of “alleged pro-German utterances.” In Little Falls, New Jersey, the Rev. Sidney Zandstra, a graduate of Hope College and Western Theological Sem-inary in Holland, Michigan, was forced to resign his pastorate after he inadvertently failed to doff his cap during the playing of the National Anthem at an outdoor rally. The U.S. Secret Service was called to investigate the disloyal Dutch dominie, but he was found innocent.4

Among Dutch Reformed immigrants, members of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) were more vulnerable than those of the RCA. The CRC had long prided itself for being the “Dutch church,” whereas the historic RCA boasted of being an “American church.” It had dropped the word “Dutch” from its official name in 1867 and was well assimilated into American Protestant culture. The CRC did not delete the name “Holland” from its title until 1894, and then it acted out of respect for its many German Reformed members and not as an affirmation of Americanization.

The “Dutchness” of the CRC caused major problems during the First World War. In January 1918, The Anchor, the Hope College student newspaper, editorialized that “the average Dutch settlement in America is a hotbed of disloyalty.” By average Dutch settlement, the editors clearly meant CRC strongholds. The Grand Rapids labor newspaper, Michigan Tradesman, touted the same theme, calling Calvin College, the denominational school of the CRC, “a bed of pro-German ideas, prejudice, and propaganda,” and staffed by “German sympathizers” for its refusal to stop teaching German.5

Also in Grand Rapids, Reverend Dr. John Van Lonkhuyzen of the Alpine Avenue CRC, who in June 1915 before the United States had entered the war, wrote a letter to the editor of the Grand Rapids News that criticized President Wilson’s handling of the Lusitania sinking by a German U-boat. Van Lonkhuyzen, a recent émigré to the United States, believed that Wilson failed to live up to U.S. neutrality laws, by siding with the British in the crisis. Editor Edwin Booth printed the Dutch dominie’s letter in a black-lined box on page one and in an adjacent column castigated the foreigner for having the gall to criticize the American president. The dominie stood his ground for a time, and even filed a suit for slander against the News, which was unsuccessful. But the public pounding induced him to accept a call to the First Chicago congregation and he left in a huff.6

In nearby Holland, Michigan Reverend Herman Hoeksema of the Fourteenth Street CRC “stirred up a hornet’s nest” in 1918 when he barred the American flag from his church sanctuary. The congregation was the first English-speaking body of that denomination in town and proud of its Americanizing ways. But, according to Hoeksema’s logical mind, unfurling the nation’s banner in church was conceding too much to Caesar’s realm.7

During World War I it was customary to display both the American and the Christian flags in front of the sanctuary. The Holland City News frequently reported the raising of the American flag in local congregations. The influential Third Re-formed Church, the congregation of many professors at nearby Hope College and Western Seminary, both denominational schools, was first to be so recognized in May 1917.8 Six weeks later Grace Episcopal Church went Third Reformed one better. It dedicated its “beautiful silk flag” during the regular morning worship service with a special litany, including a rendition of the national anthem. The congregation also posted the names of all the “boys in active service of the government” to its bulletin board. That same morning, Hope Reformed Church, the “College church” since 1862, unfurled Old Glory above the pulpit and promised to display it for the duration of the war. The congregation boasted that its flag was the “most beautiful banner in the city.” Trinity Reformed, First Re-formed, and St. Francis Catholic churches similarly hung flags and service banners in impressive ceremonies of blessing.9

At St. Francis Church, the Right Reverend M. J. Gallagher of Grand Rapids, bishop of the diocese of Western Michigan, came to preach “an appropriate sermon, bless the flag, and give a solemn benediction” at a special Sunday evening service. The local press gave his hour-long “address” extensive coverage. Gallagher stressed the hyper-patriotism of Catholics, who “sent to the colors double their proportionate share.” Catholics totaled only one-sixth of the American population, but made up 35 percent of the Army, 40 percent of the Marines, and over 50 percent of the Navy. “If necessary,” Gallagher concluded in a spirit of frenzied emotion, “the church would give its all, and would even sell its churches and its plates to give to the government the means to be used ‘that this nation of the people, for the people, and by the people would not perish from the earth.’” What better way to close than to quote Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Add-ress, America’s sacred text.10

The growing practice of linking God and country and blessing the American flag in worship services was too much for a strict Calvinist like Rev. Hoeksema. To honor the nation more than God smacked of a civil religion, not Christianity. The issue was joined for Hoeksema on Sunday morning, 10 February 1918, when he entered his pulpit and saw a flag on a staff in the front corner of the sanctuary. He said nothing until after the service, when he asked the consistory to have it removed before the evening service. They complied and that evening in the course of his sermon Hoeksema explained to the congregation that the flag “had no place in a church and that the national anthem should not be sung there.” Some congregants did not agree with their dominie and they broadcast his views far and wide. Understandably, in the charged atmosphere of the war, this brought an immediate public outcry.

Three local men, Frank Ledeboer, a physician, Jacob Geerlings, a mail carrier, and Bert Slagh, a storekeeper, appointed themselves a committee of three, and within two days they called on Hoeksema to “discuss” his beliefs and let him know that “some indignation had been aroused” around town by his rumored remarks. The trio took along a re-porter for the Holland Daily Sentinel, so that Hoeksema’s words could be fodder for a front-page story, under the headline, “Pastor Asked to Explain by Committee.”11 According to the newspaper, “a spirited discussion en-sued” and the dominie would not yield an inch. Hoeksema insisted that the Christian church, “as the manifestation of Christ’s body on earth, is universal in character; hence the church as an institution could not raise the American flag nor sing the national hymns.” The flag could be flown in the church edifice during choir concerts, Christian school graduation exercises, and similar events, but not during worship services. Members should also raise the flag at home, on the streets, and on all public and Christian school buildings. Hoeksema insisted that his congregants, as Christian citizens, “are duty bound to be loyal to their country” and to answer the call when needed for military service. Finally, he declared, “anyone who is pro-German in our time has no right to the name of Calvinist and is a rebel and traitor to his government.”12

Reverend Peter P. Cheff, minister of Hope Reformed Church, jumped into the fray immediately by penning a piece for the newspaper that challenged his colleague’s contention that the universal nature of the church precluded honoring the American flag. Hoeksema’s “proposition is illogical and wrong,” Cheff declared. “Does this universality exclude nationalism? Cannot a man love humanity and be a patriot just the same? Isn’t it perfectly proper to show one’s colors and not at all clash with the universal character of the church? If theology makes a man ‘neutral’ while in the house of prayer on the Sabbath, God deliver us from such theology.” Cheff continued: “The life of the church is interwoven with the life of the world so that you cannot separate the universal aspect of Christianity from the local colors.” Having dismissed Hoek-sema’s argument, Cheff would not lay down his pen before levying one more broadside; he charged the Dutch dominie with poisoning the “minds of men” by raising the “adder of disloyalty.” Cheff concluded: “I believe I voice the sentiment correctly when I claim that the best element feel ag-grieved and somewhat hum-iliated by the acute situation which has developed in our midst.”13

Within the week, Gerrit J. Diekema, former Fifth District U.S. Congressman and Holland’s leading citizen, took his best shot at the CRC cleric. Diekema told a large assembly at Winants Chapel on the Hope College campus, which had gathered to witness the unveiling of the Hope Service Flag and the reading of the Hope Honor Roll of servicemen, that Hoeksema’s rationale was not only “theological hair-splitting” but bordering on treason. That Diekema used the word “treason” in his “thrilling address” raised the ante considerably, especially when the audience greeted his remarks “with a loud and prolonged ap-plause.” Diekema, who had two sons in the military, almost worshiped the flag. In his eulogy, he declared: “If the flag stands for all that is pure and noble and good, it is worthy of being unfurled in any building on the face of the earth. The very portals of heaven would welcome such an emblem.”14

The attacks on his patriotism forced Hoeksema to respond with a long letter, which the paper published in its entirety alongside Cheff’s letter. “Every citizen has a right to absolutely fair treatment,” declared the Holland City News editor sanctimoniously. But he gave Diekema equal space for a refutation that immediately followed Hoeksema’s defense. Doubtless, the editor saw the newspaper war of words as a boon to sales.

Hoeksema responded with three main points, modeling the structure of his sermonizing, and he insisted he was speaking in defense both of himself and his entire denomination. He began on a questionable point, however, by asserting that the Protestant Refor-mation turned on the issue of religious liberty and the principle of the separation of church and state, which was embodied in the “laws of our own dear country.” This placed the emphasis on political theory, rather than Luther’s cardinal theological points of salvation by grace alone and sola scriptura.15

In his first point, Hoeksema took the typical debater’s tactic of insisting that his critics misunderstood the distinction he made between posting the flag during divine worship and at other times. He only opposed the former, not the latter. “You may be surprised to find Old Glory even in my own church building sometimes.” Not only did he honor the flag, he was willing to die for his country. “I am fully prepared to give my life for the country,” said the dominie, but “I am no less prepared to do the same for the truth of the word of God.” The war was just, Hoeksema noted, and he fully supported the president. He had never condoned the German tactics of sinking merchant ships and mercilessly marching through Belgium. These views are well known in the community, the cleric insisted. “How the gossip could spread that I was pro-German I fail to understand, unless for ecclesiastical differences, the ‘wish was father to the thought.’ No, Mr. Diekema, you are hopelessly mistaken if you call my attitude one of approximate treason: and mistaken you are again…if you try to present matters as if a certain college and a certain church had a monopoly of patriotism.” Christian Re-formed folk are “not the people that raise riots and insurrections, we are not the people that perform the work of spies, but we are loyal, obedient people on whom our country can rely!”16

Having stated his personal views on the patriotism and war, and hopefully disarming his critics, Hoeksema developed his second point on the Biblical and doctrinal necessity of citizens to support and pray for their government. He referred to historic Calvinism and the Heidelberg Catechism, which Diekema and Cheff, as Reformed adherents, were also duty bound to uphold. In the third and final part of his statement, Hoek-sema asserted his beliefs about the spiritual nature of the church. “In the church of Jesus Christ, we raise no flag, and sing no national anthems…. The church and state are separate, must be separate, and if you do not keep them separate, it is you who stab at the heart of all true liberty. Then you will either come to the domination of church over state, as is the ideal of Roman Catholicism, or to the subjugation of the church to the state, as was the condition in Old England, at the time of our Pilgrim Fathers.” Hoek-sema thus cleverly appealed to the anti-Catholicism of his readers and he tied his wagon to the revered Pilgrims, whom Diekema himself held up as precursors to the Dutch Seceders who had founded Holland in 1847. Both groups had been driven out of their homeland under persecution.17

Diekema enjoyed a fight as much as Hoeksema. In Diekema’s mind, the “self-delusional” cleric had displayed an “utter hopeless lack of good sense.” During war is no time for community leaders to waffle on patriotism. Everyone must to-gether fight the Kaiser and his master, the devil. The German “beast, armed with the greatest and cruelest military machine the world has ever seen,” is bent on “world domination through terrorizing humanity with murder and rape.” This beast had already devoured millions, Diekema continued as he warmed to his work, and “the very earth is trembling under our feet” and the “fate of humanity hangs in the balance.” At a time when “our sons and daughters are sinking to the bottom of the sea, are dropping from airships, crushed to earth, and are baring their breasts to German bombs and shrapnel, anyone who wastes his time in theological hair-splitting, rather than sincere patriotic effort, … is guilty of conduct which is next to treason…. If the shoe fits,” Hoeksema must “wear it.”18

Diekema then “hit below the belt” by quoting reactions of Hoeksema’s own congregation to their pastor’s sermon. “My blood ran cold,” said one. “I wanted to leave the church but seemed frozen to my pew.” Another averred that his pastor was “such a good preacher but seems to be such a poor American.” A third was more nuanced in his reaction. “I do not believe he is so wrong at heart but he is unfortunate in his expressions.” That Hoeksema caused his parishioners pain and distress was bad enough, said Diekema, but that he gave comfort to the enemy was totally unacceptable. Further, Hoeksema wrongly asserted that he spoke for his entire denomination, when his fellow CRC pastors, Marinus Van Vessum of First Zeeland, John H. Geerlings of North Street Zeeland, and U.S. Chaplain Leonard Trap at Camp Custer near Battle Creek, all had recently delivered “wonderful patriotic addresses” in a Zeeland church.

Diekema concluded with a ringing endorsement of un-bridled patriotism. “This is a Christian nation. Our flag represents God and Country. It is the emblem of Purity, Truth, Loyalty, Sacrifice, Liberty, and Justice. You cannot banish it from a church building, for although you may carry it out, it remains in all its glory engraved in the hearts of the people.” Although Diekema had vented his spleen and displayed his debating skills, he missed Hoeksema’s point entirely. The dominie welcomed the flag in church, just not during worship services.19

In addition to giving Cheff and Diekema space to refute Hoeksema, the Holland City News ran two more stories on the “flag in church” controversy. One noted that the Saturday evening edition of the Holland Sentinel had sold out as soon as it hit the streets and that at least two congregations—Hope Reformed and the Methodist Episcopal Church, had burst into spontaneous applause during Sunday morning worship services when their pastors mentioned the rightness of flying the flag in church.

The other story favorably reported an “out-spoken” oration on the “flag in church” controversy by editor Booth of the Grand Rapids Press in a well-attended Sunday evening service at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Holland, in which the American and congregational service flags were unfurled. Booth had earlier driven Van Lonkhuyzen out of Grand Rapids. The flag is the emblem of sacrifice, Booth declared. “Sacrifice is the center of civilization, and to the extent that the American flag stands for great sacrifice, to that extent it has a right to be placed in our Christian churches.”20

Within a month of Hoek-sema’s “flag in church” sermon, he declined letters of call from three congregations, two in Grand Rapids and one in Paterson, New Jersey. For a strong-willed man who relished a fight and was determined to defend the integrity of the Christian faith, this was no time to cut and run. Hoek-sema even had to ward off criticism from fellow CRC leaders. Reverend Henry Beets, pastor of the Burton Heights CRC in Grand Rapids and the influential editor of the denominational weekly, The Banner, scored Hoeksema for placing “Our People’s Loyalty Under a Cloud,” as he titled an editorial on March 14, 1918. Beets addressed the broader issue. “We want to claim here publicly that the great bulk of the charges of pro-Germanism among us, consists of unwarranted exaggeration, based upon one-sided information, or at least on misunderstanding, or both.” The apparent pro-Germanism is “in reality nothing but anti-British sentiment, created by historical conditions, some of them going back to the days of Cromwell and Charles II, and some of it dating from the Boer War.” Give the Dutch a little time “to get their bearings on the changing sea of world politics,” and they will overcome their psychological inertia and “change their mind.”21

That leading voices in the Grand Rapids CRC would not back the young cleric in Holland was not unexpected, given that they had not done so for Van Lonk-huyzen. But little did Hoek-sema expect that some members of his own congregation would act to embarrass him publicly and undermine his crusade. Early on a Sunday morning in mid-July 1918, just three months after the third letter of decline, some young people, led by James Dyke Van Putten, a future political science professor at Hope College, snuck into the church through the basement door and hung a huge American flag behind the pulpit. When the dominie and consistory entered the sanctuary for the morning service, they were shocked to find Old Glory filling the alcove from floor to ceiling. The sight “created no unusual stir during the services,” the City News editor noted in the understatement of the year. He went on to report that Reverend Hoek-sema, amazingly, carried on the service as usual, but only after informing the body that “the decorations were placed there unbeknown to him or members of the church consistory.” In the congregational prayer, he “made a fervent prayer for the soldiers,” but he also asked God to forgive those who committed “an act of rowdyism.”22 Having made their point, or perhaps in pangs of guilt, the pranksters just as craftily re-entered the church that Sunday afternoon and removed the national emblem before the evening service.

The newspaper report fail-ed to note that atop the pulpit Bible that morning, Hoeksema had found a note, signed by the American Protective League, that read: “This flag must and shall remain in this place.” It is reported that the “ensuing uproar, especially among the better folk in town, prompted Rev. Hoeksema to carry a pistol, which he threatened to use one night on some vigilantes near his home.”23

Hoeksema’s principled position against civil religion was further undermined the same week when a sister church, Maple Avenue CRC, at a congregational meeting voted “with a great deal of enthusiasm” to place the American flag in their sanctuary, along with a congregational service flag. The decision clearly had the approbation of the consistory and the pastor, Rev. John P. Battema.24

Following the July 1918 flag unfurling at Fourteenth Street Church, no further news accounts of the controversy appeared in the local press. The public war of words was over. Fifteen months later, in January 1920, Hoeksema announced that he had accepted the call extended to him by the Eastern Ave. CRC of Grand Rapids.25

That Herman Hoeksema was right, biblically and theologically, to challenge un-bridled patriotism within the walls of the Christian Church, is beyond question. But Hoeksema’s analysis was surprisingly simplistic. He drew on the patristic tradition to argue for the universality of the Christian church, but made no attempt to develop a doctrine of the church in relation to the state, such as, for example, his contemporary Rienhold Niebuhr did. In Niebuhr’s typology, Calvinists believed in transforming culture, not being made captive by it. But the dominie lost the propaganda war. In a time of national crisis, most Americans equated God and country, and saw Christianity and patriotism to be one and the same holy crusade against German totalitarianism and militarism.

One of the remarkable aspects of the controversy was the contrasting views of Reformed and Christian Reformed believers. The two churches shared a common ethnic and religious heritage, yet the differing rate of Americaniza-tion kept them apart. The “Dutch” Christian Reformed Church, which had gathered in most of the immigrants since the 1880s and sought to hold American cultural influences at bay, was better able to hold the line against the worship of national icons.

The Reformed Church, on the other hand, was thoroughly acculturated by 1917 and saw no conflict between American Christianity and America as a Christian nation. Indeed, it had been common for a century or more for Reformed churches to hold special patriotic worship services on the Sundays around Memorial Day and July 4th. Worshipers today find the American flag and other red, white, and blue banners prominently displayed, they sing patriotic “God and country” songs, veterans rise and receive ovations, children’s sermons celebrate the blessings of freedom, and church bulletins boldly display the national colors. Some pastors might even sport a stars-and-stripes tie.26

As CRC citizens have Americanized, many now also display flags in church sanctuaries during worship services and have adopted other patriotic gestures, with little thought to the theological implications. But some members, especially immigrants of the 1950s, recognized the myopia and challenged this mixing of God and country. They reminded fellow believers that they belong to a heavenly kingdom that is not of this world. Indeed, in 1984, the Worship Committee of the Fourteenth Street CRC decided to remove all flags from the sanctuary, and when a member objected, the elders stood behind their committee.27 On this point, at least, Hoeksema’s was finally vindicated.

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ENDNOTES

1 Holland City News, 11 July 1918; letter of Rev. Sytze De Bruine, De Hollandsche Amerikaan (Kalamazoo), 3 June 1918 (translation by Nella Kennedy); James P. Dahm and Dorothy Van Kooten in Peoria, Iowa: A Story of Two Cultures, With an In Depth Look at the Hollander Fires (rev. ed., Pella, Iowa: 1993), 80-81.

2 Jacob Van Hinte, Netherlanders in America: A Study of Emigration and Settlement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the United States of America, 2 vols., Robert P. Swierenga, general ed., Adriaan de Wit, translator (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1985), 760-63.

3 Holland City News, 13 June, 20 June 1918; Chas. Stuursma, “About the Peoria Incident,” The Banner, 13 June 1918; Van Hinte, Netherlanders, 761-63.

4 Holland City News, 2 August 1917; 25 April 1918.

5 The Anchor (Hope College), January 1918; Michigan Tradesman, 16 January 1918, both cited in Henry Beets’s editorial, “Our Peoples Loyalty Under a Cloud,” Banner, 14 March 1918, 180-82.

6 Van Lonkhuyzen, “Speelen met Vuur” Playing with Fire, De Wachter, 16 June 1915, translated by William Buursma; Grand Rapids News, 3 July, 29 July 1915; Grand Rapids Press, 3 July, 4 November 1915; Holland City News, 4 November 1915.

7 Jacob E. Nyenhuis, Centennial History of the Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan 1902-2002 (Holland, MI: 2002), 13-14; Holland City News, 14 February 1918; Holland Daily Sentinel, 13 February 1918; Michigan Tradesman, 6 March 1918.

8 Holland City News, 17 May 1917.

9 Ibid, 28 June 1917; 7 March, 14 March, 21 March, 30 May 1918.

10 Ibid, 14 March 1918.

11 Gertrude Hoeksema, Therefore Have I Spoken: A Biography of Herman Hoeksema (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1969), 81-82, which extensively quotes the Holland Daily Sentinel articles of 13-18 February 1918.

12 Holland City News, 14 February 1918.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid, 21 February 1918.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid, 28 Feb., 14 March, 11 April 1918; Beets, “Our People’s Loyalty Under a Cloud,” 180-81. Beets also published a lecture of Rev. R.B. Kuiper of the Sherman Street CRC of Grand Rapids, entitled “Christian Patriotism,” which he had delivered at Calvin College on April 11, 1918. Kuiper, the future president of Calvin College (1930-33), had “standing,” and his views set forth the “official” position of the CRC establishment (Banner, 6 June, 13 June, 20 June 1918, 418-19, 432-33, 452-53.

22 Holland City News, 18 July 1918; Jacob E. Nyenhuis, “A Century of Change and Adaptation in the First English-Speaking Congregation of the Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan,” 188, in Nyenhuis, ed., A Goodly Heritage: Essays in Honor of the Reverend Dr. Elton J. Bruins at Eighty (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). Whether due to the flag “break-in” or not, the consistory of the Fourteenth Street CRC did not renew janitor Kroze’s contract in 1919 and he was “asked to resign” as of May 1 (Consistory Minutes, 10 March 1919, quoted in Nyenhuis, Centennial History, 73).

23 James D. Bratt and Christopher H. Meehan, Gathered at the River: Grand Rapids, Michigan and Its People of Faith (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1993), 119.

24 Holland City News, 18 July 1918.

25 Ibid, 22 January 1920.

26 Brian Brooks, Hudsonville, Mich., letter to the editor, Church Herald, Jan. 2006, p. 6.

27 Fourteenth Street CRC, Consistory Minutes, 28 March 1984, as quoted in Nyenhuis, Centennial History, 133.

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Endnotes

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↑1 Holland City News, 11 July 1918; letter of Rev. Sytze De Bruine, De Hollandsche Amerikaan (Kalamazoo), 3 June 1918 (translation by Nella Kennedy); James P. Dahm and Dorothy Van Kooten in Peoria, Iowa: A Story of Two Cultures, With an In Depth Look at the Hollander Fires (rev. ed., Pella, Iowa: 1993), 80-81.

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↑7 Jacob E. Nyenhuis, Centennial History of the Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan 1902-2002 (Holland, MI: 2002), 13-14; Holland City News, 14 February 1918; Holland Daily Sentinel, 13 February 1918; Michigan Tradesman, 6 March 1918.

↑8 Holland City News, 17 May 1917.

↑9 Ibid, 28 June 1917; 7 March, 14 March, 21 March, 30 May 1918.

↑10 Ibid, 14 March 1918.

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