

**UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN
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Florida International University
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Doctoral Dissertation Defense

Abstract

Anti-Germanism in the American Southeast During World War I

by

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This study examines anti-German sentiment in the American Southeast during World War I. Most scholarly works that have examined anti-Germanism during the war have focused primarily on the Midwest where German-Americans were particularly numerous. Examining similar hysteria in the Southeast is worthwhile not only because of the lacuna in the existing literature, but also because this work contextualizes anti-Germanism with the two principal features of contemporary Southern distinctiveness: the race issue and the region's rural nature.

With regard to race, the Jim Crow South produced an idiosyncratic manifestation of anti-German hysteria - the fear that Germans would conspire with African Americans to sabotage the war effort. This fear was particularly prevalent in April 1917, when the US entered World War I. Aside from this feared German/Black alliance, the study will show that other elements of the hysteria, such as the spy scare, more closely followed the pattern of its manifestation elsewhere in the country. The attack on German culture was particularly fierce in the region and led to the banning of instruction of the German language in the schools of many communities. A principal source for the first two chapters are newspapers published in the relevant states from April 1917 when the US entered the war until November 1918 when World War I ended.

The later chapters analyze the roles of the more notorious demagogic populist leaders of the region and local councils of defense in regard to the hysteria. Some of these populist politicians joined the wave of anti-German appeals, others, for a variety of reasons did not, and suffered severe political consequences. Although, there was no discernible difference between the patterns of anti-Germanism in rural areas as compared to the cities, archival material of the Council of National Defense and state-level council documents show that the women's divisions of these organizations played a significant role in disseminating anti-German propaganda to rural schools and casts a new light on the participation of women in the war effort.

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