

Professor proved too controversial for IU

"That President (William Lowe) Bryan and those in authority at the University will deal with a firm hand all cases of disloyalty was evidenced in a striking manner when the so-called Zeuch case became prominent in University and state papers." *The (Indiana University) Alumni Quarterly*, Jan., 1918.

It all began when the university hired an instructor at the last minute. W.E. Zeuch was appointed to the department of economics and sociology to replace a professor who had resigned. A graduate of Lenox College in Iowa, Zeuch had been taking graduate courses at Clark University.

All was well until the young instructor sat down, took up his pen and wrote a letter to the *Hopkinton* (Iowa) *Leader* published in the town of the same name. In the latter he criticized the newspaper for a particular editorial policy.

Specifically, Zeuch wrote, "From time to time you have been inserting extracts from speeches and letters intended to leave the impressing upon the minds of your readers that the German people are a race of blood-thirsty, immoral brutes and thus stir the fighting passion of Americans to blood-letting heat."

In his letter, which appeared in the *Lead-*



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

er on Nov. 8, 1917, Zeuch reminded the newspapers' readers that "there are about fifteen millions of Americans in whose veins flows that very blood which they (the *Leader's* editors) are attempting to stigmatize and damn..."

Zeuch declared that stories of German atrocities were nothing more than fishwives' tales. "Why divide American allegiance by insulting the intelligence of every German-American with such unofficial, unauthenticated stories? The official ones will undoubtedly be black enough."

The idealistic young instructor made a fine distinction which many readers may have been incapable of understanding when he concluded his letter, "If you confine your policy to an attack upon Germany autocracy and militarism I will gladly cry

Amen..." He also wrote that he believed industrial autocracy to be the "worst crime of all."

The *Hopkinton Leader* fired back at Zeuch, "Will Prof. Zeuch contend that the war-lord who permitted the torpedoing of the *Lusitania* with its precious freight of women and children who could by no stretch of imagination menace the welfare of Germany; or the sinking of hundreds of ships of neutrals without attempting to save the lives of those on board; or the turning of guns lifeboats filled with victims of the unnatural and abhorrent scheme of submarine warfare. . . ."

Word gets around. Five days after Zeuch's letter had appeared the *Bloomington Evening World* had a front-page article which informed the readers that Zeuch was being investigated by Joseph E. Henley, chairman of the Monroe County Council of Defense, not to mention the university.

Suddenly, IU no longer needed Zeuch's services. Explained the *Alumni Quarterly*, "As soon as the matter was brought to the attention of President Bryan, he called a committee of professors of the University together and submitted the case to them."

The professors recommended that Zeuch be asked to resign, which he promptly did. Curiously enough, after Zeuch left the university he wrote a letter to the bursar, asking that the balance of his pay be sent to Ruskin, Fla., "where he would be stationed for the next week to 10 days."

Was he in the Army when he wrote that? It is a matter of record that he later received an honorable discharge from the Army.

Zeuch did some interesting things with his life. He received a Guggenheim Travel Fellowship, taught at Cornell University and the Universities of Wisconsin and Illinois. He even founded Commonwealth College in Arkansas.

Perhaps it was all an unfortunate misunderstanding. But President Bryan was very clear about how he felt. "In his (Zeuch's) published letter, he professes loyalty to the United States and the cause for which we are fighting, but without going into all the details, makes statements and implications about our soldiers of the Civil War and our soldiers of the present war which are untrue and intolerable. This University has no place for such a man."

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