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Scarlet Knights, Red Crusade: An Analysis of the Great Red Scare at Rutgers-New Brunswick

By Thomas Federowicz

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The Paul A. Stellhorn Undergraduate Paper in New Jersey History Award was established in 2004 to honor Paul A. Stellhorn (1947-2001), a distinguished historian and public servant who worked for the New Jersey Historical Commission, the New Jersey Committee (now Council) for the Humanities, and the Newark Public Library. An especially active and effective member of the New Jersey history community, he did much to expand the audience for New Jersey history and was an effective advocate for public history and a vigorous supporter of scholarship and publication about the state's history. As a program officer and a grants administrator he helped many of our present historians and humanities scholars to achieve their goals, whether as scholars, history agency personnel, or educators. He earned a Ph.D. in American History from Rutgers University with a dissertation about Newark during the era of the Great Depression. He was the author or editor of many works about New Jersey's past, especially about its urban history.

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Mickulas. Click here for more information. The following paper by Mr. Federowicz, nominated by Professor Richard L. McCormick, was one of two 2017 winners.

Among the many earth-shaking events of the first half of the 20th century, perhaps one of the most overlooked, and least discussed, episodes in American history is that of the Great Red Scare of 1919-1920. Sandwiched as it was between the two World Wars, the carefree euphoria of the Roaring Twenties, and the despondency of the Great Depression (each of which impacted every American citizen at the time in some way, shape or form) and later overshadowed by the demagogic rhetoric of the infamous Senator Joseph McCarthy during the Second Red Scare of the 1950s when the United States found itself locked in a struggle for global supremacy with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the First Red Scare, and the relatively fewer people it affected, makes it seem almost trivial in comparison. On the contrary, this incident of national mass hysteria, fear mongering, intolerance, and paranoia had a profound impact on many locales across the nation, especially industrial urban centers, including the city of New Brunswick and nearby Rutgers College. While a comprehensive survey of how various American cities and institutions of higher education were affected by the Red Scare is beyond the scope of this paper, I hope to examine how the perfect storm of socio-political factors at both the local and national levels contributed to New Brunswick's own Red Scare and its impact on the behaviors and activities of Rutgers students both during and immediately after the First World War.

One of the most important catalysts leading to the Red Scare was the Great War (1914-1918). Despite President Woodrow Wilson's attempts at neutrality in his first term, several increasingly provocative acts on the part of the German Empire gradually drew the United States into intervention in the European conflict. These included the sinking of the RMS *Lusitania*, a British ocean liner, in 1915 due to the Imperial German Navy's policy of unrestricted submarine

warfare resulting in the deaths of 128 Americans on board, and the diplomatic scandal in January 1917 involving the Zimmerman Telegram, a secret dispatch sent by the German foreign ministry to the Mexican government requesting the country to join the war on the side of the Central Powers and open the war in North America through an invasion of the United States in exchange for German support to regain the territorial lands of the American Southwest lost in the Mexican War of the 1840s, in blatant disregard of U.S. sovereignty. In April of 1917, President Wilson addressed Congress and finally requested a formal declaration of war against Germany.

This controversial decision, however, did not meet with wholesale approval from every American citizen and so it was hoped by elected officials that patriotic support for the war effort would be bolstered through the creation of several new government agencies and private organizations, such as the Committee on Public Information. According to historian Robert K. Murray, whose chronicle of the event tellingly appeared in 1955 at the time of the Second Red Scare and the similar deluge of mass hysteria and irrational paranoia brought on by McCarthyism, "During the conflict, the demand for absolute loyalty had permeated every nook and cranny of the social structure. Independent agencies such as the National Security League and the American Defense Society, together with the government-sponsored American Protective League, had converted thousands of otherwise reasonable and sane Americans into super-patriots and self-styled spy chasers by spreading rabid propaganda which maximized the dangers of wartime sabotage and sedition."[1]

Indeed, it was this action that caused the press to praise the newly fabricated ideology which came to be known as "Americanism" and denigrate the so-called "subversive elements" and "radicals" (a disparate group comprised of various left-wing factions, including socialists, Marxists

[1] Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955), 12.

and anarchists among others) opposed to American military involvement in European affairs on various socio-political, economic and/or ethical grounds. As Murray observes, "The public press had followed in the pattern set by the [Committee on Public Information[2]] and the net result had been an indoctrination of hate, prejudice and 100 percent Americanism on a colossal scale…Under such circumstances the free play of opinion and the opportunity for independent action had ceased to exist. The home front, unable to lay hands on the hated Huns, had made scapegoats of the 'draft-dodger,' the 'slacker,' and anyone else who did not conform."[3]

Only seven months after the United States declared war against Germany, America's fears of radicals and enemy sympathizers operating within the country and attempting to plan a proletarian uprising to overthrow the federal government were compounded by the outbreak of the Russian Revolution against the autocratic regime of Tsar Nicholas II and the subsequent Bolshevik uprising against the provisional government of Alexander Kerensky in October/November 1917. This fear stemmed from the massive labor unrest and strikes in major industries by America's own working class since the country's industrialization during and after the Civil War and through the Gilded Age in the second half of the nineteenth century. One byproduct of this labor unrest was the establishment of the Industrial Workers of the World, an international labor coalition that advocated industrial unionism for unskilled laborers in major industries (such as mining) and which also had ties to the Socialist Party of America and the ongoing anarchist movement, with many IWW adherents, or "Wobblies" as they were known, holding membership in one or more of these other groups. This hatred for the IWW was exacerbated by the fact that they, as an

[2] The Committee on Public Information, chaired by George Creel, was formed in 1917 and answered directly to President Wilson and his staff in the Executive Office. Their mission was to create enthusiasm for the war effort by invigorating a sense of patriotism among the American people through the dissemination of propaganda in order to influence public opinion and sway morale. It included various subdivisions, including a news bureau and a film bureau. Creel himself was a former journalist. The organization was finally dissolved in 1919.
[3] Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920,* 12-13.

organization, like the despised Bolsheviks, also opposed American participation in WWI. Their official stance was predicated on the grounds that the military-industrial complex, fostered by the capitalist system, allowed monopolistic business magnates and "robber barons" (like Cornelius Vanderbilt, John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie) to get richer in times of war through the exploitation of their employees, typically regarded as expendable in times of national emergency due to supply and demand and the surplus labor available to recruit on the market. The "Bolsheviki" came to be particularly despised by self-proclaimed patriotic organizations, such as the American Legion, not only because of their extreme leftist leanings in support of the working class, but also because they were regarded as German sympathizers and collaborators while Vladimir Lenin, smuggled back into Russia on a German train, came to be seen as an agent of the Kaiser. With the signing of the separate Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which took Russia out of the war on the Eastern Front, the Russian Bolsheviks came to be seen as traitors to the Allied cause.

Coupled with these international developments were several domestic factors, including the activities of the Socialist Party of America. Founded in 1901, by the time of American entry into the war, the party was split on the issue of supporting or opposing involvement in the conflict. Given the hostile climate to dissension at the time, this was not looked upon favorably by the populace. According to Murray:

> The general public, which heretofore had tolerated the Socialists, now unleashed a wave of hatred for these nonconformists. Newspapers and periodicals heaped calumny upon their heads, and patriotic societies ranted against their sedition. The Socialists' opposition to the war was universally regarded as irrefutable proof that they were either spies or pro-German and wanted the enemy to win….Throughout the country, Socialist headquarters were raided by mobs and sacked by soldiers, while individual Socialists were treated shamefully. The Socialists experienced difficulty not only with the general public but also with the government and courts. From time to time, federal and state authorities made official raids on Socialist headquarters… The courts applied the Espionage Law so stringently in Socialist cases that only a few were decided in favor of the defendants. [4]

[4] Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920,* 20-21.

It was also through tenuous associations with the Socialist Party of America that two separate organizations came to play a prominent role in radical activities in Middlesex County, specifically New Brunswick/Piscataway and on the Rutgers College campus: the Ferrer Modern School and the Intercollegiate Socialist Society.

Named in honor of Francisco Ferrer, a Spanish anarchist and educator who established a series of secular, anti-clerical private schools throughout Spain at the turn of the century, the Ferrer Modern School was founded in 1910 in New York City. Originally called the Ferrer Center, the student body was composed primarily of children of working-class Eastern European Jewish immigrants while the faculty were mostly from traditional Anglo-American families who had lived in the country for generations. As author Laurence Vesey, in his work on counter-cultures in America puts it, "Ethnically, though Jews predominated, a great variety of nationalities made the atmosphere at the Center cosmopolitan."[5]

The school itself boasted what might have been regarded as a "liberally unorthodox" curriculum for the time and offered, among other things, courses in free-form visual and fine arts as well as more traditional subjects. Veysey remarks that the "…English classes often included discussion of current and historical topics from a proletarian point of view. Courses on great radical thinkers of the past, on the history of philosophy…and on free thought and comparative religion were further mainstays of the program."[6]

The New York Center also hosted several guest speakers throughout the years. These included Margaret Sanger, who lectured on such topics as birth control and contraception, and Clarence Darrow, a leading member of the American Civil Liberties Union who would later go on

[5] Laurence Veysey, "The Ferrer Colony and Modern School of Stelton, New Jersey," in *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Counter-Cultures in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 80.
[6] Veysey, "The Ferrer Colony and Modern School of Stelton, New Jersey," 80.

to defend John T. Scopes' teaching of evolution in the Tennessee public school system in violation of the state's Butler Act in the infamous "Scopes Monkey Trial" of 1925. Another frequent guest speaker, and founder of the school/community center, was the notorious Alexander Berkman, the life partner of renowned anarchist Emma Goldman and a radical political activist in his own right whose attempt to assassinate American industrialist Henry Clay Frick in 1892 landed him a 22-year prison sentence (he would gain early parole in 1906 after serving only 14 years) and, eventually, deportation to Bolshevik Russia in 1919 at the height of the Red Scare. Ultimately, remarks Veysey, "…the Ferrer movement tried to link cultural and educational radicalism with a spirit of militant class consciousness. For a long time it ran the only progressive school in America which deliberately sought a working-class clientele. Bound into this effort were two distinct goals-that of initiating men, women and children into lives of free self-expression, and that of nurturing a collective social commitment."[7]

By 1914, with the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, American anarchists, just like the socialists, became increasingly divided not only over ideology but also over the best courses of action to achieve their socio-political objectives. While some "conservative" anarchists favored legitimate avenues to achieve their ends such as social programs and, ironically, political elections, others, like Emma Goldman and Luigi Galleani, advocated a more extreme and violent approach, known as "propaganda by the deed," typically entailing bombings and shootings. Vesyey reveals that the school "…came into being in a turbulent period…. The original moving force behind the Ferrer movement was the militant anarchist Emma Goldman. She had kept its impetus going during the earlier months when otherwise it might have quietly died. Most of its leading figures during the early years were her own friends or acquaintances, and some of them had been

[7] Ibid., 78.

specifically recommended by her."[8] These associates included Harry Kelly, one of the school's organizers and Leonard D. Abbott who would also be an influential figure in the creation of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, to which I will return shortly. Nevertheless, this connection to New York's aggressive anarchist movement eventually vanished when the school, thinking of what was in the children's best interest, decided to relocate to Piscataway, New Jersey in 1915, where they became known as the Ferrer Colony and, ultimately, settled next to the Fellowship Farm Cooperative, another utopian anarchist commune already operating in the area.

The founders of the school did not anticipate an entirely welcome reception from their neighbors and wanted to immediately dissociate themselves from the violent radicals who often frequented the building of the old New York school. In a New Brunswick *Daily Home News* article published shortly after the school's move to central New Jersey, Harry Kelly is quoted as saying that their being "criticized by their neighbors was but what could be expected… 'They will hear something about free education. They will say public schools are in existence… Possibly we will be able to tell them what free education really is…. Some of us have so many superstitions. We are suffering from the ghosts of our ancestors. When some great crisis happens as has happened in Europe to-day, we find that we are of the same flesh and blood as the rest of humanity.'"[9]

By all accounts, the inhabitants of the colony managed to get along fairly well with their neighbors during its first few years of existence. The real friction with the greater Middlesex community began in the immediate post-war period. Veysey remarks that "During the First World War and the Red Scare that followed it, those who lived at Stelton managed to avoid much of the highly political atmosphere which prevailed in New York. To be sure there were a few close

[8] Veysey, "The Ferrer Colony and Modern School of Stelton, New Jersey," 103.
[9] "Anarchist Colony Dedicated in the Presence of 200," *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, New Jersey), 17 May 1915.

escapes."[10] One of the most telling examples of the growing hostility towards radicals (at this point collectively called "Reds") was an incident that occurred on November 21, 1918, only ten days after the signing of the armistice which brought an end to the war. Veysey's study relates:

> When the colonists grew so bold as to hang a red flag from the top of their sixty-foot water tank in celebration of the German Revolution of 1918, armed vigilantes soon appeared-reportedly lead by a prominent New Brunswick businessman-and demanded that it be lowered. The colony was practically deserted at the time, but Joseph Cohen [one of the school's founders who invested funds in the charter] sturdily refused to comply with their order. Thereupon, they mounted the tower themselves, took down the flag and carried it off as a memento. Apparently they were satisfied with the gesture, for they never returned.[11]

An article published by the *Daily Home News* the following day quoted the leader of the posse, who did not want his name to be publicly revealed, as saying "This was just a little patriotic affair similar to some others which need attention in the section. If the red flags are again hoisted at Stelton, there will be less gentleness shown, but everything was peaceable yesterday….The purpose of the whole affair…is to keep New Brunswick and the surrounding district free from anarchy, extreme Socialism, and revolution and this we purpose to do."[12] The article later mentions that it was understood, according to reports, that the mounted troops of the Home Defense Guards, a wartime volunteer militia stationed in New Brunswick with the powers of an auxiliary police force and later a subsidiary unit of the New Jersey State Militia Reserve, were responsible for the act, but that they were not given any official order to do so. Captain Robert C. Nicholas, when questioned about the incident, stated "I know nothing officially of the matter. If any of the troop went on this mission, they did so without orders from anyone and acted simply as private individuals."[13]

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[10] Veysey, "The Ferrer Colony and Modern School of Stelton, New Jersey," 130.
[11] Ibid.
[12] "Red Flags Lowered At Stelton," *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, New Jersey), 22 November 1918, 1.
[13] Ibid., 3.

In addition to discussing the event at the Ferrer colony, the author of the article noted that a protest was also raised in relation to the display of a red flag in New Brunswick the previous day. The Home Defense Guards may or may not have played a role in this prior incident but their activities at Stelton make it plausible that they could have potentially been involved. As the article notes, "It is understood that the objectors to a red flag display also visited a French street place yesterday afternoon where an objectionable display was found and that here also removal of the red flag was secured without the employment of force."[14] Based on corroborating evidence during the course of my research, this "French street place" very likely might have been the headquarters of the Hungarian Socialist Workingmen's Organization of New Brunswick, founded in 1916, and, in contrast to the occasions just described, the scene of a comparatively aggressive mob riot earlier in the month.

At this point it is worth mentioning for background context that New Brunswick had a considerably large population of ethnic Hungarian immigrants by the time of the First World War who had come to the United States in a mass exodus in the late nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century to escape the autocratic regime of the Habsburg dual-monarchy in Austria-Hungary. Many Hungarians brought their socialist/left-wing political beliefs with them. The significance of the Hungarian-American cultural influence on New Brunswick continues to the present day with the annual Hungarian Festival celebrated in the city and the creation of the Rutgers Institute of Hungarian Studies in 1991. Regarding the incident in question, the article in the *Daily Home News* for November 12, 1918 states:

> The carrying of red flags by the Socialists in the parade yesterday afternoon, without American flags, aroused the ire of more than one 100 percent American, but none of the onlookers took any action until the members of the S.A.T.C.

[14]Ibid.

> [Student Army Training Corps[15]] at Rutgers got busy….The followers of the red flag were found to be holding a meeting in the Hungarian Socialist headquarters on French street. Hanging out of a window of the meeting room was the red flag. The students demanded that it be removed, but it was not put away as promptly as the crowd on the outside desired. One of the Socialist orators attempted to make a speech about the purpose of the meeting. Those on the outside only clamored that the red flag be removed. After a time it was removed and the American flag hung out. The crowd cheered this, but following the American flag came the red flag, waved by one of the participants in the meeting. This was enough for the crowd of soldiers and townsmen on the outside, and, led by a prominent member of the Rutgers football team and a sailor, they crowded into the place. The Socialists locked the door but it was quickly broken down…. The first thing they went for was the red flags, and there are many now in the hands of the raiders.[16]

When the mob broke into the building, the socialists managed to escape through a rear window and the flags were confiscated and taken back to the college campus to be distributed among those involved, which, judging from the passing mention of a "prominent member of the Rutgers football team" and corroborated by an article in *The Targum*, did indeed include a considerable number of students.

Given the fact that the socialist parade had occurred on the previous day on November 11, when the armistice with Germany ended the fighting on the Western Front and the nation was celebrating America's victory, the actions of the socialist marchers were considered especially provocative to the Rutgers students. It should be remembered that they were, for the duration of the 1917 and 1918 school years, for all intents and purposes, essentially enlisted reserve soldiers and the college campus virtually converted to an army camp administered, in part, by the Department of War where unpatriotic activities would not be tolerated. The November 20th issue of *The Targum*, Rutgers College's weekly student newspaper, also makes reference to the event, albeit from a slightly different perspective. Apparently,

[15] The Student Army Training Corps was the precursor organization to the U.S. Army ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) present on American college campuses during the nation's involvement in the First World War.
[16] "Take Red Flags from Socialists," *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, N.J) 12 November 1918.

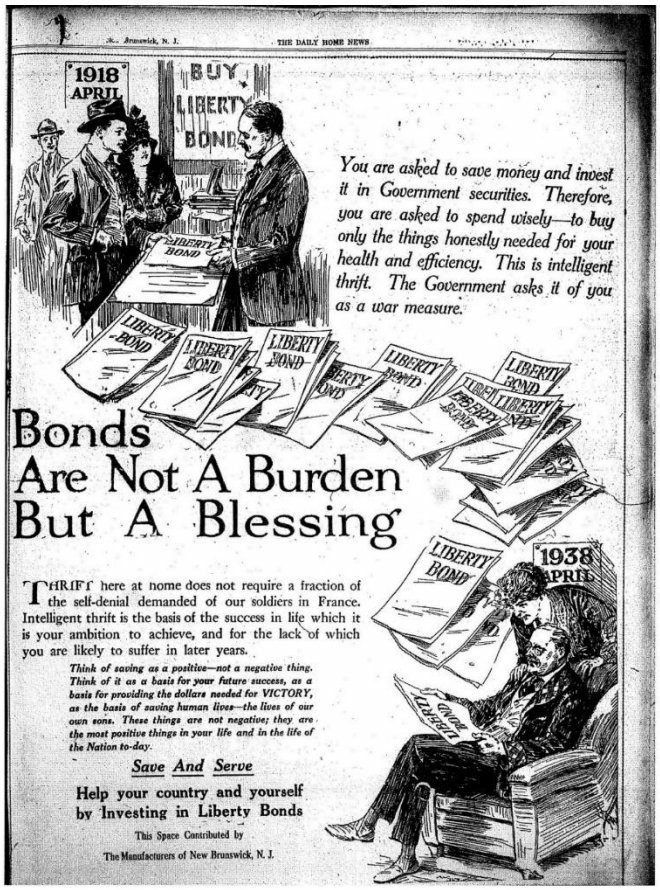
> The one feature of the War-End parade that was displeasing to Rutgers students was the rather large contingent of Socialists. It wasn't so much that they were Socialists as that they carried red flags and not American flags that caused the trouble…. A body of students set out to intercept the parade but soon discovered that the Socialists had detached themselves from the main body. Scouts were sent out at once, who soon reported that they were collecting at their headquarters on French Street. The headquarters were immediately surrounded and it was demanded that the red flags come down and American flags go up. The demand was not complied with, and in the short but snappy engagement which followed the Socialists were completely routed.[17]

Just as in *The Daily Home News* article, no specific student names were mentioned by *The Targum*. Nevertheless, as is evident from both periodicals, the reaction from the mob stands as a testament to the degree of enthusiastic patriotism expressed by the Rutgers men, the residents of New Brunswick, and, indeed, the city as a whole, for the war effort.

One of the first, and most noteworthy, events on the Rutgers College campus involving dissension that serves as an exemplary case study of the nation's suspicion and intolerance towards perceived "un-American" behavior was the attack on Samuel Chovenson on April 23, 1918. As has already been discussed, New Brunswick at the time was consumed by an ardent spirit of "100 percent Americanism," especially in the enthusiastic promotion of the Liberty Bond drives. In fact, on the very same day the episode in question took place, it was reported that a "Liberty Flag" would be presented to New Brunswick Mayor Edward Farrington on behalf of the city as an award for exceeding their fundraising quota for the Liberty Bond drive. According to the announcement in the newspaper, "New Brunswick received its Liberty Flag…from the Treasury Department of

[17] "Rutgers Students Give No Quarter to Red Flag," *The Targum* (New Brunswick, NJ) November 20, 1918, 1.

the United States for having oversubscribed its quota in the Third Liberty Loan…. The flag will be raised to the flag mast at Monument Square where it will fly with Old Glory…. Activity for the sale of bonds grows daily."[18]



This promotion for the sale of Liberty Bonds appeared on the exact same day as the attack on Samuel Chovenson. The ad was sponsored by The Manufacturers of New Brunswick, N.J., testifying not only to the spirit of "super-patriotism" that permeated the city, but also the close relationship between government and industry during the wartime period, with local businesses like Wright-Martin and Johnson & Johnson contributing significant quantities of materials to the war effort. Self-sacrifice, prudence and thrift are lauded as virtues expected of good, patriotic American citizens. (The Daily Home News- April 23, 1918; courtesy Rutgers University Libraries.)

It is important to remember that this newfound super-patriotism and the enthusiastic promotion of the Liberty Loan program, like the subsequent Red Scare, was heavily fueled by the press and a torrent of pro-war propaganda which had a domineering impact on public opinion. According to historian Murray, patriotism was "…preached to the American public by means of the written word, spoken word, motion picture, signboard, and poster, and had so directed its propaganda that 'every printed bullet might reach its mark.'"[19] Murray then went on to quote Frank Cobb, editor of the New York World at the time of World War I, who later claimed that "Government conscripted public opinion as they conscripted men and money and

[18] "Will Present Liberty Flag, Won by City, to Mayor Farrington", *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ), April 23, 1918, 1.
[19] Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920*, 12.

materials. Having conscripted it, they dealt with it as they dealt with other raw recruits. They mobilized it…. They goose-stepped it. They taught it to stand at attention and salute."[20]


Thursday, April 25, 1918.

His Daddy Has Gone To War

POOR LITTLE KID! He has played hard all day with the toy soldiers his father brought home to him the day he left for France. And he's been keeping his spirits up because his father said to him—"Boy, take care of your little mother—and keep her happy till I come home again." And he has been trying very hard to back up that soldier in France. As his head sinks down on his arm he sees that big soldier—his gun in hand, his face set towards Victory.

And as the soldier goes "Over the Top" he turns his head and smiles—smiles at the boy who means so much to him—who stands to him for home, country, love, happiness, success—all he holds most dear.

Look well at this Child! He represents the future of America—the future of Liberty—to your share to help his father win the great fight for all the children of the world.

BUY LIBERTY BONDS

and give your child the opportunity of growing up in a clean and splendid world

This space is made available to the Government by the advertising of Liberty Bonds by the

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE CO.

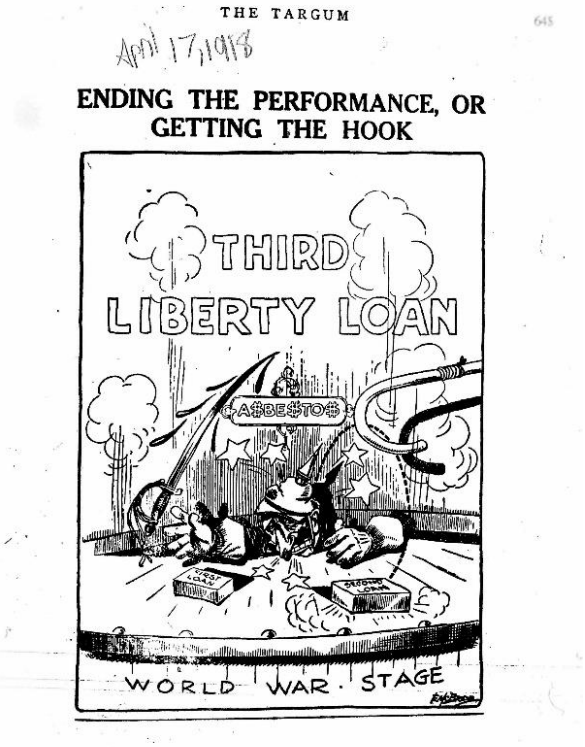
LIBERTY LOAN COMMITTEE

An advertisement for Liberty Loans appears in the April 25, 1918 edition of the New Brunswick Daily Home News. Appealing to readers' sympathies, the ad declares that the child, whose father was deployed to France as part of the AEF, represents the future of America and implores readers to "give your child the opportunity of growing up in a clean and splendid world." (The Daily Home News-April 25, 1918, courtesy Rutgers University Libraries.)

Ads for investment in war bonds being sponsored by local businesses and political cartoons promoting their sale saturated the nation's papers, including *The Daily Home News*. Catchy jingles above the main headlines ("Yours Is Not To Do And Die, Yours But To Go And Buy!"[21], "A Bond Slacker is the Kaiser's Backer!"[22]; "Your Gun to Shoulder, Be a Bond Holder"[23]) advocated their sale and emotional editorial pieces intended to tug at readers' heartstrings featured illustrations of the reputedly barbaric acts committed by the "Huns" against the liberty-loving nations of Europe, especially Belgium which proclaimed neutrality from the outset of hostilities but, nevertheless, was invaded by Germany in the opening days of the war. Other sentimental stories portrayed American doughboys sacrificing themselves

[20] Ibid.
[21] *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ), April 23, 1918, 1
[22] *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ), April 24, 1918, 1.
[23] *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ), October 8, 1918, 1.

"over there" to protect American freedom and make the world, in Wilson's words "safe for democracy".



This advertisement for New Brunswick's Third Liberty Loan campaign appeared in the April 17, 1918 edition of The Targum, the weekly published Rutgers College student newspaper exactly one week prior to the Chovenson incident. It testifies to the high degree of "100-percent Americanism" present on the Rutgers College campus during the First World War. (The Targum, April 17, 1918, courtesy Rutgers University Libraries.)

Liberty Loan ads were also prevalent in wartime issues of *The Targum*, Rutgers College's student newspaper. In April 1918, both the city and Rutgers found themselves in the midst of the Third Liberty Loan campaign, and it is against this backdrop of patriotic fervor that the events leading up to, and during, the incident must be understood.

On the day in question, April 23, Samuel Chovenson refused to speak on behalf of the Third Liberty Loan in Prof. E. Livingston Barbour's public speaking class. According to *The Daily Home News*, "…word of his seditious actions went the rounds of the student body, stirring up the patriotic young men, until everyone was demanding that some action be taken."[24] Ultimately, the students took matters into their own hands. After he finished his drilling with the Rutgers Cadet Corps[25] for the day, Chovenson was seized by unnamed assailants (but very likely

[24] "Samuel Chovenson Gets a Rebuke at Hands of Rutgers Men-Given Ride on Plank and Warned to Leave Town," *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ) April 24, 1918, 1.

[25] The Rutgers Cadet Corps was an older student military training program established in the 19th century during the period of the American Civil War and unaffiliated with the later SATC.

members of the ROTC and/or the SATC) and locked in a dormitory in the recently finished Ford Residence Hall for approximately five hours. At around 9:30 in the evening, the article continues,

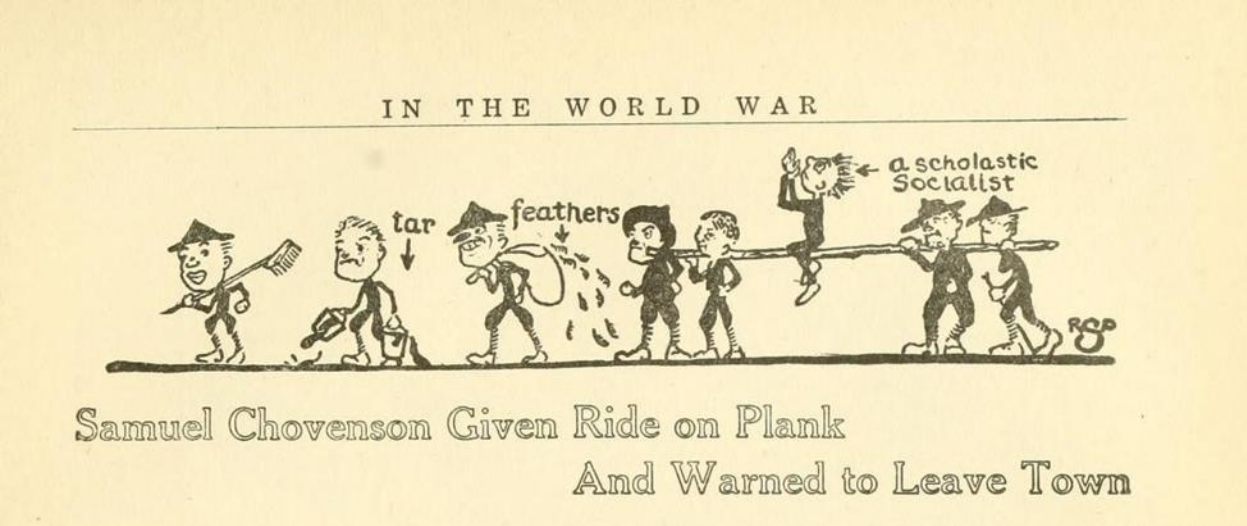
> ...[Y]oung men began flocking to George Street near the Johnson and Johnson plant. In a few minutes' time, a group of four hundred men were present. Chovenson, under the escort of two young men in the uniform of the R.O.T.C. and still maintaining that he would be a martyr to his beliefs, though he was given a chance for liberty several times during his imprisonment if he would denounce his utterances and come out in favor of the Liberty Loan and the United States, was quietly removed to the canal bank opposite Neilson Field….While the crowd waited, the committee in charge…stripped him of his Rutgers Cadet Corps uniform and, leaving him with nothing but a pair of running pants upon his body, began to paint him with molasses.[26]

After essentially being "tarred and feathered," Chovenson was then hoisted onto a wooden plank and made to "ride the rail," a common punishment from the 18th to early 20th centuries employed to run the victim out of town, often while blindfolded. Chovenson's humiliating "passion parade" continued on its march as the *Daily Home News* report went on to disclose that:

> "At every corner, new recruits were added until by the time the procession reached Albany Street, five-hundred men were in line. Signs were carried at the head of the line bearing the inscriptions, 'He's a Bolsheviki,' 'He is against the Liberty Loan and the U.S.A.' and 'This is what we do with pro-Germans.' The procession moved along George Street in a very orderly manner, the curbs being crowded with people from the theatres who were demanding more severe punishment for the offender. Numerous soldiers were spectators and were especially anxious to get to the "tarred and feathered" young man. The line moved to George and Liberty streets where it counter-marched to George and Albany. At this point the blindfold was removed and Chovenson was allowed to go free….Chovenson has apparently taken the gentle hint tendered him last evening and it is reported that he has left town. He did not put in any appearances at his classes and the report has it that he has gone for good."[27]

(Scroll for image.)

[26]"Samuel Chovenson Gets a Rebuke at Hands of Rutgers Men-Given Ride on Plank and Warned to Leave Town," *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ) April 24, 1918, 1.
[27] *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ), April 24, 1918, 3.

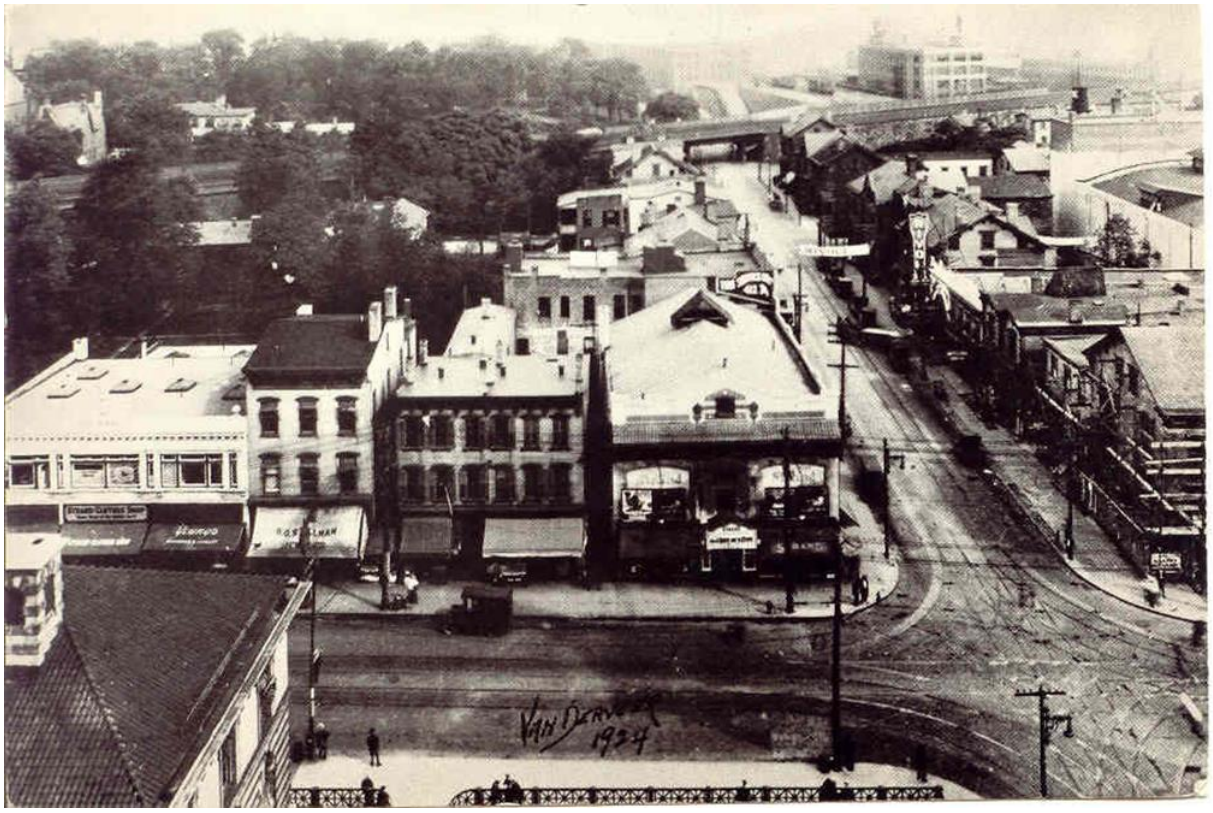


This illustration, which appears in John P. Wall's History of New Brunswick, New Jersey in the World War, 1917-1918 (1920), portrays a caricatured depiction of the treatment meted out to Rutgers College student Samuel Chovenson at the hands of an angry mob on April 23, 1918. The figure representing Chovenson is tellingly labeled as a "scholastic socialist" while several of the other figures, particularly those wearing Stetson campaign hats and khaki uniforms, are most likely the members of Rutgers' SATC and ROTC who kidnapped, tarred and feathered him, and rode him on a rail out of town. The artist is unknown.

The information in this article is extremely valuable in that it relates how the general American public dealt with subversive elements and dissidents on an intimately detailed level. One interesting detail of the article is that the crowd repudiated Chovenson as both a pro-German sympathizer and a Bolshevik when, in reality, sympathizers in these two camps believed in very different political ideologies- autocracy and Prussian militarism in the case of the former and Marxism-Leninism in the case of the latter. This conflation of the two labels was reinforced in people's minds by Lenin's signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk a month later in March 1918. The news of a separate peace brokered on the Eastern Front was despised by Americans as the betrayal of an ally, leaving them to face the full fury of the German army on the Western Front. Indeed, "Advocates of the Bolshevik movement were variously and interchangeably described as being 'German agents,' 'criminals,' 'anarchists,'… 'beasts,' and 'economic imbeciles.' Almost

overnight the word 'Bolshevik' became synonymous with 'treason' and anyone in the United States who by word or deed tried to hamper the further execution of the war was so named."[28]

We are also able to glean several other valuable bits of information on Chovenson from the *Home News* article, including the fact that he was attending Rutgers College on a scholarship and that he apparently was not an American citizen. Born between 1898/1899 in the Russian Empire and, judging from his scholarship, an apparent overachiever in his studies, which was considered anathema to mainstream college culture at the time (and perhaps still is today in some



A 1924 photograph with a view of the intersection of George and Albany Streets in downtown New Brunswick, New Jersey, where, six-years prior, an angry mob paraded Rutgers College student Samuel Chovenson before running him out of town. Photo courtesy of the New Brunswick Free Public Library.

respects), he would have been particularly susceptible to being ostracized and branded a foreign dissident and nonconformist. Together, these two traits would have constituted yet two more

[28] Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920*, 34.

strikes against Chovenson because of the genuine air of distrust among college men of the stereotypical foreign-born, radical intellectual spreading subversive ideas to incite revolution, akin to Karl Marx in his *Communist Manifesto*. This was especially scandalous given the terroristic practices (shootings, bombings, etc.) advocated, and at times carried out, by Italian, Jewish and Eastern European anarchists, especially during the string of anarchist bombings in 1919, coupled with the general xenophobia that pervaded American society as evidenced by the resurgence, in the early 20th century, of the Ku Klux Klan which vilified, besides their usual African-American targets, newly arrived Catholic and Jewish immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe.

Six days after the violence against Chovenson, *The Daily Home News* reported that socialists were declaring the abuse Chovenson received at the hands of the mob a "lynching" and were planning to hold a protest meeting in response. The announcement apparently made quite a stir among the city's residents and highlights the discrimination that left-wing groups increasingly received across the country as reports of the chaos and bloodshed of the Bolshevik Revolution filtered out of Russia. According to *The Daily Home News*, the meeting was originally

> …scheduled to be held at Columbia Hall…but…Father Quinn, curate at St. Peter's church, stated that under no circumstances will permission be granted to hold a protest meeting. He stated that the hall was hired for a public meeting, but no mention was made of a Socialist protest meeting. He declared the permission to hold the meeting will be revoked…If the meeting is held, there will undoubtedly be a large audience in attendance, as the Rutgers students will be out in force. The students are much worked up over the refusal of Chovenson to speak on the Liberty Loan and are ready to apply a coat of molasses and feathers to any student who is not one hundred percent American.[29]

The article closes by mentioning that Harry Laidler of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society was advertised to speak. We will return to him to him in a moment.

[29] "Socialists to Hold Protest Meeting in Chovenson Matter", *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ), April 29, 1918, 1.

After the Socialist Party of New Brunswick was denied a venue to hold their event, its members instead decided to post their flyers, which they originally intended to pass out at the meeting, in various locations across the city one week later between May 6 and 7. Addressed in the form of an open letter to the people of New Brunswick, it asks, in bold letters "Do You Want Mob Rule?" After quoting Woodrow Wilson's condemnation of mob violence and vigilantism as anathema to American democracy and discussing the specifics of the incident, it goes on to exonerate him on various grounds and makes the claim that, in reality,

> …the Liberty Bond incident was merely the excuse for this unjustifiable incident, not its cause. For months past certain of the students had been declaring that they were trying 'to get him' and 'beat him up.' Chovenson asked his detractors whether they could change his views by 'beating him up.' They answered, 'No, but that such treatment would close his mouth. Chovenson thereupon queried: 'Why do you not try to change my views by argument?" The frank reply came: 'We don't know as much as you do on these subjects.' Hence the usual resort, suppression. In fact the real cause of the grievance of the students seemed to be that Chovenson was an active member of the Socialist Party of New Brunswick; that he had participated in a mass meeting held to celebrate the Russian [R]evolution and that he was propagating his socialistic ideas. They realized that their victim was sincere, and wished only the welfare of mankind, and at the same time admitted their own ignorance regarding social problems. Yet that very ignorance seemed to make them the more chagrined. They seemed unable to stand the flaming light of truth….Must every person reason in the same way, think the same thoughts, say the same things, like a flock of sheep? Would such Prussianization help us the better to eliminate Prussianism from the world?[30]

The broadsheet concludes by lamenting the fact that the

> …saddest part of this whole affair is that it was the result not of an ignorant, unthinking mob, but of a group of students who supposedly had enjoyed a training in tolerance; in law; in order; who had studied the results of religious and intellectual persecution in the past and who realized that an idea cannot be crushed….The event will remain a black spot upon the escutcheon of our fair institution. People of New Brunswick, we appeal to you to protest against this outrage. It is for you to show the world that you indignantly repudiate this thing; that you protest against mob rule within your borders. Will you not demand that the authorities of Rutgers denounce this act and do their part, while we are fighting to

[30] "An Open Letter To The People Of New Brunswick Specifically And To The Public In General", May 6, 1918, Records of the Rutgers College War Service Bureau, RG 33/C0/01, Box 15, Folder 6, Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries.

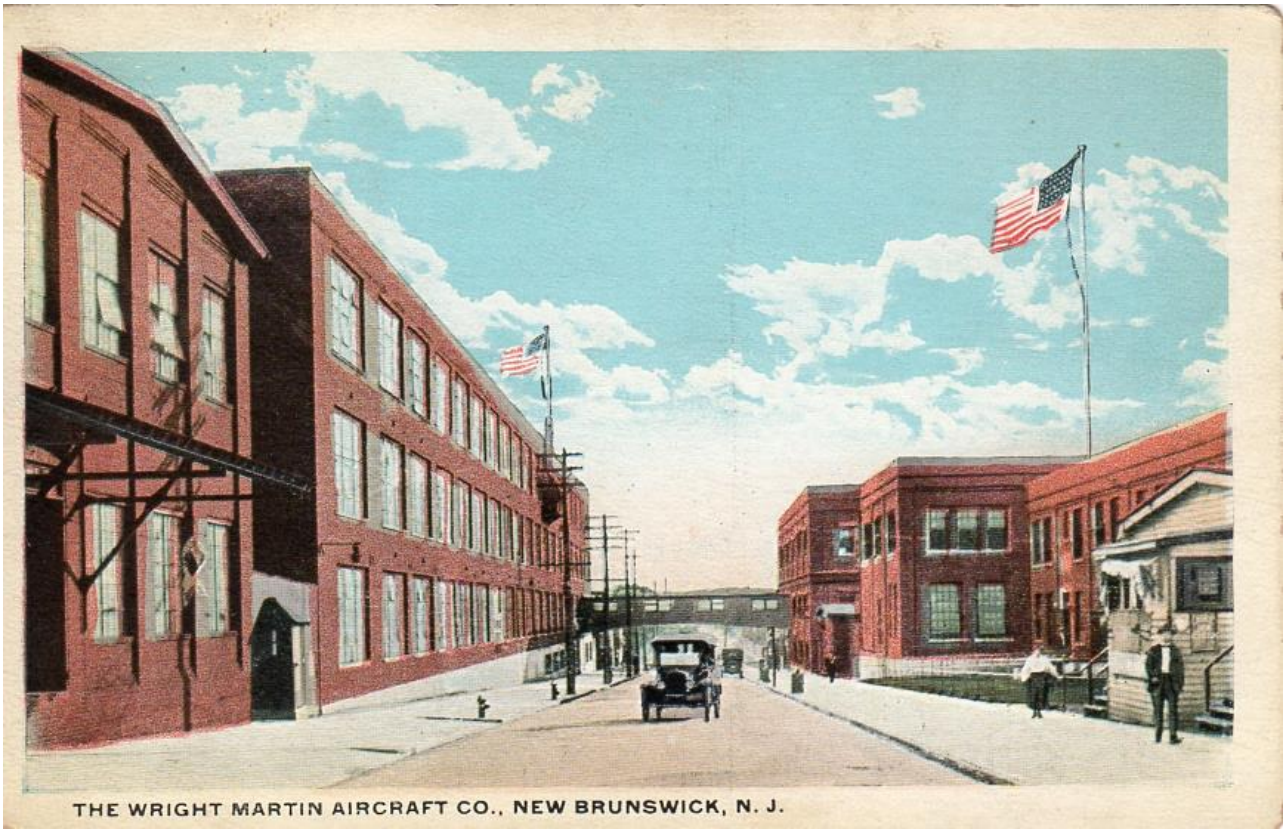
> make the world safe for democracy, to see that Rutgers does its part toward making the college safe for fair play?[31]

This appeal, jointly endorsed by the Socialist Party of New Brunswick and The Workers' Liberty Defense League, would not be heeded. In contrast, according to an article in *The Daily Home News* on the following day, May 7, 1918, the citizens of New Brunswick were "incensed" over its dissemination across their city. The article reveals that "The circulation of the open letter has caused a furor among our townspeople, and this morning a strenuous protest was made to the local authorities against a further circulation of this letter upon the streets of New Brunswick." [32] One New Brunswick resident by the name of J. Howard O'Shea, who worked in the city's Wright-Martin plant, went on the record rhetorically asking readers to "…show me the man-with red blood in his veins- that would not censor, embarrass and humiliate anyone who has refused to back up the Government in its financial appeal for just a small loan at a mighty good rate of interest…. Oh, Holy Ghost! Enlighten our Socialist friends on the real persecution in true Prussian spirit. Certainly you Socialists do not think that that Kaiser would give you a sweet coat of molasses if he caught you in No Man's Land! I will say that that the Rutgers students should be applauded for their American sentiment, which had no idea to injure, but has had an effective effect judging from the fact that the 'Socialists' forgot to place any of their 'John Hancocks' upon the amusing circular."[33] Coincidentally, John Wall's *New Brunswick, New Jersey in the World War, 1917-1918*, mentions that that the Wright-Martin plant, which manufactured aircraft for the U.S. Army Air Corps, was

[31] Ibid.
[32] "Socialists Circulate Open Letter: Action of Rutgers Students in Riding Chovenson on Plank Protested-Citizens Incensed Over Distribution of Letter on City Streets," *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ) May 7, 1918.
[33] "Socialists Circulate Open Letter," *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ) May 7, 1918.

taken over by the federal government at the beginning of the year in January so Mr. O'Shea's views may not be from an entirely impartial standpoint.

The response of the Rutgers faculty, whom the circular implored to denounce the incident, is also revealed in the article, which includes a reaction from Prof. E. Livingston Barbour in whose lecture Chovenson originally refused to speak on behalf of the Liberty Bond. In regards to the



This postcard depicts the Wright-Martin Aircraft plant as it appeared in the city of New Brunswick in the early 20th century. Photo courtesy of: www.kenlew.com

flyer, Barbour stated that

> …he had heard of its circulation, but had not seen a copy of it. Speaking about the refusal of Chovenson to speak on the Liberty Loan, Prof. Barbour stated that he had called on Chovenson to make an impromptu speech and he refused, stating that he was not prepared. The next week, Prof. Barbour stated, he again called on Chovenson, and on that occasion he declared, Chovenson said he did not wish to speak on the question. 'As far as the class room work was concerned, his refusal closed the incident,' said Prof. Barbour. 'He was given a mark of zero, and nothing

> more was said about his refusal to speak on the loan subject. What happened thereafter was done by the boys.'[34]

While his official statement to the paper appears to demonstrate objectivity, Prof. Barbour may have not have been entirely unbiased in his personal opinions toward the Chovenson incident and the war effort. Wall's account, published in 1921, reveals that, during the war, Barbour volunteered to serve in the "Four Minute Men", a subdivision of the aforementioned Committee on Public Information, comprised of prominent and respected members of the local New Brunswick community charged with promoting the purchase of Liberty Loans. Wall's work even mentions that Barbour's wife served on the Women's Liberty Loan Committee.[35] Besides Prof. Barbour, this group also counted several other Rutgers professors, a local judge and former Rutgers College President Dr. Austin Scott (who served as mayor of New Brunswick from 1912 to 1915) among its ranks. As Wall's near-contemporary account puts it, "It was therefore, in March 1917, decided to organize a group of speakers for the purpose of carrying whatever message the authorities in Washington thought proper and advantageous to the people. The title 'Four-Minute Men' was given in a duel reference to the Minute Men of the Revolutionary War and to the time limit necessarily imposed upon speakers who were to appear during brief intermissions in Theatres, Moving Picture Houses, and, in fact, every place where people congregated."[36]

Perhaps the most significant "Four-Minute Man" for the purposes of this paper was Dr. William H. S. Demarest, who was then serving as the president of Rutgers College. Holding an advanced degree as a Doctor of Divinity and being a reverend accustomed to delivering sermons to congregations would have given him the perfect skill set to appeal to the hearts and minds of

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[34] Ibid.
[35] John P. Wall, *New Brunswick, New Jersey in the World War, 1917-1918* (New Brunswick, NJ: S.M. Christie Press, 1921), 106. https://archive.org/details/newbrunswicknewj00wall.
[36] Ibid., 156.

his audiences in supporting the war effort. A sample of one of his speeches in support of the Third Liberty Loan drive, the very one which Chovenson refused to speak on, is also included in Wall's chronicle:

> God has put into us certain talents which he expects to be returned with interest. He expects us to use these talents in this war to the fullest extent. Unity makes strength. That is the lesson of today. There must be unity of purpose in these times, and upon every person devolves some responsibility for the winning of this war. It is the spirit that is going to triumph in this great conflict. The candle is the spirit of the Lord, and in this conflict the candle is our spirit. In this great war it is not only the great sacrifice of our boys whose blood will enrich the soil of France, but it is the sacrifice of the people at home, that will conquer. The folks at home must keep the fires burning. We must make some sacrifice to save and we must also make some sacrifices in our giving also.[37]

Needless to say, Chovenson would probably not have received very much sympathy from either the Rutgers College faculty or the administration had he filed a grievance on his treatment.

One significant person who was concerned with Chovenson's welfare, however, was Harry Laidler, the secretary of the National Executive Committee of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society (ISS), which I briefly mentioned earlier. Founded in 1905 by a group of prominent intellectuals involved in the socialist and progressive movements in the early 20th century, the ISS counted several notable political activists who signed the foundational charter among its ranks. These founding members included, among others, Upton Sinclair, the reform-minded novelist recognized for his muckraking novel *The Jungle* which exposed conditions in the American meatpacking industry, attorney Clarence Darrow, feminist author Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and British-American political activist Leonard D. Abbott, a prominent figure in the anarchist movement who, as previously mentioned, was also influential in the establishment of the Ferrer Modern School in New York City which later relocated to Stelton, New Jersey.

[37] Wall, *New Brunswick, New Jersey in the World War, 1917-1918*, 70-71.

Harry Laidler was, in fact, the only member of the NEC who was actually a college student at the time and who served as organizing secretary for the duration of the society's existence until its dissolution in 1921. According to the official constitution of the organization, the stated mission of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society was "…to promote an intelligent interest in Socialism among college men and women by the formation of Study Chapters in universities and colleges, and among alumni; by providing speakers, and placing books and periodicals on Socialism in college libraries and reading rooms; by holding public meetings, and by publishing or otherwise providing such literature as may be required."[38] The ISS, then, was interested in encouraging debates among college students on the merits of socialism from a purely academic standpoint and was not interested in the political aspect of the movement, despite Morris Hillquit, a founder of the SPA, serving as an appointed officer on the National Executive Committee. Indeed, Max Horn's research found that "…many members of the ISS executive committee were also members of the Socialist party…. But this did not result in either organizational or ideological control of the ISS by the party....The ISS took no official position on ideological issues debated within the international socialist movement or the Socialist Party of America."[39]

In his letter to President Demarest, dated June 8, 1918, Laidler relates that

> Several prominent men and women in New York have taken an interest in the case, and have felt very definitely that such treatment by students was absolutely against the…desired results of President Wilson's and Attorney-General Gregory's admonitions on the subject of mob-rule. These men and women wished me to find out the exact facts of the case prior to any statement on their part. I wonder whether you will kindly let me know whether the facts as given above are correct, and whether the authorities have taken any action in this case.[40]

[38] Max Horn, *The Intercollegiate Socialist Society, 1905-1921: Origins of the Modern American Student Movement*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), 225.
[39] Ibid., 43-44.
[40] Harry Laidler to William Demarest, June 8, 1918, 1-2, Records of the Rutgers College War Service Bureau, RG 33/C0/01, Box 15, Folder 6, Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries.

A letter to from Demarest to Laidler in reply to his inquiry dated June 12 brusquely states that his letter was received and that, if he wished to converse on the matter any further, to come to New Brunswick to discuss the issue in person. A further response from Laidler on June 24 lays out scheduling arrangements in which he asks Demarest what a preferable date for their appointment should be, however no further documentation in the archives exists to reveal whether or not their planned meeting took place.

The most intriguing question raised by this correspondence is why the Intercollegiate Socialist Society was interested in Samuel Chovenson in the first place? The most obvious reason would be that Chovenson was a member of the ISS and, to be sure, according to the headings on ISS stationery listing the various "study chapters," one did in fact exist at Rutgers College. Rutgers' own Nobel Prize-wining biochemist Selman Waksman served as chapter secretary sometime between 1911 and 1916. While no conclusive evidence exists definitively proving his membership in the group and no mention of the society is made in any of the Scarlet Letter yearbooks during the years of its existence, circumstantial evidence leads me to believe that Chovenson was very likely an ISS member in his freshman year.

Besides revealing that he was actively involved in the Socialist Party of New Brunswick, according to the flyers distributed protesting his abuse, Chovenson, like Waksman, was also a foreign-born academic, both men being born in Tsarist Russia in the late nineteenth century. According to Horn, "It is indisputable that a great many members of ISS college chapters excelled in their studies while in college and then went on to distinguished careers in the professions they entered."[41] As discussed earlier, Chovenson was attending Rutgers College on a scholarship and the flyer reveals that his fellow students seemed to take offense at his studious ways as an

[41] Horn, *The Intercollegiate Socialist Society, 1905-1921: Origins of the Modern American Student Movement*, 87.

overachiever. In reality, this acrimonious attitude was part of a general trend, at least among American college men, in the early twentieth century. Historian Horn says that "The ISS appeared at a time when serious study was frowned upon, if not actively discouraged by college students everywhere. Even at Harvard, the 'gentleman's C' was the mark of distinction for any student who did not wish to incur the displeasure of his peers. In this climate of rampant anti-intellectualism, the ISS insisted that college men and women had an obligation to undertake the systematic study of the socialist philosophy, and to try to understand the nature of the worldwide socialist movement as well as other movements of social reform."[42]

Possibly the most infamous, and well known, climactic events of the Great Red Scare in the post-war period were the Palmer Raids of 1919-1920. Louis F. Post, who served as Assistant Secretary of Labor in the Wilson administration from 1913 to 1921, describes the raids in great detail in his personal account of the events surrounding the "Red Crusade" and the flurry of mass deportations that preceded it. In Post's own words, he describes the raids as

> …lawless invasions of peaceable assemblies-public and private, political, recreational and educational. Meetings wide open to the general public were broken up. All persons present-citizens and aliens alike without discrimination-were arbitrarily taken into custody and searched as if they had been burglars caught in the criminal act. Without warrants of arrest, men were carried off to police stations or other temporary prisons, subjected there to secret police-office inquisitions commonly known as the "third degree"….The sole excuse for these outrages was the mere presence of the victims at those open and lawful meetings….The day after the January raiding began, accounts of it from all quarters were of course broadcasted by the press over the country. Local news reports were gathered by local reporters for their respective local papers, but the material for the comprehensive news stories that went out from Washington, principally through the Associated Press, was supplied by the Department of Justice. One of these widely published inspirations, justifying the lawless raids by reference to "the seriousness of the attempt to overthrow this Government" told of a discovery by the raiders of four bombs in a Communist Party meeting place. Those bombs were the only ones discovered in all the January raids.[43]

[42] Ibid., xiv.
[43] Louis F. Post, *The Deportations Delirium of Nineteen-Twenty: A Personal Narrative of an Historic Official Experience* (New York: De Capo Press, 1970), 92-93.

The coordinated raids on the meeting places and homes of suspected radicals in early 1920 were overseen by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, the head of the U.S. Department of Justice and aided in the field by agents of the Bureau of Investigation (BOI), the precursor to the FBI, and local police forces. While it has been theorized that the primary motivation for the raids conducted by Palmer was to further his own political agenda, another factor literally hit closer to home for him. To briefly summarize, a string of anarchist bombings swept the nation between April and June 1919 the previous summer. These bombs were sent through the mail to various recipients via the U.S Postal Service. One of their intended targets was Palmer himself and an unknown criminal planted a bomb on the front porch of his Washington residence, which happened to detonate prematurely, destroying the front of the residence and killing the unidentified culprit in the blast. As Post puts it, "It would have been natural that Attorney General Palmer should have been nervously disturbed by the June explosion in front of his residence. Powerful enough to annihilate the supposed perpetrator, that explosion would have wrecked the building and slain its inmates had the explosive material been better placed for the apparent purpose. Consciousness of an escape so narrow, supplemented with assurances of trusted detectives that 'radical' agitators were promoting these crimes on a vast scale, could over-excite even less dramatic men in Mr. Palmer's place."[44]

The effects of the Palmer Raids reverberated throughout the early months of 1920 and even extended to the Rutgers College campus. In an official dispatch, dated February 27, 1920, from the Office of the Attorney General in the Department of Justice, Palmer himself warned President Demarest of the dangers of the "ultra-radical movement" that supposedly had infested the nation

[44] Post, *The Deportations Delirium of Nineteen-Twenty: A Personal Narrative of an Historic Official Experience*, 47-48.

and, in reference to a pamphlet entitled "Red Radicalism As Described By Its Own Leaders" which he enclosed with his letter, believed it served "…to predicate the development of a most serious and vicious sort of anti-Americanism."[45]

One of the hardest hit areas of the Palmer Raids was the New York metropolitan area, especially New Jersey. "The raided cities and towns in the State included Jersey City, Passaic, Newark, Hoboken, West Hoboken, Paterson, Bayonne, Franklin Furnace, Harrison and Trenton."[46] To be sure, New Brunswick didn't escape the Palmer Raids either. *The Daily Home News* for January 3, 1920 announced, as its major headline, "Ten Radicals Caught Here When Six Places Are Raided as Part of Country-Wide War on 'Reds.'" The arrests are described in more detail in the accompanying article below and it is worth quoting in full:

> Simultaneous with the greatest round-up of radicals ever known in this country, six raids were conducted in this city last night, under the direction of an agent from the Department of Justice and Chief O'Connell, resulting in the arrest of ten alleged "Red'' leaders, two of whom were women. All of those arrested submitted to arrest without resistance. They were taken to police headquarters, where they were searched and the evidence tagged. At midnight, they were conveyed in three automobiles to Newark, from which place, after examination, it is expected they will be sent to Ellis Island, preparatory to being deported to their own countries. One additional automobile was used to carry evidence, and the literature, which was confiscated. In most of the homes papers were found implicating occupants as being interested in the overthrow of the government. In one home, papers explaining and showing how to make bombs were found. The literature in general was of the most radical sort….Those arrested at their homes were Joseph Walyus, Perry Kaiser, Nicholas Gray and his wife, Regina Horvath, Zunik Soloken, John Massonk, John Zekaurich, Wasily Gorrgycnuk and Alex Omelanick. All of them are Russians or Hungarians…All of them are aliens, and according to evidence secured by the police during the past few months, have been the local leaders in the movement to set up the soviet form of government. They are, in addition, said to have been the leading agitators in local labor troubles.[47]

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[45] A. Mitchell Palmer to William Demarest, February 27, 1920, Records of the Rutgers College Office of the President (William H.S. Demarest), RG 04/A11, Box 42, Folder 39, Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries.

[46] Post, *The Deportations Delirium of Nineteen-Twenty: A Personal Narrative of an Historic Official Experience*, 108.

[47] "Drawings of Bombs Among Literature Found At Communist Homes", *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ), January 3, 1920, pgs. 1-2.

It was soon discovered that these "bomb designs" were in fact plans for a phonographic invention and there were reports that a few of the original ten suspects had already been cleared of charges and were in the process of being discharged from federal custody only two days later. An article in *The Daily Home News* for January 5, 1920 reports that

> The fact that there would be no let-up in the war on the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party was made plain by William J. Flynn, Chief of the Department of Justice Bureau of Investigation. He declared that the round-up would continue everywhere, but declined to say whether there would be anymore wholesale raiding, like that of Friday night….The Department of Justice promised Chief O'Connell that he would be informed of the disposition of the ten who were arrested in this city Friday night, but so far no information has been forwarded here. So far as known, three of the ten have been discharged, and have returned to this city. They are Joseph F. Walyus, a printer and musician…and Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Gray of 141 Paterson Street. In the latter place a seizure of certain drawing was made and it was alleged, they showed several types of bombs. Mr. Gray after his discharge Saturday afternoon declared that the plans were those for a phonographic record on which he had been working for a long time and on which he expected to secure a patent….Joseph F. Walyus…stated today that he is not what is known as a Communist but that he is a Socialist. He has lived in this city almost 20 years and had been a citizen and taxpayer ten years.[48]

Nor did the Ferrer School in Piscataway manage to escape backlash at the height of the Red Scare when several agents sent from the office of the Attorney-General unexpectedly arrived at the colony in 1919. According to Lawrence Veysey, "After prowling around the colony and engaging [Joseph] Cohen in blunt dialogue about bomb throwing and free love, these men left. But they were soon followed by the federal district attorney, who spent four hours interrogating Cohen and arguing heatedly with him. In a report whose contents were soon smuggled to the comrades, the district attorney confidentially urged that every inhabitant of the colony be removed to Ellis Island and deported from the United States. This recommendation was quietly put aside, apparently intrinsic to the colony's [isolated] rural location."[49]

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[48] "No Let-Up in War on Radicals" *The Daily Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ), January 5, 1920, 1-3.
[49] Veysey, "The Ferrer Colony and Modern School of Stelton, New Jersey," 130-131.

The witch hunt for suspected subversive agitators and alien radicals gradually lost steam when Louis Post, in the position of Acting Secretary of Labor, began to cancel arrest warrants requested by the Department of Justice and Palmer's credibility came into question when an anticipated May Day proletarian uprising failed to materialize later that year. For all intents and purposes, with the exception of sporadic arrests and deportations, the storm that was the "Red Scare" finally broke.

The crisis of the Great Red Scare and the climate of intolerance, suppression of civil liberties and occasional outright mob violence it fostered is today regarded as one of the bleaker moments in American history; a period in which xenophobia, coupled with supercharged patriotism incited by propaganda for the war effort and a general trend of rampant anti-intellectualism and academic freedom among professors and students in American universities, created a toxic atmosphere in which ideas that ran counter to popular opinion and the status quo were met with hostile retaliation and denouncement. Rutgers College and the greater New Brunswick community were no exception to this sweeping national trend of collective hysteria and narrow-mindedness as the acrimonious wartime persecution of Samuel Chovenson and the local Socialist party make abundantly clear. Whether communist or socialist, pacifist or anarchist, a vast array of left-leaning ideological thinkers and activists ranging across the political spectrum were collectively branded as "Reds" and "Bolsheviki" and persecuted in the name of "100-percent Americanism."

Thomas Federowicz of Somerset, New Jersey received an Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts from Raritan Valley Community College in 2014. He graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor's degree in History and Medieval Studies from Rutgers University in May 2017. He is the recipient of the University's Dr. Martin Siegal History Award and is a Matthew Leydt

Society inductee. He is also a member of two honor societies (Phi Alpha Theta and Phi Theta Kappa) as well as the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. As a public history intern in the spring of 2017, he worked on the "Heaven, Hell, or Hoboken!": New Jersey in the Great War WWI centennial exhibition in the Special Collections and University Archives department at Rutgers Archibald S. Alexander Library. While he was a member of the History of Rutgers University Seminar in the fall of 2016, he wrote the paper that earned him the Stellhorn Award, "Scarlet Knights, Red Crusade: An Analysis of the Great Red Scare at Rutgers-New Brunswick." One award reviewer wrote that "The author has offered a cogent look at a little-known aspect of the Red Scare. He tied together perspectives on radical politics, higher education, and NJ history in a genuinely informative way. This was well done," and "Federowicz's work is also a timely warning of the dangers of political hysteria (from the right or the left) in times of national crisis."