

## **“Our Brothers in Germany”**

A Transnational Perspective on the Reaction of German America to the Revolutions of 1848



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**Abstract**

In the Spring of 1848, revolutions broke out in the German states calling for the liberalization of the monarchies, and for the unification of Germany. When the news of these revolutions came to the United States, the German language press immediately reacted with enthusiasm, and ample displays of support for the liberalization of the “old fatherland.” German America was the largest German speaking population outside of the German states in 1848, but their reaction to the revolutions has been relatively understudied. Historians have emphasized the role of the Forty-Eighters, the revolutionaries who fled the German states after the revolutions, in the formation of German identity in the United States, and deemphasized the German identity that already existed.

However, this thesis questions this narrative, and instead analyzes how German Americans saw themselves as German during the revolutions. This thesis treats the revolutions as a political event that prompted the articulation of identity. They served as a focal point around which German Americans could articulate their own relationship to Germany and their own place in the “German nation.” It also inspired community action in the name of the shared goal of aiding the “old fatherland.” The possibility of a unified German state also brought political questions about the structure of a possible nation state to the fore. Though German Americans agreed on the necessity of aiding the revolutionary cause, they were divided on the form a unified Germany should take.

This thesis uses a case study of four German language newspapers in the Spring of 1848 to explore the themes of identity, action, and political differences. Through these themes this thesis seeks to provide insight on both the specific case of German America in this period, and on the larger transnational experience of immigrants maintaining a connection to the politics of their country of origin.

## **Acknowledgments**

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The first person I would like to extend thanks to is Anna Maria Boss at the German Historical Institute in Washington DC. Her help with my questions about literature on German America and the revolutions on 1848 was the first impetus for me to pursue this project. When I was first developing my research idea in the Winter of 2018-19 her help was invaluable. I would also like to thank Professor Allison Clark Efford for having a conversation with me in the Spring of last year about this project, and encouraging me to go forward with this idea. Her input helped me to develop my idea and narrow down the cities I considered looking at to find German language newspapers.

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Because access to archives was such a substantial problem during this process, I would like to extend the most heartfelt thanks to Bettina Hess, the Special Collections Librarian at the German Society of Pennsylvania. She helped me to collect necessary research materials in Philadelphia in the midst of a pandemic. Without her help this thesis would have been truly dead in the water.

I would also like to thank my brother and sister-in-law for providing me with a place to stay during the lockdowns and work on my research and writing. They provided a place for me to stay when my research trip was cut short by the pandemic and I could not return to Europe. The stability they provided created a good environment to work.

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## Introduction

On the 21st of April, 1848, the steamship Washington departed from New York harbor, destined for Bremen. The ship sailed under the tricolor of the German revolution, and carried money, weapons, and volunteers from the United States to Germany with the goal of supporting the revolution. The German language paper *Der Westbote*, heralded the ship as the first “German” ship to ever sail across the Atlantic under the flag of a unified Germany.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, it was adorned with the red, black, and gold of the Revolution, and was seen off by crowds of German Americans in New York. The ship had been funded by associations that had been founded by German Americans in reaction to the news that revolutions had started in Germany, who had fundraised enough money to fund a ship to travel to Bremen. The money, letters, and weapons aboard the ship had also been gathered by German American communities across several different states. Historians have emphasized the fragmented nature of German America before the arrival of the revolutionaries exiled from the German states. So, how could a population that did not have a shared German identity and which was supposedly divided by regional differences generate enough funds and support to charter a large vessel to sail to Bremen? The contradiction between this development and the traditional historiographic view of German America calls for a reevaluation of the national identity of German America before the arrival of the so called Forty-Eighters - the revolutionaries who came to America after the failure of the revolutions in 1848.

Though German American has been understudied in the period of the revolutions in 1848, there is also a historiographic precedent for examining the Irish diaspora in 1848, which can provide a point of comparison. Coordinated local action was not unique to the German American community, though they were one of the notable groups. The minority populations in the United States had organized meetings and fundraisers in the United States in support of the promise of freedom in their homelands- including the German, Irish, Polish and Hungarian diasporas. Of the involvement of diaspora populations in the United states, the efforts of the Irish Americans to support the bid for Irish independence have been studied in depth by historians. Scholars of Irish

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<sup>1</sup> “Schwartz-Rot-Gold,” *Der Westbote*, April 28th, 1848, page 3, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1190/rec/239> .

America claim that 1848 represented a moment where the Irish were able to put aside political differences and come together on the basis of national identity.<sup>2</sup> They have also claimed that the reaction was a part of a longer pattern of Irish translational patriotism and involvement in the political developments in Ireland. There is a rich historiography that treats the Irish reaction, which included public meetings, fundraising, and attempting to organize battalions to go to fight for Irish freedom as an expression of transnational identity. The scholarship argues that this reaction was a clear expression of the idea that immigrants were also Irish. However, the reaction of German Americans to the revolutionary developments in 1848 has yet to be studied through the same lens, despite the similarities. German language papers commented on the similarity between themselves and the Irish, and the shared desire for freedom. The question that this brings to the fore is how the actions of German America represent an expression of a transnational German identity in the same way that Irish patriots in the United states expressed an Irish identity. The similarity in the developments between the groups suggest that there is space to apply an analytical framework based on patriotism and transnational connection. The concrete actions that these groups took stemmed from a sense of shared identity with each other and a connection to the country of their origin.

## Historiography

Though there has been scholarship on German America, much of it has either dismissed the 1840s or touched on them only briefly to provide a background to later developments. There has not been a study of German America in 1848 that focuses on the months after the revolution broke out in Europe, which does not pivot to another topic like abolition or the Civil war.<sup>3</sup> There is a significant lacuna in the scholarship in the Spring of 1848, which could be filled by turning

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<sup>2</sup> John Belchem, "Nationalism, Republicanism and Exile: Irish Emigrants and the Revolutions of 1848," *Past & Present*, No. 146 (Feb. 1995), 52. For a more general discussion of the long term development of Irish nationalism see Alvin Jackson, *Widening the Fight for Ireland's Freedom: Revolutionary Nationalism in Its Global Contexts in Victorian Studies* Vol. 54, No. 1 (Autumn, 2011), and for discussion of the Irish diaspora see Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> In the process of this research I reached out to the German Historical institute in Washington DC to ask if there was scholarship that I was overlooking. I also spoke to a research librarian at the New York public library about this topic. Both confirmed to me that there was no modern work that specifically focused on 1848 except for Charles Wittke's book.

to the theoretical framework that has been used for later periods like the 1870s or the turn of the century and for other minority groups. The scholarship that does touch upon the state of German America in 1848 is almost entirely focused on a later period. For example, Allison Clark Efford's book on the involvement of German Americans in the Civil War primarily discussed the voting patterns of German America during the 1840s, but in relation to the issue of slavery. She argues that the majority of German Americans strongly supported the abolitionist movement and voted for the Republican Party.<sup>4</sup> She touches very briefly on the enthusiasm that the German Americans showed for the Revolutions as part of the general trend of German America towards liberalism, which was consistent with abolition. She mentions that the German American community was divided in 1848, so the support for the revolutions was limited. The primary argument of her book is that German Americans were a disproportionate part of the support for the Republican party and voluntarily joined the war effort.<sup>5</sup> This approach only touches on the revolutions in 1848 as a contextual element. Other studies of German America in relation to the civil war refer to 1848 only sparingly as a part of the earlier developments that influenced the American Civil War.<sup>6</sup> Many of these studies instead focus on the impact on German American identity after the war, when many disillusioned Germans moved Westward to form more insular communities in newly settled territories.<sup>7</sup> There are more substantial studies of identity from the 1870s to the beginning of the century, like the book *Becoming Old Stock* which examines the identity of the German population in Philadelphia in that period.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, there are limited studies of the period that focus on the 1840s, so there is a gap of knowledge that needs to be filled to add nuance to the role of the Forty-Eighters.

The study that comes the closest to analyzing German America in the period is Charles Wittke's *Refugees of Revolution*. The book holds a paradoxical place in the historiography of

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<sup>4</sup> Alison Clark Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> for another example see Christina Bearden-White, "Illinois Germans and the Coming of the Civil War: Reshaping Ethnic Identity" in *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1998-)*, Vol. 109, No. 3 (Fall 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Russel A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton University Press, 2004).

German America of being focused on the arrival of the Forty-Eighters and their influence, but it is also cited consistently when historians discuss the state of German America in 1848, though this period is not its primary focus. The book that is treated as the most authoritative source on German America in 1848 is not focused on the period, but rather on the period directly following it. The book in total contains 26 pages that focus on the revolutions, only 14 of which deal with the German American response. The book draws from New York based newspapers, but makes wider generalizations about German America. He extrapolates based on what is occurring in New York, with far less primary source backing for his claims in other cities. While his primary source work on New York City is solid, the conclusions that he draws about German America as a whole are flawed. The book was published in 1953, and the age of the scholarship is an issue, because it is impossible to remove Wittke's work from the period in which it was produced. The long shadow of the Second World War also appears in the work, which focuses on the way that German Americans became more American. Because of the age of the book, it also lacks the modern historical theory to discuss the transnational immigrant experience. There is little interest in the transnational connections to Germany, since the focus of the book is the integration of German immigrants into the American fold, and the conclusion of Wittke's narrative is that German Americans eventually gave up on the hope of returning to Germany once Germany unified under Prussian leadership.

Wittke's tone is also elitist in a way that biases his view on the existing German American community in 1848. He is highly dismissive of the German language paper, which he calls paste-pot papers, because they would republish the same stories between each other, which he claims made it so that there was little original journalism. He stated that, "German newspapers....were poorly edited, made up with scissors and paste-pot, contained little intellectual food, and often were written in a style that became progressively more corrupt with the infiltration of English words and American slang."<sup>9</sup> His description of German language newspapers is disdainful of the lower-class editors, who he claims were not really journalists as much as reprinters. He contradicts his own description by stating that these same papers also had

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<sup>9</sup> Carl Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952), 10.



detailed coverage of the Frankfurt Parliament, and followed the developments in Germany closely, which suggests that they were capable of thorough journalism.<sup>10</sup> This is inconsistent with the earlier condemnation of the level of journalism. The judgement of subpar journalism does not fit with the fact that the papers were resourceful and thorough in their coverage of the Revolutions in Germany. He notes that the German Americans in New York did act to support the revolutions, but he also discredits these efforts by claiming that they were not significant enough to make a difference, and castigates German Americans for being stingy, and emphasizes how little money was raised.<sup>11</sup> The focus on New York City also introduces subtle elitism by only analyzing the efforts of the richest urban German American population, rather than accounting for the multitude of rural German Americans. He focuses on the efficacy of the efforts rather than examining what the reaction itself indicates about the German identity of those involved. This approach has a problem of missing the proverbial forest for the trees. Looking only at the effect leads Wittke too easily to dismissing the efforts, rather than elaborating on what the reaction meant about German American identity. His short chapter on the response from America is more focused on providing a background for the reception of the Forty-Eighters than providing substantial analysis of the German American action. He argues for the substantial impact of the Forty-Eighters as vectors of Germanness, while simultaneously undervaluing the reaction that proceeded the arrival of the Forty-Eighters. This makes his narrative one about great men driving history, which should be revisited from a different angle that includes German America as more than passive acceptors of identity.

There were also older volumes published that included the 1840s as part of a longer encyclopedic histories of Germans in the United States, but these also repeated the idea that the bourgeois revolutionaries who arrived after 1848 were the source of Germanness in the United States. However, these volumes were predominantly written in the interwar years, and it is impossible to separate the history from the climate of distrust and anti-Germanness that emerged

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 35.

during the first World War.<sup>12</sup> In the wake of the first world war, there was significant pressure on Germans outside of Germany to emphasize that they did not have ties to Germany. For example, Germans in Ontario who published newspapers began claiming that they were not connected to Germany to avoid accusations of loyalty to the Kaiser.<sup>13</sup> So, it is necessary to question whether these histories of German America were influenced by the desire to emphasize the distance between German Americans and their old homeland. There is a substantial likelihood that there was a subconscious effort to tell the story of how Germans became American without leaving any room for accusations of loyalty to the Kaiser or the Third Reich.<sup>14</sup> Given the age of the only available scholarship on the period, and the political influences of the time it was produced in, a reevaluation of the reaction of German America through current transnational approaches could provide a new perspective.

There have been recent developments in German history and immigrant histories that emphasizes the transnational nature of German identity, which is useful in this case. The idea of transnational connections emerged in sociology to study groups of recent immigrants and how they perceive their homeland. For example, there have been studies in the United States on immigrants from Latin America and how they perceive political events in their country of origin. There have also been studies in sociology on Turkish immigrants in Germany, and their ties to Turkey and Turkish politics.<sup>15</sup> The question of how immigrants maintain their ties to their homelands is relevant in present politics, and an increasingly globalizing world, because those in

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<sup>12</sup> For examples of these works see: Albert Bernhard Faust's two volumes on *The German Element in the United States* published in 1927, *The Tragedy of German-America: The Germans in the United States of America During the Nineteenth Century--and After* by John A Hawgood published in 1940 and Carl Wittke's *Refugees of Revolution* published in 1952.

<sup>13</sup> Anne Löchte, "We don't want the Kaiser to Rule in Ontario" in *German Diasporic Experiences: Identity, Migration and Loss*, ed. Mathias Schultze, James M. Skidmore, et al. (Wilfried University Press, 2008), 111.

<sup>14</sup> Though there is some room to question the role of the rhetoric of the Third Reich in the United States, since there were some who supported it, especially among those with German ancestry. For this topic, see Norbert Götz, "German-Speaking People and German Heritage: Nazi Germany and the Problem of Volksgemeinschaft" in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, ed. Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin (University of Michigan press, 2005), 58-82 or Bradley W. Hart, *Hitler's American Friends: The Third Reich's Supporters in the United States* (St. Martin's Press, 2018).

<sup>15</sup> For social science applications of these concepts see: Nedim Ögelman, "Documenting and Explaining the Persistence of Homeland Politics among Germany's Turks" and Roger Waldinger and Lauren Duquette-Rury, "Emigrant Politics, Immigrant Engagement: Homeland Ties and Immigrant Political Identity in the United States."

the political sphere often express a pressure for immigrants to assimilate to a new cultural context. Studies of earlier periods through the lens of transnational connections can demonstrate that immigrants maintaining a connection to their country of origin is not a recent development; immigrants in the mid-19th century also maintained political connections to their country of origin. The significant change from the past to the present is the speed of information and the technology available. There is space to apply this idea historically on two different questions that are relevant to German America.

The first of these questions is how immigrant histories exist in relation to a predominant Anglo-American narrative that prioritizes assimilation. The question that is asked in many American narratives of immigration is “how did this group become American?”<sup>16</sup> It communicates an idea that the trajectory of immigrants must always be to conform to Anglo-American cultural norms, and to shed ties to their country of origin. The American mythos of the melting pot is built on the necessity of integration to a point. Cultural diversity is allowed so long as it still conforms to an Anglo-American idea of what it is to be American. And this pressure has continued to be a facet of the immigrant experience in the present. The predominant idea that immigrants do not maintain long term ties with their homelands is prevalent in American political discourse, and is reinforced by the approach that historians take to the question. As David Gerber states, “The center of this master narrative [of American history is] a variation on the familiar immigrant paradigm, by which I mean the narrative of the path of the immigrants, via the ethnic group, to becoming ethnic Americans.”<sup>17</sup> Keeping significant ties to their country of origin often brings accusations of disloyalty, as demonstrated by the response to German Americans during the First World War, the response to Japanese Americans during the Second World War, and the modern distrust of immigrants from the Middle East. There is an expectation that even if some cultural practices are maintained, connections to the immigrant’s country of origin should be severed in favor of identifying primarily as American. But, taking a transnational approach inverts the question, and instead asking how immigrants maintained ties

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<sup>16</sup> David A. Gerber, “Forming a Transnational Narrative: New Perspectives on European Migrations to the United States” in *The History Teacher*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Nov., 2001), 62.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 63.

to their country of origin. David Gerber have suggested that there is a lack in the historiography of American immigration concerning the transnational ties of the earlier waves of immigration.<sup>18</sup> The earlier European waves of immigration have not been the subject of scholarship that analyzes the transnational bonds to Europe.

Scholarship on pre-unification Germany has also developed the idea of decentralizing German identity, which is helpful in discussing German America in 1848. *The Heimat Abroad* made the argument that the history of Germany before unification was tied to groups outside of Germany as well as those within it. In the Introduction Krista O'Donnell states, "The history of Germany is inextricably tied to Germans outside the homeland"<sup>19</sup> The volume consisted of a number of case studies applying this idea to groups outside of the German states. However, none of these case studies includes the United States in 1848. The concept of Germany had yet to solidify as early as the 1840s, so it was still being negotiated by different groups in conversation with each other. Decentralizing the idea of Germanness allows for the discussion of groups outside of Germany that had their own conception of Germanness. in "Germans Abroad: Respatializing Historical Narrative," Glenn Penny and Stephan Rinke argue that these groups in the German Diaspora played an important part in the formation of a German identity.<sup>20</sup> Though there have been several works that connect German diaspora groups to developments in Germany, like the chapters of the volume *The Heimat Abroad*, which each deal with the connection of a group to Germany. But, they deal with a later period, predominantly the 1860s and 1870s. The revolutions in 1848 have not yet been a subject of a study that focuses on the transnational discussion of German identity and German unification, and this period is important because it provides one moment where there was the possibility of substantial change in the German homeland. By analyzing German America, it is possible to connect to both a discussion about American immigration, and fill a gap of information about transnational ties of early

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>19</sup> Krista O'Donnell et al. "Introduction" in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005, 1.

<sup>20</sup> H. Glenn Penny and Stefan Rinke, "Germans Abroad: Respatializing Historical Narrative" in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 41. Jahrg., H 2 (April-Juni, 2015), 176. For more discussion of transnational German identity also see: Alexander Maxwell and Sacha E. Davis, "Germanness beyond Germany: Collective Identity in German Diaspora Communities" in *German Studies Review*, Volume 39, Number 1, (February 2016), 1-15.

European immigrant groups, and it will also fill a gap in 1848 for the emerging scholarship in Germanness.

## Sources

One of the best sources for the political discourse in German America in 1848 is the German language newspapers, which were prevalent at the time. Like many other linguistic minorities, Germans established publications in their own language in the United States, and were arguably the most prolific. There were German speaking communities in the United States that published papers in German until the beginning of the 20th century, when the anti-German sentiment during the first world war forced German speaking communities to Anglicize quickly.<sup>21</sup> So, these papers provide a unique insight into the events within the German American communities, because they were meant to be distributed to a German speaking population, and were not created with the Anglo-American majority in mind. Additionally, the smaller potential readership meant that it was important to publish those things that were important to the community. So, they do reflect the issues that were of interest to the German speaking community, especially if there was extensive coverage. However, it is also important to note that there was a strong editorial voice in each paper. They did not pretend to be unbiased observers, and the content of the newspapers reflected a clear bias. And while their political leanings cannot be taken as wholly representative of the views of German Americans, or of the German Americans in a particular city, these newspapers were still purchased and read within the community, so there must have been resonance of their ideas. The newspapers usually made their political leanings - whether Whig, Republican or Democrat - very apparent by the masthead or the description of the newspaper that was always found on the front page. If a paper was able to maintain its readership and publish for years, then there was support for those political views.

In the period, there was proliferation of German newspapers, so for the purposes of this thesis, it would be impractical to attempt a comprehensive summary of the entire German

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<sup>21</sup> Russel A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* details the effect of the pressure to anglicize on the German speaking population of Philadelphia. It is also worth noting that this was not universally true for German communities, and there are still German speaking towns in Pennsylvania and Texas. But, it is still relatively accurate to say that the majority of German speaking communities stopped speaking German during the First World War.

language press, so this thesis will instead focus on a case study of two separate states, using two papers from each. The issue of the archival sources for German American newspapers in 1848 is both one of practicality and archival lack. There was a wealth of papers produced at the time, but many have not survived or have only partially survived. The bulk of the archive of German American newspapers is from the 1860s and 1870s, even if the paper was published in the 1840s.<sup>22</sup> In some cases there are only a few remaining issues of papers from 1848, so it would be difficult to draw any conclusion from only a few issues. In many archives that I examined, this was apparent in the indexing, which showed that the paper had been published in the 1840s, and had covered 1848, but, the surviving issues of the paper were from the 1860s onward. The other significant complication is that the surviving copies of papers from the period are only available in certain archives close to where they were produced. It was outside the feasible scope of a thesis to travel to several different cities and towns to be able to read the papers.<sup>23</sup> So, it was more feasible to focus on a few papers that are available in full during the period of the revolutionary outbreak in the Spring of 1848.

The period for this analysis will be the Spring of 1848, because it proceeds the arrival of the Forty-Eighters, and it was the period of the most enthusiasm. The first reason to focus on the Spring of 1848 - specifically March to the end of June- is that it does not muddy the question of the influence of the Forty-Eighters on German identity. The Forty-Eighters were German revolutionaries who fled the German states once it became apparent that the conservative monarchies were going to maintain control, so they had no reason to immigrate as early as the Spring of 1848. Thus, the reaction of the German American community in that period was only that of German America in the absence of any influence by Forty-Eighters. So, focusing the analysis on this period provides the best insight on how German Americans saw their own Germanness without any outside input. The second reason is that this period encompasses the period of the most enthusiasm. The revolutions broke out in March of 1848, and the news took

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<sup>22</sup> This statement is based on an examination of *Chronicling America*, which is the collection of newspapers in the library of Congress, The German Society in Pennsylvania, and The New York Public library. These three have the largest collections of German language newspapers, and would be the most likely to have issues from 1848.

<sup>23</sup> Additionally, due to COVID-19, travel was not possible. So, the majority of the work done on this thesis was done through online archives, though I had initially intended to use material available at the New York public library. It was necessary to make adjustments to the selection of source material because of lockdowns.

several weeks to reach the United States, and by June, the German Americans were receiving news about the meetings of the Frankfurt parliament. In this period German America expressed their enthusiasm most strongly, and it faded by the summer, for reasons that will be explored later in this thesis. So, this analysis will focus on the four months with the strongest reaction.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will focus on four papers that come from Pennsylvania and Ohio. The papers that I will use for this analysis are: “Der Demokrat”<sup>24</sup>, “Der liberale Beobachter und Berks, Montgomery und Schuylkill Counties allgemeine Anzeiger”<sup>25</sup>, “Der West-bote” and the “Ohio Staats-bote.” The former pair are from Pennsylvania, and the latter pair come from Ohio. These two states had significant German settlement late in the 18th century, and then during the first significant wave of German immigration in the 1830s, so there was a substantial German American base to consume the news. The two states also had a divide between agricultural areas, like central Pennsylvania, and cities like Philadelphia and Columbus. So, it is possible to employ two axis of comparative analysis. The first axis of comparison is between a rural perspective and an urban perspective.”Der liberale Beobachter” was published in Reading, Pennsylvania, which was a small city in the middle of the agricultural area of the state. Because of its position, it served as a meeting point for the rural communities around it, so a paper published there would have been read by the farming community primarily. Similarly, the “Ohio Staats-bote” was published in Canton, which also was in the center of a rural part of Ohio. These two papers are the closest that one can realistically get to a rural paper, because smaller communities did not have the population density or means to produce a paper and to maintain it, as well as archiving such a paper. So, papers from small towns that served as a crossroads for rural communities are the closest feasible sources to assess the perspective of rural German Americans. “Der Demokrat”<sup>26</sup> and “Der Westbote” were published in Philadelphia and Columbus, so they are both sources of the urban German perspectives. By comparing the

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<sup>24</sup> This paper is also sometimes called “Der Philadelphier Demokrat” or “Der Demokrat und der Anzeiger der Deutschen” for the sake of simplicity, I will refer to it as “Der Demokrat” for this thesis.

<sup>25</sup> For the sake of brevity and readability, I will refer to this paper as “Der liberale Beobachter” for the rest of this thesis.

<sup>26</sup> One important point is that Der Demokrat is the only daily paper out of the four. All the others are weekly, and Der liberale Beobachter occasionally skipped weeks. So Der Demokrat had the greatest bulk of articles by virtue of having seven editions to every one of the other three papers.

perspectives from these different papers, one can ask the question of how rural and urban German Americans perceived and reacted to the developments in Germany.

The second axis of comparison will be between the two different states. Historians like Charles Wittke, who dismiss the idea of German Americans identifying as German before the arrival of the Forty-Eighters argue that regional divisions within the country were too strong for any kind of unified identity.<sup>27</sup> Other like William Donner argue that German Americans in the 1840s identified more strongly with the German state that they were from than with an idea of Germanness.<sup>28</sup> They argue that a person would feel more strongly Bavarian or Prussian than German. Others suggest that the communities in different American states were not able to coordinate. The first claim can be addressed by examining the way that German Americans refer to themselves and their own identities, and whether they prioritized their state of origin. The second claim that German Americans were too divided across states can be addressed by comparing two different states, and asking whether the reaction to the Revolutions was different between states.

### **Research Question**

The analysis of the newspapers will focus on three main themes that are facets of transnational identity, and the German American reaction to the Revolutions. To address the second claim that has been made in the historiography, it will be necessary to establish how German Americans referred to themselves and to Germany. By analyzing the language that the articles and the editorials use to refer to German America, Germany, and the German Revolutionary movement, it is possible to show how the idea of Germanness was communicated in the newspapers. If earlier historiography is correct that German Americans saw themselves as connected to particular states, then there should be rhetoric that refers to certain states as the homeland or fatherland, while neglecting the concept of Germany on the whole. However, patriotic sentiment focused on Germany as a whole and solidarity between Germany and German

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<sup>27</sup> Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution*, 13-14.

<sup>28</sup> William W. Donner, “‘Neither Germans nor Englishmen, but Americans’: Education, Assimilation, and Ethnicity Among Nineteenth-Century Pennsylvania Germans”, *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (Spring, 2008), 198-199.



America would indicate that there was a sense of Germanness in the United States without the influence of the Forty-Eighters. So, the first subquestion is: How did German Americans articulate their own identity in relation to Germany?

The second subquestion is how the reaction to the revolutions became community action. Though editorialized reporting in newspapers cannot necessarily indicate the thoughts or reactions of the community on the whole, collective action shows community involvement. This action can take the form of meetings, fundraising, and the formation of volunteer units. The newspapers published about the events occurring in the community, and also published summaries of meetings, as well as calls to arms. All of these pieces allow insight into the action that was being taken by German Americans in reaction to hearing the news from Germany. This is a vital part of the discussion of transnational connections, because it connects the rhetoric in the papers to the actions taken by the community. The size of the gatherings and the amounts raised in fundraisers also gives an indication of the scale of community support. So the second subquestion is: How did German American communities act on the news of the revolutions?

The third facet is the political leanings of the paper and the ideal form of a unified Germany that they advocated. In the German states, the most divisive issue was the goal of the revolution. There was a sharp divide between those who advocated a more democratic solution, and the proponents of both an Austrian led and Prussian led constitutional monarchy. Thus, it would follow logically that German America would also have divisions based on politics. The papers are equally divided across the American political spectrum. *Der Demokrat* was a left leaning Whig paper, and so was *Der liberale Beobachter*. *Der Westbote* and the *Ohio Staats-bote* were both right leaning Democrat papers. *Der Westbote* went as far as to paint itself as the lone dissenting voice among a plethora of Whig papers. So, the selected papers draw from different parts of the political spectrum, and should have differing political opinions. I will also analyze the political positions that the papers took on both German and American politics, and how they differed in their view of the ideal outcome of the Revolutions. The third subquestion is: How did German American papers see the ideal political outcome of the revolutions?

Through these three subquestions, which will serve as the structure for this thesis, I will answer the question of how German American transnational ties and German identity appeared in the reaction to the revolutions of 1848.

## **Chapter 1: German Identity**

In the Spring of 1848, the German language press in the United States began enthusiastically covering the revolutions in Germany. Large parts of the papers were devoted to the newest developments in the German states. As Charles Wittke rightly describes, there was an overnight increase in interest in news from the German states after the first revolutionary stirrings.<sup>29</sup> News from Germany was slow to reach the United States, because it had to be carried across the Atlantic in steamships. It took about three or four weeks for the news to arrive in port cities like New York, and longer for areas further inland. So, the news of the revolutions broke in the United States in late March and early April of 1848. German language papers began to publish news from Europe state by state, and eventually a separate section titled “Deutschland” which covered the meetings of the Frankfurt Congress. While it is significant to cover another country in such detail, and does indicate a significant level of interest, it is also important to note what was occurring in the United States. There were two important domestic events that the coverage of German developments overshadowed.

The first was a presidential election; 1848 was an election year in the United States, and the candidates were campaigning in the Spring of that year. Before the arrival of the news from Europe, much of the papers had been focused on covering the campaigns of the candidates, and the conventions occurring in each state.<sup>30</sup> For example, *Der Demokrat* focused its coverage heavily on Zachary Taylor and Henry Clay, who were both potential Whig candidates, and lauded Zachary Taylor’s record as a commander in Mexico. *Der Westbote* similarly covered Lewis Cass - or Caß as the paper spelled his name<sup>31</sup>- the Democratic Candidate, and also lauded

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<sup>29</sup> Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution*, 30.

<sup>30</sup> Since the American electoral system depends on a series of caucuses and conventions to determine the candidate for the presidency.

<sup>31</sup> While there is no indication that Cass himself had German roots or would have ever spelled his name this way, the change in spelling made him more appealing to a German speaking electorate.

his performance as a commander. Until the German revolutions, much of the paper was taken up by news of the elections and the potential candidates. Though presidential questions never completely disappeared from the papers, it was pushed to the third page, and took up a far smaller section than news from Germany. The interest in American politics seemed to wain in favor of German political developments.

The second important topic in the American political sphere was the war with Mexico. Though it had started before the revolutions in Germany, the war ended during the Spring of 1848. By April of 1848, the United States had effectively won the war, and was only battling resistance in Veracruz. The negotiations for peace - which included a sizable concession of land to the United States - were underway at the same time as the revolutions. In *Der Westbote*, the news from Mexico virtually disappeared from the pages of the paper until the peace settlement was announced. So, the enthusiasm of the coverage is significant, but so is the fact that it displaced news of both a war and an election. The same did not happen in the English language press, which covered the 1848 revolutions briefly - with a greater focus on France than any other country - but mostly focused on questions about Mexico and the election. The enthusiasm for the revolutions that appeared in the German press was very different from English language papers in the same period, which indicates that it was unique to the German America. The news from Germany took the central position in the papers, and was more important to report on than important American political developments, which indicates the significance that they held for German Americans.

The main point of contention about the German Americans in 1848 is whether German Americans saw themselves as German. Within this question, there are a number of subquestions that relate to national identity. Because national identity was a multifaceted concept in the period of Romantic Nationalism, it is not simple to conclude that German Americans conceived of themselves as German without analyzing the different elements of identity. Though the enthusiasm is significant, it does not in itself say anything about identity, because the enthusiasm could be born from any numbers of factors. For example, Abolitionist papers also had more complete coverage of Europe, because the editors could liken the perceived struggle for freedom in Europe to the American struggle against slavery. So, enthusiasm itself does not indicate a

connection based on identity. However, the question about how German Americans saw themselves in relation to a concept of Germanness should be answered by the rhetorical contents of the articles, instead of the number of articles.

For the purpose of discussing identity, there are several facets of a transnational sense of Germanness that appear in the articles. Because the idea of Germanness was not monopolized by the German states, the concept of what it meant to be German was malleable. German Americans articulated their own version of what it meant to be German, and how that related to their connection to other German Americans and the experience of being American. There are three facets of German American identity that appear in the articles. The first is the relationship to Germany, which indicates how German Americans conceived of the German states and themselves in relation to it. The second is the representations of the German American community, which will indicate whether Germanness and enthusiasm about the Revolutions was cross-cutting. The third is the relation between German and American identity, and the question of whether German Americans viewed these identities as mutually exclusive, which would be indicative of the transnational nature of German American identity.

### **1.1 Representations of Germany**

The first piece of German American identity is how they conceived of themselves in relation to Germany, and whether they viewed themselves as part of the German nation as much as those in the German states. According to the theory of decentralizing Germanness, those outside of the German states conceived of themselves as German in the similar way as those who lived in the core German states, because they did not view national identity as dependent on land. This idea holds true in the case of the four papers, which refer to Germany rhetorically as the fatherland, and invoke the duty of German Americans to the fatherland to support revolutionary efforts. The rhetoric makes use of images of family to convey the idea that German Americans are still German, and still have a duty to Germany. The coverage frames the fatherland as paternal, both to German Americans and to their “brothers” in the German states. In other words, the consistent rhetoric across the four papers states that German America was German, even if they were separated by an ocean.

Though most of the references to the German identity in the German language papers appeared in the form of rhetorical statements about the duty of German America to the fatherland, there are a few examples that explicitly show that German Americans did not see geography as a boundary to being German. One of the clearest examples of this appeared in *Der Westbote* on March 10th, 1848. The article announced the return of an expedition that had been sent to conduct a census of German people, and reporting the findings.<sup>32</sup> The existence of such an expedition is interesting, because it shows that there was interest in documenting the size of the German population. However, the phrasing of the findings is the most interesting in terms of identity. The article states that there are, “in Nordamerika, Brasilien, Venezuela, und Neuholland”<sup>33</sup> 5,000,000<sup>34</sup> Germans. Then it concludes, “daß die Gesamtsumme von ... 53 Millionen ansäßiger und beisammenwohnenden Deutschen Bevölkerung in mehr als 70 unabhängigen Staaten sich ergibt.”<sup>35</sup> The article makes no distinction between the status of Germans in any of these different states, especially not between those in the core German states and those who have emigrated. Nor does it place North America, which had the most substantial German speaking population, in a different position than other places that had German immigration. Instead, it conveys the idea that there is a German population that is spread out all over the world. This idea is consistent with a romantic notion of the nation that does not consider geography to be a strong determiner. Instead, it defines every population that speaks German as German, which suggests that the criteria for inclusion in the nation was language.

*Der liberale Beobachter* and the *Ohio Staats-bote* both also stated that they saw themselves as German. In response to the news of the Revolution in Germany, there was a gathering in Reading, and in the article that announced the meeting, the paper stated that the Revolutions, “verdienen sicher der Sympathie und den Beifall der Deutschen in den Ver.

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<sup>32</sup> “Verbreitung der deutschen Sprache” *Der Westbote*, March 10th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1155/rec/232>.

<sup>33</sup> “in North America, Brazil, Venezuela, and New Holland.” In this case “New Holland” is either Australia or a close island in Macronesia.

<sup>34</sup> “Verbreitung der deutschen Sprache” *Der Westbote*, March 10th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1155/rec/232>.

<sup>35</sup> “The sum of 53 Million local German populations in more than 70 independent states,” Ibid.

Staaten.”<sup>36</sup> In the formulation of the statement, they identify themselves as the Germans in the United States, which indicates that they do see themselves as German; living in the United States does not make them less German in their eyes. Rather, they fully identify themselves as German. Similarly the Ohio Staats-bote refers to German Americans as brothers “welcher auf unserm Vaterland lastet.”<sup>37</sup> In both of these cases, it is only a geographical difference between the Germans in the German states, and those in the United States. They may be Germans who have left the homeland and reside in the United States, but they still identify themselves as German.

There is also an article in *Der Demokrat* that makes an explicit statement that German Americans were part of the German nation, which supports the idea that German Americans did not conceptualize themselves as separate from the German nation. In an article that demanded the creation of a German republic without the interference of the Prussian king, the papers stated that, “Gebe ich mich der Hoffnung hin, daß Seine preußische romantische Majestät bald nicht mehr sein wird, dann wird der stärkste Hinderniß einer Deuscher Republik verschwunden sein. Deutschland wird und muss dieß vollenden! Wir, das Volk, wollen es!”<sup>38</sup> Though the strong anti-Prussian sentiment and endorsement of a republic is a substantial part of the article, that is the subject for a later section. In terms of German American identity, the last statement is the most significant. The editor claims, speaking for the whole of the German nation, that they demand a republic. He as a German American felt that he is able to include himself in the “das Volk.” It indicates that he is including German America as part of the german Volk. Like the article in *Der Westbote*, the editor does not draw a distinction between German Americans who live outside of Germany and those in Europe.

German identity also served as a motivator for action, and the editors employed a rhetorical strategy that framed Germany as their fatherland which was in need of the aid of its sons, and the revolutionaries as their German brothers. The framing of a family structure

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<sup>36</sup> “Have surely earned the sympathy and the applause of the Germans in the United States”, “Die Versammlung der Deutschen”, *Der liberale Beobachter*, April 25th, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-04-25/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>37</sup> “who have left our fatherland.”

<sup>38</sup> “I have the hope that his Prussian romantic Majesty soon will no longer be king, then the strongest impediment to a German republic will disappear. Germany will and must have this happen! We, the people, demand it!” “Europa”, *Der Demokrat*, April 9th, 1848, Horner Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

appealed to a sense of filial and patriotic duty to mobilize German America to help the cause of the Revolutions. All of the four papers published patriotic poems on the front page of the paper during the first months of the Revolutions. The purpose of these poems was to stir patriotic sentiment, especially early in the Revolutions. For example, two of the papers published the same patriotic poem that explained the significance of the German tricolor, and likened the color of each band to a struggle for freedom.<sup>39</sup> These poems provide insight into the kind of rhetoric that was used to appeal to German America through the press. One poem demonstrates the kind of familial image that appeared in the German language papers. The poem, titled “Das Vatererbe” was published in the *Ohio Staats-bote* on April 5th, 1848.<sup>40</sup> It portrays three sons leaving their father to travel abroad, which serves as an allegory for Germans who have emigrated from the German states. They thank their father for the qualities that they inherited from him, which include German strength and a German heart.<sup>41</sup> Importantly, the second son thanks his father for the inheritance of “Den echten deutschen Geist.”<sup>42</sup> Though it is not completely clear what the poem is defining as the German Geist, it is clear that the poem portrays those who emigrated as still possessing this abstract idea of Germanness. Given the significance of language and Volksgeist in the romantic idea of nationalism, the poem claims that the German diaspora possessed everything that would make them part of the German nation. The German states and Germany were referred to consistently either as the singular “Vaterland” or the plural “Vaterlande,” which emphasized the connection to Germany. The poem demonstrates the idea that there was a familial connection between Germany and those who spoke German outside of Germany.

The idea of a familial connection was used rhetorically by each of the papers to mobilize the readership based on a sense of duty due to the fatherland as Germans. For example, The *Ohio Staats-bote* called for action among the people, and states that, “Es ruft das alte Vaterland, wo

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<sup>39</sup> “Die deutschen Farben”, *Ohio Staats-bote*, June 28th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-06-28/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>40</sup> “The father’s inheritance”, “Das Vatererbe”, *Ohio Staats-bote*, April 9th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-04-05/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> “The true German spirit”, Ibid. Note: Translating the terms “Geist” is difficult because of connotations that do not exist for the word “spirit” in English, so this is the most exact translation possible.

unserer Väter Wiege stand.”<sup>43</sup> This is part of a call to action for German Americans to support the Revolution in any way they can. It suggests that the support is part of a duty, because Germany is the land of their fathers. *Der Demokrat* more explicitly stated this idea in a call to arms, “So ist eine heilige Pflicht der Dankbarkeit eines getreuen Sohnes gegen das Land, das uns geboren und erzogen, selbst derjenigen Deutschen welchen hier im Land geboren sind, denn was sie sind, verdanken sie ihren Eltern und durch sie der treuen Mutter, den deutschen Vaterlande.”<sup>44</sup> The reason that the paper provides for German America providing to Germany is that it is the duty of a child to their parent. This rhetoric takes the metaphor of the fatherland giving the qualities of Germanness to the diaspora, and suggests that the proper conduct of a thankful child is to provide aid. As a rhetorical strategy, the idea of a family leverages German identity and the connection to the homeland to spur action. This kind of rhetoric was not unique to *Der Demokrat*; it appeared in all four of the papers. There is a common thread in each paper of putting Germany in the position of a parent, and German America as a child, who should act to help create freedom in the fatherland. An article in *Der liberale Beobachter* announcing a meeting in Reading appealed to, “Germania’s rustigen Söhne.”<sup>45</sup> So, it was a common thread in representations of Germany between all of the papers, which indicates that there was a shared conception of Germany that made it effective to appeal to a feeling of Germanness and the fatherland needing the aid of its sons.

Additionally, the papers appealed to a fraternal feeling with the revolutionaries, who were often referred to as brothers, based on the idea that they were also Germans. Each of the four papers claimed that the revolutionaries in Germany were the brothers of German America, and that they needed aid to fulfill the goal of German freedom. The duty of German America, according to the newspapers, was to provide what they could to their brothers who were

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<sup>43</sup> “The old fatherland is calling, where our fathers’ cradles stood.”, “Aufruf,” *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 3rd, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-03/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>44</sup> “So, it is a holy duty for the a grateful and true son of the the land, that birthed and raised us, and for the Germans who were born in this land, because of who they are, owe their parents, and through them the true mother: the German fatherland.”, “Aufruf an der Deutschen in Philadelphia zu einer Massenversammlung”, *Der Demokrat*, April 3rd, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>45</sup> “Germania’s vigorous sons” , “Die deutsche Massen-Versammlung”, *Der liberale Beobachter*, May 2nd, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-05-02/ed-1/seq-2/>.



struggling for freedom. *Der liberale Beobachter* declared that, “unsere Brüder kämpfen gegen Despotie.”<sup>46</sup> The fraternal feeling was based both on the familial connection to those who also spoke German and on the sense of shared goals. The German language papers in the United States were in favor of a united Germany, and they saw the revolutionaries as those who also opposed despotism, and the division of Germany. This also added to the idea that because of these shared goals, German America should work to support them. As *Der Demokrat* claimed, “unsere deutschen Brüder... rüften sich, auch Deutschlands Söhne rufen nach Reform und Freiheit.”<sup>47</sup> It claimed that the brotherhood between Germans was the reason to support the Revolutions. They were putting support towards the ideological goal of a free Germany, but were also acting on German brotherhood. *Der Westbote* also echoed a similar idea about the fraternal bond between German Americans and the Revolutionaries. In an article on the Revolutionary uprisings, it stated, “Eure Brüder werfen mutig die Fesseln ab.”<sup>48</sup> Other articles in the same paper also consistently argued that people should support their German brothers out of a sense of fraternity. All four papers used a consistent rhetoric about the filial duty that was owed to the father land, and the fraternal bond between German Americans and the German revolutionaries, which were both predicated on the idea that German Americans were German.

The rhetoric that the papers used was also grounded in a tradition of portraying the German fatherland through familial metaphors that started at the end of the 18th century. In general terms, patriotism has long employed the language of loyalty and patriarchal duty.<sup>49</sup> However, the advent of nationalism shifted this rhetoric, as Jose Eisenberg states, “the main focus turned to loyalty of members to the nation.”<sup>50</sup> This process can be concretely documented in the case of the German states. In the era of Enlightened despotism, there was an effort to

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<sup>46</sup> “our brothers are fighting against despotism,” *Ibid*.

<sup>47</sup> “Our german brothers are also calling you, Germany’s sons also call for reform and freedom”, “Aufruf an der Deutschen in Philadelphia zu einer Massenversammlung”, *Der Demokrat*, April 3rd, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>48</sup> “your brothers are bravely throwing off the fetters” , “Von Deutschland!”, *Der Westbote* April 7th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1174/rec/236>.

<sup>49</sup> José Eisenberg, “PATRIOTISM AND GENDER IN THE TRADITION OF MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT” in *Contributions to the History of Concepts* , march 2005, Vol. 1, No. 1 (march 2005).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 72.

portray the monarch as the head of the family, and the subject as a dutiful son. This process started in Prussia with the reshaping of the image of Frederick the Great as the father of the people, which was used as a rhetorical tool to convey the idea of civic duty.<sup>51</sup> A parallel process occurred under Joseph II in the Habsburg empire, which portrayed the empress Maria Theresa as the mother of the empire.<sup>52</sup> During this period, there was a refiguring of monarchs as figures connected to their people for the purpose of rallying the support of the populace. There was another shift in this rhetoric during the wars against Napoleon, which replaced the idea of loyalty to the monarch with loyalty to the fatherland. As Karen Hagenmann states, “The accompanying emotionalization of political concepts was intended to help overcome the duality of monarch and subjects mentally and to integrate them into the “monarchical nation”- not least in order to motivate them to make the necessary wartime “sacrifice for the fatherland.””<sup>53</sup> Building on the earlier models, fighting for the fatherland was conveyed during the Wars of Liberation through this idea of the family. It took the form of filial duty to the fatherland and brotherly duty to fellow soldiers.<sup>54</sup> The first conflict where the German nation banded together also introduced a specific rhetorical vocabulary that invoked the concept of the family to mobilize popular support.

The discussion of duty to the German homeland in familial terms in the German language papers bares a very close resemblance to this rhetoric, which indicates that the editors were making use of German nationalist rhetoric they experienced before they left the German states. The first significant wave of German immigration occurred throughout the 1830s<sup>55</sup>, which means that both the editors and the readership would have been familiar with the rhetoric used during the wars against Napoleon. Many of the editors went so far as to reference the Napoleonic Wars when they argued for the strength of the German people, which indicates that the wars were fresh in the collective memory of German America. So, German America was specifically

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<sup>51</sup> Eckhart Hellmuth, “Die „Wiedergeburt“ Friedrichs des Großen und der „Tod fürs Vaterland“: Zum patriotischen Selbstverständnis in Preußen in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts” in *Aufklärung*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Nationalismus vor dem Nationalismus? (1998), 23-54.

<sup>52</sup> Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, (Harvard University Press, 2016), 56.

<sup>53</sup> Karen Hagenmann, ““Of “Manly Valor” and “German Honor”/ Nation, War, and Masculinity in the Age of the Prussian Uprising against Napoleon,” *Central European History*, 1997, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1997), 208.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 212.

<sup>55</sup> Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution*, 10-11.

making use of a rhetorical strategy from a period of “national liberation,” which indicates their own familiarity with the language of German nationalism as well as their own feeling that German America was part of the German nation.

The four German language papers had a consistent thread of defining Germanness as a linguistic, rather than geographic phenomena. They identified themselves as Germans who lived outside of the fatherland, who still spoke German and had inherited the German Geist from the fatherland. They also used rhetoric that resonated with the German connections of the readers.

## **1.2 Representations of the German American Community**

The second aspect of German identity in German America is how much it could function as a cross cutting unifying factor. Historians like Wittke and Donner have argued that Germanness was not a substantial enough element to overcome the divisions in German America. However, the German language papers show that this was not the case. The papers called on a unified German American community to act in concert to support the Revolutions, because their shared Germanness and shared interest in the homeland was enough to set aside other differences. It is true that there were divisions in German America, given the diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds, religions, and political positions.<sup>56</sup> However, the same could have been said about the population of the German states in the same period. The divisions in the German diaspora were reflections of the divisions that existed within the German states-with the caveat that German America was disproportionately lower class, and these same divisions did not necessarily prove too substantial of an impediment in the German states. Before the Revolutions of 1848, the divisions were more apparent, because they were what appeared in the day to day discourse. However, similarly to what occurred in the case of Irish Americans, the news from Europe provided a moment when identity could overtake all other divisions. The historical moment provided a locus for the articulation of German identity as a unifying factor.

The German Americans were far from politically unified on the subject of American politics, but those divisions became less important when it came to questions of German events.

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<sup>56</sup> Alison Clark Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era*, (New York: Cambridge University Press. Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 2013).

Though it is impossible to say that German Americans overwhelmingly supported one side of the political spectrum, as Efford explains, the majority did support the left leaning parties - the Whigs and later the Republicans.<sup>57</sup> So, *Der Westbote* provides an interesting source for the discussion of political differences, because it is a right leaning paper. The editor often reprinted the articles from other German language papers and lambasted the ideological points that the Whigs made. Though *Der Ohio Staats-bote* was also a right leaning paper, it did not take the same care to establish itself as an opposition voice. So, *Der Westbote* would be the ideal paper to voice an objection to the reporting of Whig papers on the Revolutions. However, after the first news of the Revolutions in Germany, the editor wrote, “Den größten Teil unseres Blattes füllen heute die höchstwichtigen Nachrichten von Deutschland.... Wenn die Demokratie in Deutschland so kräftige Fortschritte macht, dann können wir wohl die Whigs einmal eine Woche lang ungeschoren lassen.”<sup>58</sup> He is aware of the tendency of his paper to lambast the Whigs, but is willing to desist because the German cause is more important. This example is striking, because it shows clearly how one of the usual cleavages in the community could be overcome by the important matter of Germany. This statement also indicates the scale of the coverage that the Revolutions got in German language papers, since he claims that the majority of German papers were celebrating the news from Europe. *Der Westbote* refrained from criticism towards Whig papers through the months of the Revolution, with only a few notes in the coverage of the American election. In this case, the strength of German American solidarity gave reason for political solidarity, which is a testament to the importance that Germany held for German America.

In a similar fashion, *Der Demokrat* called for a unified call in the German language press for support of the Revolutions, which indicates level of communal solidarity. On April 1st, the

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<sup>57</sup> Adam Chamberlain, “Voter Coordination and the Rise of the Republican Party: Evidence from New England,” *Social Science History*, Vol. 38, No. 3-4 (Fall/Winter 2014), in 1848 the Republican party was still relatively small, but it would grow into a major political party in the years following the Mexican-American war.

<sup>58</sup> “The majority of our papers are full today with the important news from Germany....when the democracy in Germany is being so strongly supported, then we can leave the Whigs unscathed for one week”, *Der Westbote*, April 7th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1175/rec/236>.

paper published an article, which addressed, “Deutsche Freunde und Landsleute”<sup>59</sup> and claimed that it was necessary for German America to present united support for the sake of “unseren Brüder.”<sup>60</sup> It called for the German press to provide a call to arm, regardless of other disagreements. The article states, “Daß wir alle deutsche Amerikaner in einen engen Bund zusammen, um gemeinsam hoflich für den großen Zweck der Befreiung unseres... Vaterlandes aus den schmähhlichen Ketten der Knechtschaft nach Maaßgabe unsrer Kräfte zu werfen und zu bandeln.”<sup>61</sup> The idea that loyalty to the fatherland would be enough to unify separate German American papers is significant, because it appeals to a shared goal. It conceptualizes the German American community on the whole as capable of rallying around their interest in the fatherland, and desire to support a Revolution. On the 11th of May, *Der Demokrat* also published a list of German papers, which was a survey of the papers that were covering the revolutions for the purpose of emphasizing the solidarity between different German language papers.<sup>62</sup> The list covered several different states, which suggests an interest and solidarity between different communities across different states. Strikingly, the list included both Whig and Democrat papers, which shows that the unifying idea of the revolutions, and a German duty supports them was more important than the political leanings of the paper.

While the articles in *Der Demokrat* do not in themselves show that there was a shared sense of German American identity, there was also a substantial amount of support for the revolutions in the papers, and reprinting articles from other German language papers. The sharing of articles is especially striking because it demonstrates that the papers were reading what the others published, and agreed enough to publish their support of the Revolutions. Though it was not unusual to publish articles from other German language papers before the revolutions there was a notable difference in the way that they republished after the beginning of the revolution. Before the revolutions, the papers republished news articles from each other as a

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<sup>59</sup> “German friends and compatriots” , “An die deutsche Presse in Amerika”, *Der Demokrat*, April 1st, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>60</sup> “Our brothers.”

<sup>61</sup> “That all of us German Americans in a close union together, for the same hope for the great purpose of the freeing of our...fatherland out of the terrible shackles.”, *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Der Demokrat*, May 11th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

way to share news that they did not receive directly. By contrast, the republishing during the revolutions included editorial articles that support for the revolutions, which presented a common understanding of the need to support the homeland. For example, *Der Demokrat* published the entire text of a speech at a meeting in Reading - which appeared initially in *Der liberale Beobachter*.<sup>63</sup> By doing so, the paper created an elevated platform for the support being mustered in a smaller city by publishing the words to a wider audience in Philadelphia. Similarly, *Der Westbote* reprinted articles from Canton and Cincinnati, which included articles announcing gatherings in other parts of the state that encouraged people who read the paper to go to these meetings if possible.<sup>64</sup>

The reprinting also crossed state boundaries. *Der Ohio Staats-bote* reprinted articles from both New York and Baltimore. Each of the four papers reprinted articles from *Der New Yorker Schnellpost*. This happened for a number of reasons. Firstly, because the New York papers usually got the news first, because the steamships would arrive in New York harbor, which gave them the most direct contact with the news from Europe. Secondly, because the *Schnellpost* had a correspondent in Germany, who sent letters that detailed the events, which were of great interest to the other German language papers. *Der Demokrat* explicitly stated that, “Den größten Teil der interessanten Nachrichten im heutigen Blatte entnehmen wir dem ‘Baltimore Correspondant’ und der ‘N.Y.Schnellpost.’”<sup>65</sup> But, in addition to the interesting nature of the articles, other papers, including *Der Westbote* also published the calls for action and the correspondence from New York..<sup>66</sup> The support of the *Schnellpost* in *Der Westbote* is more important than other papers, because the *Schnellpost* was exactly the kind of far left, pro-

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<sup>63</sup> “Die Readinger Versammlung,” *Der Demokrat*, May 2nd, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>64</sup> For example: *Der Westbote*, April 7th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1175/rec/236>.

<sup>65</sup> “The majority of interesting news in today’s papers comes from the Baltimore Correspondant and the ‘N.Y. Schnellpost’” “Verschiedenes”, *Der Demokrat*, June 1st, 1848 Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>66</sup> “Ausland”, *Der Westbote*, June 2nd, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1217/rec/244>.

Socialist paper that *Der Westbote* usually heaped scorn on.<sup>67</sup> The cross cutting nature of the desire to aid Germany is evident in the large overlap between the papers, and the willingness to reprint editorial articles from papers that otherwise have been ideological opposites. Thus, the newspapers used their platform to present a unified message about the enthusiasm for the Revolutions. Importantly, they cited the idea that as a German American community, they could more effectively rally support if they worked together.

There are two incidents involving the community in New York that demonstrate a sense of solidarity and community within German America. The first occurred in early May of 1848, when a Mr. Dowiat, who was part of the liberal movement in Germany visited the United States. According to *Der Demokrat*, the goal of the visit was to observe, “die Institutionen dieser großen Republik.”<sup>68</sup> During an appearance where he spoke to the German Americans in New York he was critical of those present. He claimed that the community in New York was dominated by the bourgeois, and that it was not as liberal as it should be to support the Revolutions. His criticisms were harsh, according to *Der Demokrat*. The article then refutes the claims that Dowiat made by stating that the, “Bourgeoisie in New York [hat]....Geld gesammelt, um wider...Europa zu fordern.”<sup>69</sup> The paper treated the comments as an affront to both the community on the whole and the community in New York, because they had been mobilizing support for the fatherland. The article suggests that they see Dowiat as ungrateful for devaluing the efforts that the New York Germans had taken, and the class criticism as unnecessarily harsh during a period when all support should be valued. This article shows that there was a camaraderie that moved the editor of *Der Demokrat* to speak for the New York Germans in response to outside criticism. It is especially notable because *Der Demokrat* was a left leaning paper that regularly published about workers movements and supporting the working class. In the case of France, they explicitly

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<sup>67</sup> William Frederic Kamman, *Socialism in German American Literature* (Americana Germanica Press, 1917), 36. Though this source also falls into the category of literature produced in the shadow of the First World War, it is the only source I could find that makes a statement on the political leanings of the *Schnellpost*. Under normal circumstances, I would have had access to the *Schnellpost* myself. But the lockdown in New York because of COVID-19 made this impossible. So, it was necessary to turn to secondary literature.

<sup>68</sup> “the institutions of this great republic” “Dowiat und Weidling,” *Der Demokrat*, May 3rd, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>69</sup> “bourgeois in New York [have]....collected money, in order to support Europe.”, “Vermischte Nachrichten” *Der Demokrat*, 5th of May, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

stated that the working classes needed to be involved in the creation of a French republic.<sup>70</sup> So, it would be accurate to describe *Der Demokrat* as Socialist, and usually amenable to class-based criticism. However, in this case, they viewed the criticism inappropriate, and were quick to defend another part of the German American community. This suggests that there was a sense that it was necessary to prioritize the community rather than levying these kinds of criticism. This occurrence also casts some doubt on the popular idea in scholarship that German America had nothing but admiration for German liberals. In this article, there is a sense that the community could rebuff a German liberal if they felt that he was too critical.

The second event that demonstrated the feeling of fellowship between German American communities occurred in late April of 1848. The editor of the *Schnellpost* in New York, Karl Heizen felt so moved by the occurrences in Germany that he chose to take a ship to Germany to fight personally. An article about his choice appeared in *Der Westbote*; the paper framed Heizen's choice as something that they fully support and encourage. It stated that, "Der ... deutsche Patriot... ist mit dem letzten Schiffe von New York aus nach Deutschland abgereist, um an dem Freiheitskampfe in Deutschland teilzunehmen."<sup>71</sup> The paper lauds his choice, and the tone is clearly enthusiastic. Though the *Westbote* and the *Schnellpost* are far apart in both ideological and physical distance, there is support between the two. The paper lauded someone they considered to be a part of their community and his patriotic choice to fight for the homeland because his patriotic choice was more important than his position on American politics.

The German American papers expressed a sense of shared German identity during the revolutions, but also a sense of shared purpose that was worth putting aside other differences. Counter to what earlier scholarship has claimed, German Americans were able to find a cross cutting shared cause in supporting the revolutions. They were able to see past both political and class differences, and there was also an effort by urban papers to publicize the events and meetings from smaller communities and across state lines. This indicates that the regionalism and division that many historians have stated were impediments to organized German action

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<sup>70</sup> "Europa," *Der Demokrat*, March 28th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>71</sup> "the german patriot has taken the last ship from New York to Germany, in order to take part in the fight for freedom in Germany.", "Vermischtes", *Der Westbote*, May 5th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1194/rec/240>.



were not as vital. Rather, there was rhetoric about supporting other German Americans to provide more effective support to Germany.

### 1.3 Relation Between German and American Identity

The third aspect of identity that is necessary in the discussion of German America is the relationship between the German and American aspects of identity. The transnational aspect of German American identity is important, because it is impossible to completely separate the German identity from an American experience. The American experience had to be a part of how German Americans conceived of themselves. In the study of immigration to the United States, the interaction of immigrant groups with Anglo-America is important, because there is a predominant pressure to speak English and conform to Anglo-American cultural norms.<sup>72</sup> While German America was one of the immigrant groups that was able to maintain greater insularity, the pressure of Anglo-America still had an impact. They lived in their own communities, but also had contact with Anglo-American society. In the question of Germany, they did not view the American identity and experience as necessarily contradictory. Instead, they viewed their own Germanness and their experience of American as complimentary, and able to inform their ability to aid Germany, because they had experienced republican government and democracy. The biggest point of contention was not American experience, but rather using English as a language.

The idea of America was generally viewed favorably by the newspapers, and they often praised the idea of the American flag being displayed at events that supported the revolutions, which symbolically indicated the compatibility of both the American and the German. On the 10th of April, there was a meeting of German Americans in St. John's Hall in Philadelphia. *Der Demokrat* described the meeting, and stated that, "ein großes amerikanisches Sternenbanner prangte, daß zu Rechten von unsere alten schwarz roth goldenen Nationalflagge."<sup>73</sup> The image of a patriotic German meeting with both the German and American flag is poignant, because it

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<sup>72</sup> For the way this functioned, see Friederike Baer, "Germans and Anglicized Eyrisch-Germans: The Parties" in *The Trial of Frederick Eberle: Language, Patriotism and Citizenship in Philadelphia's German Community, 1790 to 1830* (NYU Press, 2008).

<sup>73</sup> "a large American starry flag flies to the right of our old black, red, and gold national flag." "Stadt Neuigkeiten", *Der Demokrat*, April 10th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

conveys the idea that these two things do not contradict each other. The two flags, in the terms of the newspaper, both represent the idea of freedom - both the freedom that is present in the United States and that which they hoped for in Germany. The two go naturally together according to the article, and the imagery portrays a kind of hybridity that German American experienced. There is a similar image in the paper later in April, when the paper describes another meeting and mentions that, “Drei Banner, der amerikanisch, deutschen und französischen werden auf dem Independence Square.”<sup>74</sup> The paper makes a point in the case of both meetings to mention the flags, and to state that the German and the American are displayed together. These images provide a visual depiction of the way in which German America saw investment in Germany and an affinity for American liberty as complimentary. Other papers also communicated this idea through their use of terminology. For example, the *Ohio Staats-bote* referred to the United States as the “new fatherland” and Germany as the “old fatherland.”<sup>75</sup> There is no indication that there is any contradiction between the idea of two fatherlands.

It is not a question of exclusive loyalty to one or the other, because the idea of being German is not tied to a geographic location, and German America viewed the concept of America through the lens of values. The modern view of nation and citizenship often views a dual view of nation as contradictory. The United States demonstrated this idea during the World Wars, by insisting that having a connection to another country must be loyalty to that country.<sup>76</sup> However, in the 19th Century, there was not a distinct dichotomy for immigrant groups. They were able to maintain a connection to their country of origin and value America. It is clear that German Americans had a distinct view of the United States. They viewed America as a land of freedom. The view that many of the editors held of America is apparent in how they expected the United States to react to the revolutions in Europe. Both *Der Demokrat* and the *Ohio Staats-bote* urge the United States to act to aid the revolutions, because they believe that the United States

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<sup>74</sup> “Three banners, the American, German, and French were above Independence Square” , “Die große Massenversammlung im Independence Square”, *Der Demokrat*, April 21st, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>75</sup> About *Ohio Staats-bote*. (Canton, Stark County, Ohio) 1846-1851, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/>.

<sup>76</sup> Anne Löchte, “We don’t want the Kaiser to Rule in Ontario” in *German Diasporic Experiences: Identity, Migration and Loss*, ed. Mathias Schultze, James M. Skidmore, et al. (Wilfried University Press, 2008).

holds liberty as a core value, and should aid the development of republics in other countries.<sup>77</sup> So, in essence, in celebrating both Germany and the United States, the *Ohio Staats-bote* was true to its motto, “Wo Freiheit wohnt, da ist mein Vaterland.”<sup>78</sup> They did not view any contradiction between identifying with both of the two, because the values aligned.

More than one editor also portrayed the experience of America as an advantage, because it gave German Americans the experience of democracy, which the revolutionaries in Germany did not have. They viewed the experience of America as something that could be an asset, because it provided a different view of liberalism. Though it was not the only paper that made the argument, *Der Demokrat* offered a succinct articulation of this idea. They stated that German Americans can, “durch die Macht ihre amerikanischen Erfahrungen die Gründung republikanischer Institution fördern zu helfen.”<sup>79</sup> The idea is that being German American gave them a better position to help Germany follow in the model of the United States. It ties the idea of their unique experience in the United States to the concept that German Americans had a duty to aid Germany. The same article continues as a call to arms, which further reinforced the idea that having experienced America was an asset. The *Ohio Staats-bote* also made a similar argument; it argued that the involvement of German Americans in the process of creating a republic in Germany should be encouraged because of their unique perspective.<sup>80</sup> So, in addition to viewing American and German as complimentary identities that could co-exist, the American experience could be seen as a boon, which helped German Americans to be the ideal people to aid in the formation of a German republic.

The only point of contention among German Americans was the use of English as a language in the discussion or promotion of the revolutionary efforts, which did hint at a tension between German Americans and Anglo-America. The subject of language in immigrant

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<sup>77</sup> “Die Vereinigen Staaten und Europa”, *Der Demokrat*, April 7th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>78</sup> “Where Freedom lives, there is my fatherland.”

<sup>79</sup> “help with the founding of republican institutions through the strength of our American experiences”, “Aufruf an die Deutschen den Ver. Staaten,” *Der Demokrat*, April 24th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>80</sup> “Aufruf,” *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 3rd, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-03/ed-1/seq-1/>.

communities was one that was under discussion before the outbreak of the Revolutions.<sup>81</sup> For example, *Der liberale Beobachter* published an article in early March that dealt with the issue of German language education.<sup>82</sup> They argued that it was important for the German community to provide education in German to their children to resist the pressure to speak English, and that it was necessary to provide funding for German schools.<sup>83</sup> So, the subject of supporting the use of the German language against the pressure to speak English had been discussed in the community before. But this conversation also continued into the revolutions. Specifically, there was a conversation about the language spoken at the meetings and used for the advertising of the meetings. Though English allowed for greater outreach outside of the German speaking community, there was not consensus that it was desirable. The *Indiana State Sentinel*, an English language paper, published an appeal from the German community. The last resolution in the article was to have the article translated from German and published in an English paper, in order to create more support for the Revolution.<sup>84</sup> In that case, the Germans in Indianapolis saw it as more beneficial to encourage participation from the larger Anglo-American public. *Der Demokrat* also showed some indications that speaking English was accepted in some of the Revolutionary discussions. On May 14th, the paper reported on a gathering that had taken place in the small town of Pottsville, and noted that there were speakers present made speeches in both English and German.<sup>85</sup> The picture that it painted is of a bilingual atmosphere, which accepted the use of both. There is a second gathering that the paper also reported on where both language were used.<sup>86</sup> The paper did not mention whether everyone present was able to understand both, or if an individual person might have only understood half of what was said. The paper's

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<sup>81</sup> Friedericke Baer, "Germans and Anglicized Eyrisch-Germans: The Parties" in *The Trial of Frederick Eberle: Language, Patriotism, and Citizenship in Philadelphia's German Community, 1790 to 1830* (NYU Press, 2008), provides an example of this kind of tension between the English speaking and German speaking communities.

<sup>82</sup> *Der liberale Beobachter*, April 11th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-04-11/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> "German Meeting," *Indiana State Sentinel*, April 20th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015677/1848-04-20/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>85</sup> *Der Demokrat*, May 14th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>86</sup> "Die Readinger Versammlung," *Der Demokrat*, May 2nd, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

reporting is neutral, and thus avoids making comment on the matter of English language outreach.

Der liberale Beobachter took the opposite position, and argued that it would not be productive to have English speakers at the meeting. They claim that the Anglo-Americans would say, “Isn’t it out of order to speak Dutch here?”<sup>87</sup> The biting remark makes two points about Anglo-Americans. The first is that they do not know anything about German America and the German identity. They would identify them as “Dutch” because they cannot tell the difference between “Deutsch” and “Dutch.”<sup>88</sup> Thus implying that they would not understand the importance of Germany or supporting the German national cause, so it would not be productive to have them present. The remark also suggests that inviting Anglo-Americans would also invite the pressure to speak English into a space that was meant for German matters. They implied that Anglo-Americans would shame them for speaking German even in matters that concern Germany. In providing this hypothetical Anglo-American, Der liberale Beobachter made the point that inviting English speakers would be pointless, and would pressure the German speakers to be less German.

The importance of German language and negotiating the relationship with English was also a question of identity. German America viewed themselves as having the German Volksg Geist, which was heavily tied to their use of German as a language. Passing the language to their children and maintaining a linguistic community was an important part of the German American cultural landscape. To use English as a language was to be removed from the German Geist insofar as German America understood the concept of “Volksg Geist.” So, in a matter that dealt with the connection between German Americans and Germany, it was natural that language would become an issue. Each part of the community had to weigh using English as a practical step, or using a neutral kind of bilingualism against the pressure from Anglo-America to conform. The question of language did not have a consistent answer through all of the Revolutionary efforts, but it does reveal the only significant tension between German America

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<sup>87</sup> “Die deutsche Versammlung”, *Der liberale Beobachter*, May 2nd, 1848. page 3, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-05-02/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>88</sup> This linguistic misunderstanding resulted in Anglo-Americans consistently referring to the German speaking population as the “Pennsylvania Dutch.”

and the rest of American culture. For German America, America was viewed primarily in terms of the values of freedom and liberty, so it was possible to hold those values and also use German exclusively as a language. However, the idea from Anglo-America that one should speak English introduced tension, which appeared in debates about the language of outreach.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

Scholars have argued that German Americans in the United States did not have a concept of themselves as German before the arrival of the Forty-Eighters, but the presence of rhetoric that expresses their Germanness in papers in 1848 shows a flaw in this interpretation. It is necessary to adjust the narrative of German America to include this development of German identity independent from the influence of the German revolutionaries. It is possible to instead liken it to the development of Irish patriotism in the United States, which only formed a significant and consistent concept of what it meant to be Irish during the Revolutions of 1848. While it may be true that there was little evidence to suggest a shared German identity in the 1840s, there was also not a single crisis to spur German Americans to openly express their identity or connection to the homeland. So, the expressions of identity took subtler forms like funding German language schools and resisting Anglo-American incursion. None of these required a strong statement of Germanness, which could give the impression that German identity was very limited or regional, since it prioritized local communities. Until 1848, German Americans also did not express strong political ties to Germany, because they could reasonably expect little change in the dominance of Metternich and the Holy Alliance. However, several of the papers state that the outbreak of the Revolutions was the first hope they had to fulfill a “long held hope” of a more liberal Germany.<sup>89</sup> So, they had been invested in German politics, but had not seen any development towards liberalism. Because German America largely opposed conservative monarchy and didn’t see change in the German states, they focused on matters of American politics instead.

Like the Irish American community, the prospect of substantial political change in their country of origin prompted German America to articulate their German identity in a way that

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<sup>89</sup> *Der Demokrat*, March 28th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

they had not previously. The German language newspapers did proclaim their own Germanness and state that they saw themselves as a part of the German Volk. In their terms, German America was just as German as the German states or any part of the diaspora, because they spoke the language and had the Geist. The connection to the German states and the German revolutionaries is the most apparent in the calls to action for organizations and meetings, which poetically refer to the filial duty that is owed by German Americans to their homeland. It frames German America as a child who has left the home, but is still German nonetheless and who has a duty to their family: The country which is in the role of the father, and the Revolutionaries who are in the role of the brothers. The patriotic poems that the newspapers regularly published also spoke to the connection between German America and Germany. These sections of the paper stated explicitly that they were German. However, this is still due on the revolutions. Because of the emergence of political change in Germany, there was reason to publish patriotic poems and calls to arms to rally support for the revolutions and the revolutionaries. The political change prompted the articulation of German identity, which makes it seem to appear in 1848 like it had not earlier in the 1840s. The influence of the Forty-Eighters was not the singular factor that led to a coherent version of German identity. Rather, they were able to step into an environment where German identity had already been expressed for several months, and add their own ideas of Germany and Germanness to a set already independently developed by the diaspora.

The interpretation that German Americans were more focused on their own limited community also does not hold true. They did conceive of themselves as a singular community, even though there were divisions between different political papers. The revolutions also prompted German America to set aside these political differences for the sake of supporting what they saw as a shared goal - a liberalized and unified German states. Though there had been division before, the situation provided a reason for greater unity. Papers published news and updates from other papers, regardless of the political leanings of the paper they were printing from. Most importantly, they published the calls for meetings and gatherings from other papers for the purpose of inviting as much German participation as possible. In addition to opening the discourse for the open expression of German identity, the Revolutions gave reason for solidarity between different states and communities. The cause of a liberal Germany was worth creating a

unified front built on a shared German identity. The rhetoric of the papers emphasized that they were all Germans, and for that reason should support each other.

However, the German American identity must be more nuanced because of the transnational nature of their connection to the homeland, and the experience of America was a facet of how they conceived of themselves, and the kind of aid they could provide to Germany. German Americans had both the experience of living in American democracy, and also the pressure of Anglo-America. The perspective of German America was that the American facet of their identity was primarily derived from the American values of liberty, democracy and freedom, which they had experienced through participation with the democratic process. So, it was not incompatible with a German identity which came primarily from speaking the language. It was possible for them to hang the two flags together as a symbol that they both represent freedom. German Americans could see themselves as valuing the freedom of the United States, and connected to Germany and speaking German.

## **Chapter 2: Communal Action**

The question of how German America reacted to the revolutions goes beyond the rhetoric of the editors of the papers. The rhetoric in the articles made the case that German Americans were German, and that they had a duty to the homeland, but that alone does not demonstrate that a large number of German speaking population agreed with this idea. While the paper did need to maintain a readership, and had to publish articles that were relevant to the community, that does not necessarily mean that the German American community was receptive to the ideas. It would have been possible to ignore the zealous rhetoric of the editors, though it is not likely with how prevalent and apparent the conversation about Germany were in the papers. To answer the question of how the community interacted with the news from Germany, and the impact of the rhetoric on the readership, it is useful to turn to the actions that people took. It is possible to examine this through the newspapers, because the papers promoted the meetings and fundraisers that were being held in their own community. They also lauded the efforts of other German American communities in other cities. The combination of the two makes it possible to construct a picture of the actions being taken within the community through the four papers. While this



will not include every possible German American action in every city, it does provide a large case study in the kind of support the community mustered. The actions that people took are integral for answering the question of transnational identity, because they demonstrate how many people were moved by the idea of connection to the fatherland.

It is important to examine these actions as part of the reaction to the revolutions, since they were the way that people acted on their sense of connection to Germany. The few other studies of this period have dismissed these efforts, because they failed to have a substantial impact on the political situation in Germany.<sup>90</sup> This kind of focus on the efficacy of the efforts rather than the efforts themselves leads to dismissing them, because they could not produce change. But, when the question focuses on the efforts themselves, it is possible to examine them as an expression of identity and initiative to take part in the political process in Germany. The efforts taken by the communities were a concrete attempt to put the rhetoric of supporting the fatherland into practice. Examining the form of support and the magnitude of it reveals how the community acted on the news, and also indicates how widespread the support was.

It is also necessary to contextualize what was possible for German America to do to support the revolutions. They did not have the power to enact governmental action that would have had a substantial impact on Germany. There was an attempt to persuade a Senator to speak for Germany and for German refugees in the government, but there is no evidence that it was successful.<sup>91</sup> The United States enforced a policy of isolationism when it came to the revolutions in Europe, partially due to the war that they were already involved in, but also due to the concern that too much contact with Revolutions would feed domestic political divisions. The Democrats were not willing to risk the revolutions in Europe spreading to the United States and feeding the abolitionist current.<sup>92</sup> On both sides of the political debate, they viewed the revolutions as a risk for upsetting the political balance. The careful balancing act between free and slave states was

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<sup>90</sup> Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution*, 40-41.

<sup>91</sup> "Vermischtes Nachrichten," *Der Demokrat*, June 8th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>92</sup> For an example of a Democrat paper making this argument see: *The Spirit of Democracy*, April 1st, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038115/1848-04-01/ed-1/seq-1/>.

generally viewed as necessary in order to not cause a rift between the North and South.<sup>93</sup> The desire to maintain the status quo in terms of slavery also manifested in the foreign policy. Given the disposition of the United States in the period, it would have been impossible to entice the United States to support the revolution in Germany. So, German America was limited to what they could do within their own communities to provide support. Within their own communities, there was also a limit of what they were capable of mobilizing. With the exception of some pockets in major cities like New York and Philadelphia, German America mostly consisted of lower class farmers.<sup>94</sup> It is important to keep these limits in mind, to avoid the conclusion that German Americans did not act as substantially as they could have.

For the purpose of analyzing the reaction, it is useful to separate them into different categories, and discuss how each functioned in relation to the community and Germany. There were varying forms of involvement with supporting the Revolutions, which ranged from collecting money to directly intervening in Germany. Rather than implying that there is a hierarchy that puts greater value on direct involvement in the fighting, it is possible to show the variety of actions.

## 2.1 Letters

One of the simplest ways that German Americans made an effort to support the revolutions was by writing letters to their German friends and relatives. David Gerber emphasized in his article “Forming a Transnational Narrative” that one of the questions that has yet to be answered in transnational scholarship on the earlier 19th century is how transnational connections between families were maintained before the advent of modern communication infrastructure.<sup>95</sup> The case of German America in 1848 provides an answer to this question, since letters were an integral part of both sending encouragement for the revolutions and of receiving news from Germany. Since letters are inherently personal, the number of letters sent back and

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<sup>93</sup> Gary W. Gallagher, Waugh, Joan, “Expansion, Nation, and Perception: The Road to Secession and War” in *The American War: A History of the Civil War Era* (Flip Learning, 2015), 14-15.

<sup>94</sup> Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution*, 15.

<sup>95</sup> David A. Gerber, “Forming a Transnational Narrative: New Perspectives on European Migrations to the United States,” *The History Teacher*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Nov., 2001), 62.

forth from Germany is impossible to know, but they did leave traces in the newspapers. Correspondence between the two countries was an important part of the reaction, because it used interpersonal transnational connections in a way that demonstrates that people did maintain contact between the two countries.

One of the most prominent example of the use of letters as part of the efforts to support the revolutions came from *Der Westbote*, which published about sending letters to Germany. The first of the articles dealing with the letters appeared on the 17th of March, announcing that there was a collection of letters being undertaken to be sent to New York and then to Germany.<sup>96</sup> The paper stated that, “Wichtig für unsere deutschen Landsleute ist dem Umstand, daß das Postgeld auf Briefe, die nach Deutschland ...sind fünfzig in irgend einem Postamte der Ver. Staaten vorausbezahlt werden kann. Diese Briefe werden dann mit den Dampfschiffen Washington und Herrmann, die regelmäßig zwischen Neu-York und Bremen.”<sup>97</sup> In the article, the paper gives information about sending letters from the United States, but also provides the ability to send the letters without the fee through the efforts being taken to send the letters from New York. The collection of letters was intended to remove some of the impediments that kept poorer German Americans from sending letters to the homeland. In so doing, the community was able to enable greater communication, which would also allow German Americans to express their support to their friends and relatives. The following week the paper published a letter from a reader named Johannes Rupert who was delighted and surprised by the announcement of the letter collection. He stated that, “Die hier wohnenden Deutschen würden sich freuen, wenn die Fürsten von ihren Thronen heruntergejagt würden.”<sup>98</sup> and that many people had been hoping for the chance to contact their German relatives to express their enthusiasm. Another letter from a reader named

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<sup>96</sup> *Der Westbote*, 17th of March, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1160/rec/233>.

<sup>97</sup> “It is important for our German countrymen to know that the price of sending a letter from any post office in the United States is usually fifty [Dollars]. These letters will be sent with the steamships Washington and Herrman which are traveling between New York and Bremen,” Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> “The Germans who live here would be very excited, when the Princes are forced from their thrones.” Johannes Rupert, *Der Westbote*, March 31st, 1848, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1169/rec/235>.

T.H. Tanke expressed a similar interest, stating that, “Stolz, daß ich in einem Zeitalter leben in welchem Grundsätze herrschend werden.”<sup>99</sup> The editor responds by confirming that there is a letter collection happening, and encouraging all those who can to send letters to the homeland. Months later the paper also encouraged readers to send letters, and included the instruction, “Jeder Deutsche, der Briefe von Deutschland erwartet sollte vorerst seinen Angehörigen im alten Vaterlande seine Adresse richtig angeben.”<sup>100</sup> According to the paper, having the right return address would be important, because it would ensure that they could get a response to their letters. This is particularly interesting because it paints a picture of an exchange of letters that carried on throughout the Revolutions. These letters, according to the newspapers, could be used as a form of interpersonal influence. *Der Demokrat* also encouraged its readers to send letters to individual Germans, and the article clearly articulates the reasoning behind these letters as part of a larger effort to aid the German cause, “Können wir unsere Bruderstimmen nicht persönlich im Vaterlande erheben, so können wir dies erseßen durch Briefe, durch Adressen, durch die Macht der freien Presse, durch liberale Unterstützung der reinsten Patrioten im Vaterland eilen, um persönlich Anteil zu nehmen an dem großen Kampf für Freiheit.”<sup>101</sup> The inclusion of letters in the list of ways to make their voices heard in Germany indicates that they were seen as a way to have an individual influence. Both papers suggest that using the interpersonal connections to those in the homeland to express their political position was a legitimate form of support for the Revolutions. It was seen as a way to express an individual political voice, even if it was just to another individual.

Letters also served as a way to get information from the homeland, sometimes in the form of first hand accounts. For example, *Der Westbote* published an article that stated that they had

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<sup>99</sup> “I am proud that I live in a time when principals will prevail” T.H. Tanke, “Für den Westboten” *Der Westbote*, April 28th, 1848, page 3, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1190/rec/239>.

<sup>100</sup> “Every German who is waiting for a letter from Germany should make sure that they are providing the right address in the old fatherland.” *Der Westbote*, June 2nd, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1190/rec/239>.

<sup>101</sup> “Since we can not express our fraternal voice in the fatherland in person, we can do so through letters, through addresses, through the strength of the free press, through the liberal support of the true patriots in the fatherland, and through personally taking part in the great battle for freedom.” “Aufruf an die Deutschen in der Ver. Staaten,” *Der Demokrat*, April 24th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

received a letter with news from “a friend in Germany.”<sup>102</sup> Though they don’t state who their friend is, they publish his account of the developments in Germany. It demonstrates that the connection to Germany also went the other way. Letters that came from Germany were a way to keep up with the news outside of the news that came by steamship. At the end of June, *Der Westbote* published a letter from an unnamed German patriot, which praised the German American efforts and stated that, “Brüder Amerikaner, die Ihr stets der bedrängten Freien auf Deutschlands Boden gedachtet mit Wort und Tat, ihr werdet die geächteten deutschen Republikaner, welche in Not und Dürftigkeit kümmern.”<sup>103</sup> So, there was at least one letter that came from Germany that was complimentary about the efforts of German America to support the revolutions. *Der Demokrat* also corresponded with German associations in London and Paris, with the goal of coordinating action to aid the German revolution.<sup>104</sup> Though it is harder to confirm through the second hand reporting and reprinting, the correspondent that the *Schnellpost* had in Germany was communicating through letters. So, the ability to have correspondence from Germany was also important, because it provided news from the perspective of an individual, which allowed for a different view of the events.

The existence of these letter exchanges is important, because it demonstrates the importance of transnational interpersonal connections. It was possible to maintain connections through letters to people in the homeland, and then make use of these connections in a situation of political change to advocate for a particular outcome. Effectively, the exchange of letters consisted of German America writing to their relatives and friends in Germany to encourage them to support the Revolutions, and friends in Germany sending back letters that served as a source of news. There was a network of interpersonal connections that facilitated an exchange of

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<sup>102</sup> *Der Westbote*, June 23rd, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1230/rec/247>.

<sup>103</sup> “Brother Americans, you who have faithfully thought of the besieged freedom of Germany’s soil with word and deed, you will care for the fugitive german Republicans, who are in need and meagerness.”, *Der Westbote*, June 23rd, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1230/rec/247>.

<sup>104</sup> “Vermischtes Nachtrichten,” *Der Demokrat*, June 3rd, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

information between Germany and German America, and it was part of the larger complex of actions that German Americans took to support the German revolutions.

## 2.2 Community Meetings and Fundraising

The most ubiquitous form of support in German America was the hosting of gatherings in the community, which served the purpose of either rallying the community, hosting speakers who could convey the necessity of supporting the revolution or fundraising. The best way to spread the news of the Revolution, aside from printing in the newspaper, was to have large gatherings in public places. It provided a forum to announce the developments in Germany, and to rally people together in one place, which forged a sense of both community and shared purpose. The meetings also provided the chance for people to contribute financially to the efforts, since money could easily be collected with people in the same place. The newspapers published news from their own local meetings and those in other states and city. This reporting provides valuable insight into how many meetings were held, and how many people attended each one, which also indicates the level of community involvement.

Each paper published announcements of the meetings within their community, and these announcements demonstrate how each community held their own gatherings to express their support for the Revolutions as soon as they broke out. The enthusiastic gatherings were practically instantaneous once the news from Germany broke in the United States, which indicates that the newspapers were not exaggerating when they stated that German America had been hoping for this news. It seems that German America acted on the news as soon as it appeared. One of the most striking example of the enthusiasm for Revolution appeared in *Der Demokrat* before the news of the revolutions in Germany. In response to the start of the revolution in France, *Der Demokrat* called for a meeting of Germans.<sup>105</sup> It stated that, “Beschlossen: daß wir Deutsche als treue und wahre Republikaner die Botschaft der

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<sup>105</sup> “Resolved: That we Germans as true and sincere Republicans greet the French Revolution as the first successful cry for freedom in Europe.” *Der Demokrat*, March 28th, 1848, Horner Research Library, the German Society of Pennsylvania.

französischer Revolution, als den ersten Siegesruf der Freiheit in Europa begrüßen.”<sup>106</sup> They declared that this was to celebrate the freedom in France, but they also proposed a meeting for the purpose of encouraging the same kind of revolution in Germany. The article stated that, “Was müßten dann wir Deutschen Amerikas für unser altes Vaterland [tun]... Wir müssen es mit aller uns zu Gebote stehen den Kraft dahin bringen daß Deutschland seine Sklavenfetten zerbricht, seines Königsbrut vertilgt und sich in einen Staat verwandelt.”<sup>107</sup> This bold proclamation came before there was any news of revolutionary stirring in Germany, so it demonstrates that there was a hope for change in the homeland. They set out a plan to help create a revolution in Germany, which involved raising 100,000 Dollars to send to Germany and recruiting 1000 volunteers.<sup>108</sup> Beyond the scale of the plan, which was more ambitious than was feasible, its existence speaks to the hopes of German America. Upon hearing about the revolution in France, the immediate reaction of the German American community in Philadelphia was to attempt to inspire the same in Germany. This reaction was also not unique to Philadelphia, since *Der Westbote* also mentioned Germany in its initial coverage of the revolutionary developments in France. It asked, “Wird die Revolution in Frankreich als Vorspiel des großen Freiheitskampfes in unserm alten... deutschen Vaterlandes dienen?”<sup>109</sup> The paper also claimed that a revolution was the dearest wish of the German American people, because it would bring freedom to the fatherland. The appearance of this enthusiasm before the start of the coverage of the revolutions in Germany suggests that German Americans were already thinking about the possibility of a liberal Germany, even if it had not appeared in the papers until the possibility of revolution was raised by France. The announcement of a meeting in Philadelphia also suggests that some German Americans were willing to contribute to creating that kind of revolution. These articles serve as a kind of foreshadowing for the kind of enthusiastic support that German America would later be able to muster once the news of a revolution broke.

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<sup>106</sup> “What must us German Americans do for our old fatherland?... We must do all that we can with our strength to induce Germany to break its slave fetters, to destroy its brood of Kings, and to reorganize itself into a state.” Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> “Will the Revolution in France serve as an example of the great fight for freedom for our German fatherland?” “Revolution in Frankreich,” *Der Westbote*, March 24th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1164/rec/234>.

Once German America was aware of the revolutions, the community meetings sprung up in each community. Each of the four papers reported that there was going to be a gathering in their own community, or in one close enough for their readership to travel to. For example, on the 19th of April, the *Ohio Staats-bote* reported that there was going to be a meeting in Cleveland in support of the Revolutions. Interestingly, the article also stated that it was the duty of every proper German woman to attend the meeting.<sup>110</sup> *Der Westbote* also reprinted the same call to a meeting, and stated that, “Auch die hochgesinnten deutschen Frauen und Jungfrauen Cincinnatis haben einen patriotischen Aufruf zu einer Versammlung an ihre Mitschwestern erlassen.”<sup>111</sup> It states that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss and celebrate the revolution in Germany, and also suggests that there will be a collection of money at the meetings. Since Canton and Cleveland are close together, this was a meeting that the readers of the paper could easily attend. A later article also noted that the venue of the meeting had been changed because of the great interest that people showed in attending the meeting. There was also a meeting later in the Spring that was even closer to home. On the 17th of May, the *Ohio Staats-bote* published a reminder that there would be a meeting in Canton later in the month.<sup>112</sup> This shift from one place to the other is indicative of the size of the support. Initially the meeting was going to be held in a small venue in a major city, and then had to be moved to a larger one, which suggests that the enthusiasm was greater than the organizers expected. Then, after a month of consistent news about the revolution, it was possible to have enough participation in a small town like Canton to hold a meeting there. This paints a picture of substantial community participation and support for the meetings in Ohio. On the 7th of April, *Der Westbote* wrote that, “In Cincinnati ist ... eine Massenversammlung der Deutschen berufen worden.”<sup>113</sup> The next week the paper wrote a description of the meeting after it had been held. On the 14th of April, the paper wrote that, “Die

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<sup>110</sup> *Ohio Stats-bote*, April 19th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-04-19/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>111</sup> “The proper German women and young women of Cincinnati also have a patriotic calling to attend a meeting with their sisters.” *Der Westbote*, April 14th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1179/rec/237>.

<sup>112</sup> “In Cincinnati there will be a gathering of the Germans.” *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 17th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-17/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>113</sup> *Der Westbote*, April 7th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1175/rec/236>.



Deutschen von Cincinnati hielten am 4ten April eine große Massenversammlung und sprachen in passenden Beschlüssen ihren Jubel über die neuesten revolutionären Bewegungen in Deutschland aus.”<sup>114</sup> The purpose of this meeting was primarily discussion, and to express the excitement that the German Americans felt about the revolutions. Thus, it provided a forum for the community to share their excitement in a communal way. This statement is particularly interesting because of how quickly the meetings developed after the initial news. The news of the revolutions appeared in the United States at the end of March, and there was a meeting in the first week of April in Cincinnati. The timeline indicates that the meeting was organized almost as soon as the news broke, which speaks to the enthusiasm with which German Americans embraced the revolutions, and the large number of participants.

Meetings also happened in Pennsylvania in the same period, as evidenced in the newspapers from Reading and Philadelphia. *Der liberale Beobachter* published an announcement of a “Deutsche Massenversammlung” that was to take place on the 18th of April in Reading. There was also a second meeting that was announced on the 2nd of May with the purpose of, “über die neuesten Ereignisse im alten Vaterlande zu deliberieren.”<sup>115</sup> Similarly to the case in Canton, there was enough support in a small town like Reading to host a meeting without turning to Philadelphia. They were able to muster enough support to have speakers and discussion even in a smaller community. *Der Demokrat* described the meeting in Reading as, “eine große Anzahl Männer vor dem Hause versammelt.”<sup>116</sup> So, there was substantial participation even in a small town. This also demonstrates the importance of meetings as a forum to discuss the events in Germany. They provided a space for the average German American to speak about the revolutions and give an opinion on the events. So, these were a space to democratize the revolutions outside of the newspaper reports. Philadelphia had many different meetings after the

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<sup>114</sup> “The Germans in Cincinnati held a large gathering on the 4th of April and spoke about their resolutions of their excitement over the newest revolutionary developments in Germany.” *Der Westbote*, April 14th, 1848, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1179/rec/237>.

<sup>115</sup> “to deliberate over the newest occurrences in the old fatherland,” “Die deutsche Massen-Versammlung,” *Der liberale Beobachter*, May 2nd, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-05-02/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>116</sup> “A large number of people were collected in the house.” *Der Demokrat*, April 28th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

first aforementioned meeting, there was another call to a meeting in Philadelphia published on the 3rd of April, and there were other meetings later in May and June.<sup>117</sup> The paper describes the meeting of German Americans in Union Square on the 21st of April as very large.<sup>118</sup> The description in *Der Westbote* confirms both the size of the gatherings, and that money was collected there. As a community, Philadelphia was particularly enthusiastic in their organization of public events. Each paper reported more than one meeting to discuss the events in Germany, which indicates that meetings were the most widespread response to the revolutions. It was common for German Americans to organize meetings to express their enthusiasm for the revolutions, and the descriptions of the meetings indicated that there was substantial participation.

Papers also published about meetings that occurred outside of their own cities, which provides a greater insight into how widespread the meetings were. There were also substantial meetings in both New York and Baltimore, which many of the other newspapers reported on with interest. For example, *Der Westbote* reported, “Die Versammlungen der Deutschen von New York, Baltimore und Philadelphia waren ungeheuer zahlreich. Patriotische Beschlüsse wurden passiert und liberale Geldbeiträge zur Unterstützung der Freiheitsbestrebungen Deutschlands erhoben.”<sup>119</sup> Through the construction of this report, the paper draws a firm connection between all of these efforts, and indicate that they are part of the same effort to support freedom in Germany. The article continues to state that Cincinnati is contributing to the same goal with their efforts. On the 26th of May, the same paper made the argument that all of the revolutionary gatherings had the same goal, which it stated was: “der schöne große Zweck: Unterstützung der Freiheitsbestrebungen in Deutschland nicht bloß in Cincinnati, sondern auch .... in New York

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<sup>117</sup> “Aufruf an der Deutschen Philadelphia zu einer Massen-Versammlung,” *Der Demokrat*, April 3rd, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>118</sup> “Ein große Massenversammlung im Independence Square”, *Der Demokrat*, April 21st, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>119</sup> “The meetings of the Germans in New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia were incredibly numerous. Patriotic resolutions were passed and there was a liberal collection of money to support Germany's struggle for freedom.” *Der Westbote*, April 7th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1175/rec/236>.

und Philadelphia, Louisville, ec.”<sup>120</sup> The other papers also published about meetings outside of their own communities. For example, The Ohio Staats-bote also reported on efforts that were taking place in both New York and St. Louis.<sup>121</sup> Similarly, Der liberale Beobachter covered Philadelphia’s efforts, and those in New York. The coverage of each newspaper expanded beyond their own communities, and showed the efforts that their fellow German Americans were taking in other states and cities, for the purpose of inspiring further communal action and solidarity.

The purpose of these meetings was varied, and they did also provide a place for fundraising, since the German American support of the Revolutions was also monetary. This was not always apparent from the announcements, which primarily focused on discussion and celebration. The announcement of the first meeting in Philadelphia was one firm example of fundraising, because it set a goal of raising 100,000 Dollars. But there is also evidence of fundraising at other meetings. The meeting in Cleveland also mentioned that there would be a collection of money.<sup>122</sup> There is only one article that gives a clear estimate for how much money it was possible to collect at the meetings. On the 15th of April, Der Demokrat reported that the Germans in New York were so moved by the story of the Prussian repression of the Revolution in the Berlin that they donated 2500 dollars for the widows of those who were killed in Berlin.<sup>123</sup> Der Westbote also mentions that, “Die Deutschen von Baltimore haben bereits \$292 zur Unterstützung der Freiheitsbestrebungen Deutschlands gesammelt.”<sup>124</sup> Even though there was a smaller amount, the report from Baltimore also shows that fundraising was a part of the meetings. Though it is just one example, it demonstrates that one of the purposes of the meetings

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<sup>120</sup> “The biggest goal: Supporting the struggle for freedom in Germany, not only in Cincinnati, but also...in New York, and Philadelphia, Louisville, etc.” “An das deutsche Publikum,” *Der Westbote*, May 26th, 1848, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1209/rec/243>.

<sup>121</sup> *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 17th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-17/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> “Verschiedenes,” *Der Demokrat*, April 15th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>124</sup> “The Germans of Baltimore have already collected \$292 for the support of the fight for freedom in Germany.” *Der Westbote*, April 28th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1190/rec/239>.

was to raise money, and that in the case of New York they were able to raise a significant amount.

It is worth noting that this strategy is similar to what people did on to support the war effort during the wars of liberation. The concept of being moved by the sacrifice of soldiers and donating money for their benefit also appeared in the rhetoric in the German states during the period of national liberation. As Hagenmann, “Voluntary military service and "patriotic charity" for the "national warriors" and their families were the two visible forms of a patriotic national commitment previously unheard o German history, at least on the scale of 1813-15.”<sup>125</sup> So, the way that German America responded to the revolutions is similar to the way that the German nation was mobilized in an earlier period. This is not to say that German America intentionally set out to recreate the efforts during the wars against Napoleon. Their actions also resembled some of what was done by other diaspora groups in the same period. However, German America effectively reproduced the rhetoric and strategies as the wars against Napoleon on a smaller scale in response to what they also saw as a struggle for national liberation.

The main purpose of the meetings, according to the papers was to host speakers and discussion, and in one case the papers do reprint what was said in meetings. The *Ohio Staatsbote* reprinted an address from a revolutionary gathering on the 21st of June. The complete reprint took up the majority of the pages of the paper, and allowed those who had not been present to know what was said. The article also provides an insight into the kind of speeches that would be given at the meetings. The rhetoric of the speaker was strikingly similar to that of the newspapers. The speaker provided an account of the revolutions in Germany, and emphasized the importance of these developments as a step toward real freedom in the fatherland.<sup>126</sup> He also emphasized that there was a connection between the freedoms that German Americans had in the United States, and those that could be gained in Germany through the revolutions, and claimed that this was part of the reason that German Americans should be involved in the Revolutions.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Hagenmann, 195.

<sup>126</sup> “Rede von G. Mener, Gehalten am Tage der Revolutions-Feier” *Ohio Staatsbote*, June 21st, 1848, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-06-21/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

Der Demokrat also summarized an address given at a meeting in Reading, as, “[sie] Sprach die sichere Hoffnung aus, daß das altre deutsche Vaterland bald von den Fesseln nichtswerdiger Despoten erlöst werden.”<sup>128</sup> While it is not the same as a full reprint, this statement also emphasizes that the meetings generally shared the same rhetoric. There is not a significant difference between what was being said between a meeting in Ohio and one being held in Pennsylvania, and between the speeches at meetings and the newspaper articles in the same state. The consistency of rhetoric between the papers and the speakers indicate that there was some agreement within the community. It also shows that the meetings served as another venue for the same message that was present in the papers. Those who did not buy or read the papers could still be part of the discourse through the meetings.

Community gatherings were the most common response to the revolutions, and they were common across the different communities. The gatherings were the most accessible form of support for most people, which explains how common they were. Unlike the newspapers, the meetings provided a way to get the same information and hear the same arguments by just attending, which did not require a purchase. It was also free to attend these gatherings, especially if they were held in public places, which meant that there was not a monetary impediment to participation. Though these meetings were also used for fundraising, there is no indication in the many announcements about meetings that contributing financially will be mandatory or that there will be a fee charged for participation. Therefore, this was an accessible way for the average German American to engage with the revolutions. It was also a democratic form of participation, because aside from the speakers, the meetings provided a space to voice a shared conviction and to discuss the developments with others. Unlike other forms of support, the meetings did not have a formal structure or a prerequisite monetary commitment. They were important because they worked to build a communal conviction and provided a venue for fundraising, which could fuel other more formal or direct forms of participation.

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<sup>128</sup> “[they] spoke about the sincere hope that the old German fatherland will soon be freed from the shackles of despots,” “Die Readinger Versammlung” Der Demokrat, May 1st, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

## 2.3 Associations

German American communities also formed associations that could more formally direct and organize meetings and action. While spontaneous gatherings and fundraising speak to the enthusiasm with which German Americans embraced the revolutions, it was also necessary to have organizations that arranged events, handled the money raised by the fundraising efforts, and coordinate with other cities. Without this kind of centralized association, support would only be enthusiastic, but not organized. There were several different associations that formed after the outbreak of the revolutions, and the question of how each community created their own association and how these associations coordinated with each other.

In each of the papers there is evidence that the support of the revolutions also took the form of various associations, and these associations had the stated purpose or organizing support to aid the Revolutions. The clearest example of this is the association that was created in Philadelphia. *Der Demokrat* published the founding resolutions of the revolutionary association in Philadelphia on the 4th of April. The founding motions stated that the purpose of the association was, “zur Unterstützung der Freiheitsbestrebung in Europa und insbesondere in Deutschland zu verwenden.”<sup>129</sup> Most of the founding resolutions deal with the structure of the association, which it stated would consist of an executive board that was selected by the members.<sup>130</sup> They also laid out the plans for what kind of support they could provide for Germany, which included both raising money to send to the revolutionaries and forming a Freikorps in Philadelphia, which speaks to how central the role of these associations were to mobilizing material support. They proposed another meeting in Philadelphia for the purpose of organizing volunteers for the start of a Freikorps.<sup>131</sup> Interestingly, these founding articles also appeared in *Der Westbote*. Though the founding principals of an association likely would not have been directly applicable, it would have provided a model to create a similar association. By May, there was a similar association founded in Cincinnati. According to the statement published

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<sup>129</sup> “to support the fight for freedom in Europe, and especially in Germany”, “Aufruf”, *Der Demokrat*, April 4th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

in *Der Westbote*, the purpose was to support, “Das geliebte Land unserer Geburt, woran uns noch so manches Band der freundschaftlichen Erinnerung knüpft - das deutsche Vaterland.”<sup>132</sup> Both of the large cities created their own associations to support the revolutions, which shows that, in addition to the enthusiasm, there was a desire to create organized bodies that could effectively direct support.

The smaller communities also created their own associations for the support of the German fatherland. Though Canton itself did not create its own smaller association, it did report on the development of one in Cincinnati, which was close enough that the people in Canton could travel there and take part. Reading did form its own association for a period of time, though it had a smaller base of support.<sup>133</sup> However, much like the case in Ohio, the association eventually centered around the closest major city, so that it could more effectively coordinate the efforts within the area. *Der Demokrat* shifted from reporting on the Revolutionary association in early April to publishing a “Vorschlag zu einer Versammlung der Executive Committee der ‘deutschen Freiheitsvereine’ von Philadelphia, Reading und Pottsville.”<sup>134</sup> So, the association in Philadelphia joined with two smaller associations in Pottsville and Reading and former a larger one. However, this was not a larger organization taking over smaller ones, and they did not meet in Philadelphia. Instead, as the article states, “Bis wohin hoffentlich du Geldsammlungen beendigt sein werden, in der Stadt Reading, als dem Mittelpunkt vor Philadelphia und Pottsville versammeln möchten.”<sup>135</sup> So, it was a collaborative effort between the different cities, with a shared goal in mind. The paper does allude to some disagreements between the three, but the Verein generally represented collaboration. The case in Philadelphia speaks to the possibility that these organizations could collaborate across different boundaries,

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<sup>132</sup> “The beloved land of our birth, to which many happy memories are tied - the German fatherland”, “Deutscher Revolutions-Verein in Cincinnati,” *Der Westbote*, May 12th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1199/rec/241>.

<sup>133</sup> *Der Demokrat* mentions merging the association in Philadelphia with this association.

<sup>134</sup> “Resolution for a meeting of the executive committee of the ‘german freedom association’ of Philadelphia, Reading and Pottsville.” “Vorschlag zu einer Versammlung der Executiv Committee der ‘deutschen Freiheitsvereine von Philadelphia, Reading und Pottsville’”, *Der Demokrat*, May 19th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>135</sup> “When the fundraiser is completed, [the association] will meet in the city of Reading as a middle point between Philadelphia and Pottsville,” *Ibid*.

The papers also published on the associations that formed in other cities, which emphasizes that the creation of these organizations stretched beyond the Pennsylvania and Ohio. For example, in the same issue of the paper that discussed the formation of an association in Philadelphia, there was also an article that stated that, “Bei der im Baltimore am 30. Mai gehalten Versammlung des deutschen revolutionäres Verein.”<sup>136</sup> So the creation of this kind of association happened in Baltimore before it happened further West. It is also clear that the Verein in New York was formed earlier, because there were reports of the money they were able to raise early in April.<sup>137</sup> Other papers published about the efforts of the New York Revolutions Verein. The pattern of the formation of associations across German America suggests that they were formed shortly after the news from Germany broke. The earliest mention of a Verein in all four papers is in New York and then Baltimore, which logically follows the pattern of how the news broke. The steam ships that brought the news from Europe first arrived in the East Coast port cities, principally New York and Baltimore. So, they had access to the news first, and could act on it first and form their own associations. The news then moved to Philadelphia and Reading, and other cities further West. So, the pattern of association formation suggests that it followed closely after the news from Germany, which suggests both enthusiasm, and a desire to also organize more effective support.

The prevalence of reporting on the formation and actions of the associations in other cities also suggests that they drew inspiration from each other. The papers made an effort to publicize the efforts of the other associations, which included the fundraising and gatherings. This publication had two purposes: To provide inspiration for the kind of action that could be taken, and also created a sense of shared communal purpose. For example, the publication of an article describing the association in Baltimore directly preceded the creation of an association in Philadelphia. So, there is an indication that cities were watching each other and building their own organizations, based on what others were doing. The publication of the amount of money raised by other communities or the size of the participation in meetings can also be seen a form

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<sup>136</sup> “In Baltimore on the 30th of May there will be a meeting of the german revolutionary association.” “Vermischte Nachrichten,” *Der Demokrat*, April 4th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>137</sup> “Vermischte Nachrichten.” *Der Demokrat*, April 15th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.



of inspiration, because it suggests to the reader that other cities are participating heavily and donating, so they should be doing the same. Especially in the case of the *Ohio Staats-bote* and *Der liberale Beobachter*, which had the task of mustering support in a smaller community, there is an implicit suggestion that this kind of fundraising is expected of any loyal German, so the German Americans reading the paper should also donate if they share the same sympathy. It also created a greater sense of shared cause with other cities. The reporting showed that other communities were also taking steps to support the Revolution, which elevated the cause from something being discussed and acted on locally to something that many communities were acting upon.

The collaboration between different communities also did occur between different Vereine that communicated with each other, which suggests that there was an effort to collaborate across state lines. There was collaboration between associations within states, as evidenced by the formation of a larger association in Pennsylvania, but the same also happened across different states. For example, the Revolutionary association in New York wrote to the association in Philadelphia after it was founded and stated that, “Es freut uns ferner, fragen zu können, daß es auch in Philadelphia nicht an warmer Sympathie für die freiheitsmutigen Brüder in Deutschland fehlt, und das wir uns berufen fühlen, den Kampf für politische Freiheit, wo er auch entbrennen möge, zunteift aber in unserem geliebten Vaterlande, so weit zu unterstützen als, es die Verhältnisse gestatten.”<sup>138</sup> This suggests that these associations were also observing each other, and encouraged the creation of others. They saw it as a way to encourage what they called the fight for freedom in Germany. So, they framed the effort as part of the same communal struggle for the sake of their shared fatherland. This led to a collaboration between the two associations. *Der Westbote* reported on this collaboration on the 26th of May. It reported that, “Das die Executive Committee sich mit den verwandten Committeeen in Philadelphia und New York über die schleunigste und zweckmäßigste Anwendung des Revolutionsfondes verständigen,

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<sup>138</sup> “We are pleased that there is no lack of warm sympathy for the courageous, free brothers in Germany, and that we feel called to the fight for political freedom, wherever it burns, especially in our beloved fatherland.”, “An die deutsche Revolutions Committee in New-York” *Der Demokrat*, April 18th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

und mit denselben zusammen wirken soll.”<sup>139</sup> The article claims that the two associations are communicating with each other, which is also suggested by the publication of correspondence from the New York association in *Der Demokrat*. Through this communication their executive committees were focused on working together. By May they were able to work towards a coordinated approach. This is a logical step, because Philadelphia and New York had some of the largest German American communities, and were geographically close enough to collaborate. As two large East coast cities that were close together, it was plausible for them to communicate effectively and to coordinate action. The collaboration also attest to the agreement between different communities that they had a shared goal, and could work together towards that goal. It suggests that the argument of the importance of divides between states is not as strong as historians have claimed, because the associations that German America built for themselves corresponded and worked to bridge the geographical distance.

The associations that were formed in German America after the start of the Revolutions are an important facet of the support for the fatherland because they provided a form of organization. Much of the scholarship on this period, primarily drawing from Wittke, emphasizes the spontaneous response, and the enthusiasm. But, the narrative then suggests that the failure of German America’s response was a failure to organize which led to a fragmented response. However, the reporting in German American newspapers suggest that this may not have been the case. Shortly after the news of the Revolutions, communities formed their own revolutionary associations, with the goal of organizing support. The communities were aware of the necessity of directing enthusiasm into productive action, so they created bodies that were able to direct money and participation. It is also clear from the reporting that different cities were observing the development of associations in other cities, and in some cases were working with other associations to create larger action.

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<sup>139</sup> “That the Executive Committee in collaboration with the committees in Philadelphia and New York for the fastest and the more efficient use of the Revolution Fund, and how they should work together.” “An das Deutschen Publikum”, *Der Westbote*, May 26th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1209/rec/243>.

## 2.4 Freikorps

The most direct form of action that German America took was the formation of Freikorps that were supposed to go to Germany and fight on the side of the Revolutionaries. This form of action was not unique to German America, as the Irish American community also created battalions to go to Ireland in the same period.<sup>140</sup> Forming military units for the purpose of sending back to the homeland was seen as a viable form of support in the period, and appeared as a strategy in more than one minority community in the United States. The German American community followed this pattern, and organized their own Freikorps in the major cities in the United States.

From the beginning of the revolutions, there was discussion in German America of creating units that would go to Germany and fight. The first mention of this idea is in *Der Demokrat*, which suggests the formation of a unit in response to the French Revolution. The paper claims that the only way to create substantial change in Germany was through violent Revolution.<sup>141</sup> They planned to recruit 1000 volunteers to form a Freikorps, even before they had any idea that Revolution was going to break out in Germany.<sup>142</sup> Once the news of the Revolution broke, there was a call to create a Freikorps in Philadelphia. On the 1st of April, after the news from Germany, *Der Demokrat* published a poem titled “Mein Blut” which professed the virtues of shedding blood for the freedom of the fatherland, and claimed that dying for the fatherland was a patriotic honor.<sup>143</sup> This poem came between the idea of creating a Freikorps and the first recruiting article, and it centered on the theme of being a soldier in the fatherland. So, it was priming the ground rhetorically for the formation of a battalion by expressing the virtues in participating as a soldier. The first call for volunteers was published on the 19th of April, and it clearly laid out the goal of the unit. The article stated that, “Das Freicorps<sup>144</sup> will die Freiheit

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<sup>140</sup> John Belchem, “Republican Spirit and Military Science: The 'Irish Brigade' and Irish-American Nationalism in 1848” in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 113 (May, 1994).

<sup>141</sup> *Der Demokrat*, 28th March, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Harro Harring, “Mein Blut,” *Der Demokrat*, April 1st, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>144</sup> A note on spelling: Depending on the paper and the author of the article, this word was spelled Frei Corps, Freicorps, or Freikorps. The three versions of the spelling all referred to the same thing.

Deutschlands erkämpfen helfen. Es wird zu dem Ende in Verbindung mit den Deutschen von Paris, London, Brüssel und der Schweiz.”<sup>145</sup> The goal of the recruitment is to create a kind of international brigade, which would join with other German groups and enter the German states as a unified force. This ambitious strategy is particularly striking considering the period, because it would rely on a high degree of international cooperation. Though there is evidence of the Philadelphia association corresponding with a German organization in London, it is not evident if there was ever a substantial exchange of letters with other parts of Europe that would allow for this kind of joint action. However, even if this statement is treated an ideal plan, it speaks to the feeling that there was a shared purpose across all of the German speaking communities. The idea of a shared goal was evident in the German American discourse, but this plan extended the reach of this idea to the German speaking communities in Europe as well. Even if this plan was never feasible, the inclusion of such an ambitious idea is significant in itself.

The article then poses a question to German America, “Was zögert ihr, Männer, was zögert ihr deutsche Männer, eurem geliebten alten Vaterlande, in dem jetzt die heiligen Flammen der Freiheit lodern, beizustehen?”<sup>146</sup> The provocative question frames joining the Freikorps as part of a patriotic duty to stand by the fatherland. The paper leveraged the language of patriotism, which appeared in many of the other articles about Germany, to galvanize men to join the Freikorps. This statement is significant because it builds on the patriotic rhetoric that had been present in all of the German language papers since the outbreak of the Revolutions, and presents participation in a Freikorps as a very significant form of patriotic participation.

This rhetoric was not limited to Philadelphia, since the news of a formation of a Freikorps in Philadelphia appeared in other papers across German America. It also appeared in other German American newspapers in other states. The Ohio Staats-bote printed an article about the Freikorps being organized in Philadelphia on the 3rd of May. It was a shorter version of the call to arms that had been published in *Der Demokrat* previously, including the plan to coordinate the

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<sup>145</sup> “The Freikorps want to help fight for the freedom of Germany. In the end they will join with the Germans from Paris, London, Brussels and Switzerland.”, “Deutsche Männer!”, *Der Demokrat*, April 19th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>146</sup> “Why are you hesitating, men? Why are you hesitating, German men? Your beloved old fatherland is ablaze now with the holy flames of freedom.” Ibid.

action with other groups in Europe.<sup>147</sup> On the 28th of April, *Der Westbote* reprinted the announcement of the Freikorps forming in Philadelphia.<sup>148</sup> Interestingly, this was also a reprint from the *Baltimore Correspondent*, which had first republished the announcement. This article demonstrates that the announcement of a Freikorps appeared across state lines in both Maryland and Ohio, which suggests the possibility that it was also published in other German language newspapers. Each of the announcements reproduced the first one, including the call to arms, the goal of “fighting for the freedom of the homeland” and the plan to coordinate with other German groups in Europe. Thus, there was support for this form of action within the community, enough so that other papers promoted it by republishing the announcement.

There is also evidence in each of the papers that there were Freikorps also being organized in other cities, which indicates that the formation of units were a larger phenomena within German America. The largest example is the creation of a Freikorps in New York, which appeared in several of the papers. On the 3rd of May, the *Ohio Staats-bote* published an article that stated that the Revolutionary association in New York had collected 1600 weapons with the purpose of forming a Freikorps.<sup>149</sup> The number of weapons suggests that there was significant backing for a Freikorps in New York. There was a second article published on the *New York Freikorps* on the 17th of May, which indicates that the goal of forming a Freikorps was met.<sup>150</sup> The German Americans in New York was able to raise enough money and volunteers to create a Freikorps, according to the papers. However, this development was also not limited to the large East coast cities. The *Ohio Staats-bote* also reported that there was another Freikorps forming in St. Louis, which was a smaller city further West.<sup>151</sup> *Der Demokrat* also published the news that

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<sup>147</sup> *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 3rd, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-03/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>148</sup> *Der Westbote*, 28th of April, *Ohio History Connection*, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1190/rec/239>.

<sup>149</sup> *Ohio Staats-bote*, 3rd of May, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-03/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>150</sup> *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 17th, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-17/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>151</sup> *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 31st, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-31/ed-1/seq-2/>.

there was a Freikorps forming in Pittsburg.<sup>152</sup> So, there were several different Freikorps being created in other cities.

The creation of units to be sent to Germany was a substantial part of the response among the German American community. Several different cities built up their own units, with the full intention of sending them to Germany. This is indicative of both the way that German America saw their connection to the homeland and the amount of support they were able to muster. German Americans saw themselves as German enough to take part in the struggle for the creation of a more liberal Germany not just monetarily or rhetorically, but also with blood. In the case of some men, including the editor of the *New York Schnellpost*, they felt called to the homeland strongly enough that they returned and fought on their own. Another example of this appeared in *Der Demokrat* when L. R. Rummberg, the editor of another German American paper, returned to Germany to fight. His last statement about leaving his post as editor and returning to Germany was published in *Der Demokrat* with glowing commentary about the genuine German patriotism that he showed by returning.<sup>153</sup> He stated that. “Jetzt ruft mich eine innere Stimme gebiete sich auf ein anderes Feld der Tätigkeit. Im alten Europa ist die Freiheit erstanden.”<sup>154</sup> The paper reprinted his statement, because it provides an example of the kind of behavior that is exemplary and patriotic. These examples provided inspiration for men to join the fight, and join Freikorps. They were able to recruit enough men who believed in the rhetoric of patriotic connection to the homeland that they were able to make Freikorps that could have been sent to Germany. There was also enough monetary support from the community to arm the units. The stirrings for Freikorps by both the Germans and the Irish led to a warning in the *New York Journal of Commerce* that American citizens could not go to war with a country while the United States was at peace.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, the formation of several different Freikorps is indicative of a strong connection to the homeland and a willingness to fight for the homeland.

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<sup>152</sup> “Vermischtes Nachrichten”, *Der Demokrat*, April 28th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>153</sup> L. R. Rummberg, “Threuesten Mitbürger und Freunde!” *Der Demokrat*, April 28th, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>154</sup> “Now an inner voice is calling me to another field of action. In Europe freedom is arisen.” Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution*, 33.

## 2.4 Conclusion

The rhetorical support of the homeland in the papers and the claim that German America was German does show that there was a form of transnational German identity, but the community actions show that these ideas resonated beyond the written word. There was enthusiastic support for the Revolutions in a variety of forms, and people responded to calls that were based heavily on the idea that there was a patriotic duty to the homeland. The strong rhetoric in the papers corresponded to enthusiastic public gatherings and fundraising, which indicates that the rhetoric did resonate with many people who did see themselves as German. The community actions are a greater indication of the community feeling, and they were consistent with the kind of claims about German identity present in the papers.

Across the four newspapers it is clear that German America acted in a variety of ways consistently between communities, and observed what the others were doing. There is a level of inspiration and imitation in the way that actions from one community were published in another, and then the local community worked to create a similar kind of response. The idea that German American communities were too divided to effectively organize and produce action is inconsistent with what appeared in all four papers. The existence of many different Revolutionary Vereine contradicts the idea that German American communities were not organized. Shortly after the outbreak of the Revolutions, German America worked to create organizations that could support them through events and fundraising. These were bodies formed for the sake of organizing a community, both locally and through communication with others. The communities were observing each other, praising each other's formations of associations and Freikorps, and offering support. There is a clear indication that there was extensive communication and correspondence especially between New York and Philadelphia. They eventually coordinated their revolutionary organizations and reported on the other's formation of Freikorps. The charge that German America was too scattered or too divided to be substantial is both incorrect and also devalues local and personal contributions which also showed a connection to the homeland. There was a substantial amount of support for other parts of the community on the grounds that they had the same goal and the same homeland.

There was also local and personal participation that was not part of a larger pattern, but nonetheless speak to the interest of individuals or communities in supporting the Revolutions. For example, there was a theatre performance in Reading in support of the Revolutions, which seems to be a unique response. The play was created in a relatively short period of time and was performed a month after the outbreak of the Revolutions.<sup>156</sup> However, this local response even saw some support outside of the immediate community. *Der Demokrat* published an announcement of the play, and later defended it from a review that called it too ideologically motivated.<sup>157</sup> There is also the interesting example of a unit of German American soldiers<sup>158</sup> in Portsmouth who held their own celebration of the Revolutions.<sup>159</sup> Arguably, even these local or personal acts were encouraged and supported by the larger German American community. Though a theatre production was local, the community could still support it against detractors. Letters to Germany were the more personal form of response, and the community encouraged them and made it financially more feasible to send letters from the United States. Newspapers also published about singular acts like that of the soldiers in Portland to encourage and support them. So, the community was still invested in smaller community action to encourage any action that aided the fatherland.

This support was arguably necessary because larger German communities had more resources than small towns. The biggest difference between the reporting in *Der Demokrat* and the reporting *Der liberale Beobachter* is how much support they were able to muster in their own communities. Philadelphia could hold bigger gatherings and form their own *Freikorps*, while Reading could only report on them. The *Verein* in Reading took the chance to join with the one in Philadelphia, which indicates that it would have greater resources and reach by embracing the support of a larger community. All of the community action was based on the idea that they had

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<sup>156</sup> "Theater", *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 24th, 1848. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-24/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>157</sup> "Deutsches Theater" *Der Demokrat*, June 1st, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>158</sup> It is worth noting that in this period that units in the United States military often consisted of ethnic minorities, so this particular unit, which the paper refers to as a German unit, was likely made up of German Americans.

<sup>159</sup> *Der Demokrat*, May 19th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.



the same goal, which provided a bridge between different communities, and the impetus for shared organized action.

### **Chapter 3: Political Divisions**

The unifying idea that allowed for the organization of German America as a community across state lines and across different communities was that they had a shared goal. However, this concept remained somewhat nebulous for most of the papers. In articles that called for the unity in the German American community wrote about the “freedom of the fatherland.” This general phrase seemed to refer to the creation of a more liberal Germany, and a unified state. These goals were still relatively abstract, which made them easier to agree to. Liberalization and unity were the most apparent goals of the community, but references to them remained mostly abstract and poetic. But, the articles that called for the whole community did not articulate how the liberalization of Germany should occur, and what kind of government should emerge from the Revolutions. The call of the fatherland had a strong rhetorical appeal, and it functioned well for the organization of fundraisers and Freikorps, because it appealed to a strong feeling of connection to the homeland. But, the question had to come to the fore of what kind of Germany should be created, and the answers to this question revealed that the idea of a shared goal was not as universal as the articles presented it.

As previously mentioned, the papers came from different parts of the American political spectrum, which led them to have different views on policy within the United States. *Der Westbote* was the most right leaning of the four, since it was an outspoken Democrat paper. In the period before the civil war the American political parties were in flux because of the pressure from the South and the question of abolition. It was common political knowledge that overt abolitionism would alienate the Southern states, because the Southern economy was still heavily reliant on slave labor.<sup>160</sup> The Democrats viewed slavery as an issue of property, and thus one that the federal government should not intervene with. Abolition, as viewed by the Democratic Party,

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<sup>160</sup> Gary W. Gallagher, Waugh, Joan, “Expansion, Nation, and Perception: The Road to Secession and War” in *The American War: A History of the Civil War Era* (Flip Learning, 2015), 15.

would deprive citizens of their private property.<sup>161</sup> Thus, the Democratic party was strongest in the South. By contrast, the Whig party viewed abolition as an issue of human rights. Though the ultimate destruction of the Whig party came from the refusal to state a strong stance against slavery. The desire to retain the South as a voting block made the party stop short of openly stating an abolitionist stance.<sup>162</sup> In 1848, there was still a Whig party, but Zachary Taylor was the last Whig candidate to ever successfully run for the presidency. So, 1848 was the last national election before the Whig party succumbed to its internal divisions.<sup>163</sup> For the purposes of the four papers in this analysis, it is still possible to still tentatively treat the state of politics as a two party system.

With the stance of the different parties in mind, it is possible to place the papers in the context of the politics of the period. All four papers were produced in free states in the North, so they are all on the same side of the geographical divide in the United States. As Allison Clark Efford claims, Germans disproportionately supported abolition.<sup>164</sup> So, in the case of *Der Westbote*, a German paper writing in support of the Democratic party in the North would be in the relative minority. This position of opposition against the majority of German America does explain the combative stance that the editor often took on political, and the effort he made to present himself as the opposition. The *Ohio Staats-bote* can be placed slightly to the left of *Der Westbote*, because it was a Democrat paper, but it did not state its convictions so strongly, and was more disposed towards compromise with the Whigs. Both *Der Demokrat* and *Der liberale Beobachter* were Whig papers. On the scale of American politics, *Der liberale Beobachter* inhabited the centrist section of the Whig party. It published in support of the Whig party, but did not opine about abolitionism. *Der Demokrat* was firmly left leaning, and did at one point in the *Revolutions* publish an article that claimed that German Americans who said they supported freedom should also support the Republican party, because abolition was a part of freedom

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<sup>161</sup> Jon L. Wakelyn, "Party Issues and Political Strategy of the Charleston Taylor Democrats of 1848," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (Apr., 1972), 74.

<sup>162</sup> *The American War*, 15-16.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, 13-14.

<sup>164</sup> Alison Clark Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era*, (New York: Cambridge University Press. Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 2013), 55.

everywhere.<sup>165</sup> The emphasis on working class people and the rights of the working classes also makes the paper socialist leaning. So, the four papers covered the range of the American political spectrum.

This is important because it should also inform the discussion of German politics, because it is the best indicator of the political standing of each paper. It is hard to gauge the position that the paper took on German matters before the Revolutions, because the reporting on Germany was more scarce and not as political. There are some slight indications, like the editor of *Der Westbote* taking pride of “his state” of Wurttemberg being a constitutional state.<sup>166</sup> However, on the whole, the position that each paper held on Germany was unclear until they were in a position to articulate it in relation to the revolutions. So, their position in American politics was the only indication of whether they would lean left or right on a topic. Though, it is worth noting that on the scale of European politics all of the American political parties would have been designated far left insofar as they supported democracy and representative government. So, the position that they took on the German issue only appeared in their reporting on the revolutions, and can be compared to both their position in the American and German political system.

It is also necessary to break the question of political opinions into smaller topics. The first of these is whether a constitutional monarchy was a desirable outcome for the Revolutions. It is also important to ask how the papers considered other revolutions and if they expressed solidarity with the movements in Italy, Poland, and Hungary, because it suggests how they viewed the ideal outcome for Europe as a whole. The invasion of Schleswig by Denmark in the midst of the Revolutions was a critical point for the discussion of Germany’s future, because it emphasized the danger of outside threats. The final question that appeared in the summer of 1848 was whether the Frankfurt parliament was a legitimate body that was capable of deciding the fate of the German nation.

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<sup>165</sup> *Der Demokrat*, May 24th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>166</sup> “Ausland” *Der Westbote*, March 3rd, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1150/rec/231>.

### 3.1 Republic or Monarchy?

The critical question that divided German America in their response to the revolutions was what kind of state Germany would be after the revolutions. Though they all discussed a Germany free from the “chains” of the monarchy, they did not have the same answer to what should take the place of the kings, or whether it would be enough to restrain a monarch with a constitution. It is evident from the discourse during the revolutions that what was generally understood as the “chains” binding Germany was the conservative regime of the Holy Alliance. Prince Metternich in particular was a figure that typified this conservative regime. His departure as the revolutions intensified in Vienna was celebrated in all four papers. So, the point of agreement between the four was opposition to the kind of conservative monarchy that was represented by the Austrian emperor and the Prussian king. However, the form that a liberalized government should take was not as clear. The two options that seemed possible to German America were a constitutional monarchy with a reformed constitution that guaranteed the rights of the people, and a republic that was based on the federal model of the United States. There was no agreement among German America about which of these forms of government should prevail.

The argument about the form of government that a united Germany had been an ongoing discussion since the 1830s, and German America was continuing a long standing discussion. Organizations that had supported the liberalization of Germany and the possibility of a unified German state had been present in the 1830s. For example, German liberals supported the Mazzini-esque idea of a unified Germany and a reconstituted Poland during the Polish uprising against Russia.<sup>167</sup> Turnvereine in Germany were also active in fostering liberal ideas, and supporting liberal politics.<sup>168</sup> While there was not a substantial threat to the monarchical status quo, there was discussion of an ideal of a liberal, unified Germany. And the discussion of a possible unification was not only limited to radical liberal circles. There was also an ongoing discussion among about whether it would be possible to create a German state under Prussian leadership, and thus avoid Austria using the German Confederation for its own foreign policy.

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<sup>167</sup>Jacco Pekelder, ‘Chapter 2: 1830-1848: Polish-German Friendship’, unpublished chapter of forthcoming book, *Europe and the Rise of Germany, 1830-1871*, 2-3.

<sup>168</sup> Robert D. Billinger, Jr, “The War Scare of 1831 and Prussian-South German Plans for the End of Austrian Dominance in Germany” in *Central European History* , Sep., 1976, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Sep., 1976) , 205.

There was an ongoing discussion of whether it would be possible to exclude Austria and still create a German state.<sup>169</sup> So, the German Americans who had immigrated during the 1830s could reasonably have contact with the discussions about liberalizing and unifying Germany. Many of the editors were building on this same foundation from across the Atlantic. The most notable difference is that German America perceived a republic as a realistic and desirable outcome, when the German discourse was primarily focused on a constitutional monarchy.

Der Westbote was one of the insistent that a republic was the only acceptable outcome of the Revolution, and that accepting anything less would be a betrayal of the ideas of freedom. From the first reporting of the start of the Revolution, Der Westbote was clear in the view it held of any monarchy or aristocracy. On the 4th of April, a week after the first substantial news of Revolution in Germany, the paper wrote that, “Die deutschen Fürsten zittern auf ihren Thronen und sehen sich gezwungen, ihren Völkern liberale Versprechungen zu machen; selbst der ‘Deutsche Bund sah sich genötigt von seinem hohen Gaule herabzuspringen und der drohenden Stimme des Volkes nachzugeben. Aber es ist zu spät!...Das deutsche Volk ist entschlossen sich nicht länger am Gangelbände seiner Tyrannen leiten zu lassen.”<sup>170</sup> The statement in this article was clear on two points. The first is that all of the German princes were seen as the enemy of the people. The editor frames them all as in opposition to their people. The second point is that reform is not enough to quell the revolution. The editor viewed the revolutions as a process that should eventually end in democracy and a republic. The following week the paper celebrated the revolution in Austria, which it saw as a part of the larger pattern of revolutions that moved towards liberalization and democracy. In the article the paper stated that, “Wir wollen nicht länger bitten und betteln, so heiß es. Wir bringen unsere gerechten Forderungen vor den Thron, Freiheit der Presse, eine Constitution, Vereinigungsrech, ein deutsches Parlament zc.”<sup>171</sup> He

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 206.

<sup>170</sup> “The German princes are trembling on their thrones, and are forced to make liberal promises, the German Bund also saw it necessary to come down from their high position and respond to the threatening voices of their people. But it is too late!...The German people is determined to no longer live by the demands of tyrants.”, “Später und wichtiger!” *Der Westbote* April 7th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1174/rec/236>.

<sup>171</sup> “We will no longer ask and beg... We are bringing our demands before the throne, Freedom of the press, a constitution, the freedom of assembly, a german Parliament, etc.”, “Die Revolution in Deutschland”, *Der Westbote*, April 14th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1179/rec/237>.

included the formation of a German parliament in the list of demands that he believes will be met, which suggests that freedom of the press and a constitution are inherently part of the formation of a democratic system. The editor of *Der Westbote* was clear that he saw the end point of the revolutions should be the formation of a democratic government that would free Germany from the tyranny of the monarchy.

As the revolution progressed, *Der Westbote* became more explicit in advocating for the complete overthrow of monarchy and the creation of a republic, and was clear in saying that promises of reform from the monarchs were a hollow attempt to placate the revolutionaries. For example, in response to the king of Prussia addressing the revolutionaries and promising reform, the paper claimed that Friedrich Wilhelm was only interested in creating his own Germany with himself as Kaiser.<sup>172</sup> The paper paints the promises of a Constitution and unity as acting in order to maintain his position and possibly to expand it to all of Germany. The article continued calling the king an actor, stating that, “Der elende Schauspieler von Berlin will die Rolle eines Retters Deutschlands spielen. Hoffentlich wird das deutsche Volk dem Hanswurf die Narrenjacke herunterreißen und ihn mit einem Laternenpfahls zur Besinnung bringen!”<sup>173</sup> In this statement it is clear that he believes that any promise of reform from the king of Prussia is just an act. Though the paper had more ire for the king of Prussia, the position that it held on monarchy applied to every king. There is no middle ground that can be found with the monarch, and the article goes on to state, “Die deutschen Völker brauchen die Fürsten nicht; sie sind groß und stark genug.”<sup>174</sup> There is no need for any monarchs according to the paper, so the natural form of government that Germany should form is a republic with a constitution and a parliament that is democratically elected.

Later the editor reiterated the statement that the promises of a king were empty and lamented that, “Dennoch gibt es nach allen dieser traurigen Erfahrungen, in Deutschland noch Männer, die sich Volksfreunde nennen, und als solche dem deutschen Volke abermals die

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<sup>172</sup> “Noch später! Ankunft der ‘Acadia,’” *Der Westbote*, April 28th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1189/rec/239>.

<sup>173</sup> “The wretched actor in Berlin wants to play the role of the savior of Germany. Hopefully the German people will throw off the straight jacket and bring him to his senses!” Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> “The German people do not need princes; they are great and strong enough.” Ibid.

Versprechungen der Könige als Garantie für seine Rechte und seine Freiheit aufbürden wollen.”<sup>175</sup> He again stated that it is impossible to create the kind of freedoms that the revolutionaries were demanding without creating a republic. It was tragic to him that there were those who believed in the promises that the Prussian king made for concessions. According to *Der Westbote* Friedrich Wilhelm was only pretending to be a friend to the people. The article counters by claiming that, “in der Republik ist die Abschaffung der Diktatur echt möglich.”<sup>176</sup> The only form of real rights can be found, according to the article, in a Republic and not in the promises of a king. *Der Westbote* advocates that there should be no end to the Revolutions until a Republic was created, and the “tyrants” were removed from their thrones.

Out of the four papers, the one that agreed with *Der Westbote* on the necessity of a republic was *Der Demokrat*, which also published heavily in favor of a republic from the very beginning of the revolutions. A few days after the first news of the Revolutions, the newspaper stated that any concession from the monarchs would not be enough, “um die Stimme der Volks zum Schweigen zu bringen.”<sup>177</sup> The demands, according to the paper, were for a democratic form of government that could support the rights like freedom of the press. The paper produced a radical call for violent revolution that would overthrow the monarchies. According to the paper, the only way to secure the rights of the people was “durch Sturm und Eisen.”<sup>178</sup> The view that the paper had of the monarchy was clearly articulated in an article on the 9th of April, which stated that, “Den Monarchen sind nichts anderes, als gewaltsame Räuber, welche nur mit Waffengewalt die Unterdrückung danieder halten.”<sup>179</sup> The paper positioned the monarchs as nothing more than tyrants, and their repression of the people was a part of the system that needed

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<sup>175</sup> “However, even after all of these tragic events, there are still men, who call themselves friends of the people, who nonetheless tell the German people that they should take the promises of kings as guarantees of their rights.” “Es lebt die Republik!” *Der Westbote*, May 12th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1199/rec/241>.

<sup>176</sup> “However this is only really possible in a republic.” Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> “to silence the voices of the people”, “Europa”, *Der Demokrat*, April 1st, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>178</sup> “Through Storm and Iron”, “Aufruf”, *Der Demokrat*, April 4th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania..

<sup>179</sup> “The monarchs are nothing but violent robbers, who can only maintain their oppression with the use of force.” “Europa”, *Der Demokrat* April 9th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

to be overthrown. The paper would also use the same epithet as *Der Westbote* of “Volksmörder” for the Prussian king after he ordered soldiers to shoot the revolutionaries. The epithet stuck in both papers through the whole of the revolutions. It is evident that the editor viewed the Prussian king with the same kind of scorn that *Der Westbote* did. When there was a false report of the declaration of a republic in Prussia, *Der Demokrat* enthusiastically reported that it was the defeat of the “Prussian Napoleon.”<sup>180</sup> The jab is mocking the idea that Friedrich Wilhelm would have used the Revolutions to make himself emperor as a power grab. It is evident that both of the papers were firmly anti-monarchy and held up the Prussian king as an example of the kind of monarch who could speak about being sympathetic to the people and grant concessions while still being a “murderer of the people.”

*Der Demokrat* supported a republic as the only acceptable form of political organization for a unified Germany. The first clear mention of this idea was after a republic was declared in France, and the paper expressed the idea that it was their hope that Germany would follow the French example and establish a republic.<sup>181</sup> On the 24th of April, the paper published an article suggesting that the only possible outcome to ensure freedom would be a republic, “das ganze deutsche Volk von der Wahrheit durchdrungen ist, daß nur in der Republik die wahre Freiheit bestehe, die es sucht und will.”<sup>182</sup> The argument, much like that of *Der Westbote*, was that it was impossible to maintain a monarchy and still safeguard the rights of the people. It was important, to create a republic because only in a republic could the people be free. The paper also expresses faith that Germany can be a republic at the end of the Revolutions. On the first of May, the paper stated that, “Wir glauben, daß die Wiedergeburt Deutschlands...bis eine Republik gegründet ist und zwar eine erfolgreichere Republik als die Welt je sah.”<sup>183</sup> The paper claims that as a unified republic, Germany would be able to have freedom and also be one of the most powerful states in

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<sup>180</sup> “Neues aus Europa” *Der Demokrat*, April 21st, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>181</sup> “Europa”, *Der Demokrat*, March 28th, 1848, Horner Research Library, the German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>182</sup> “The whole German people know the truth that the true freedom only exists in a republic, and that is what they seek and want”, “Constitutionelle Monarchie”, *Der Demokrat*, April 24th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>183</sup> “We believe that when a [German] republic is founded, it will be the strongest republic that the world has ever seen.”, “Deutschland”, *Der Demokrat*, May 1st, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.



Europe. The article cites the strength of each of the states separately and claims that together they could be one of the strongest states in Europe. The article expresses a vision of Germany united as a federation, which could hold substantial sway in European politics. Later in May the paper also argued that the Austrian parts of the Hapsburg empire should be incorporated into a federal republic of Germany. The goal of the revolutions, according to *Der Demokrat*, was to form a German republic that would be able to safeguard the rights of the people.

The positions of *Der Westbote* and *Der Demokrat* are strikingly similar, which is surprising considering that they represent two different ends of the American political spectrum. Notably, of the four papers these two were the most likely to disagree, both on American politics, and thus, logically, German politics. *Der Westbote* was a very conservative paper in American terms, so it should have been at odds with a paper that was effectively socialist. However, though the two held opposite view points when it came to American politics, they both placed a strong value on Republicanism and federation. Effectively, they made the same argument about the function of a republic, and the necessity for one in Germany. This agreement indicates that the position that a paper held on American politics did not necessarily indicate how the paper would react to political developments in Germany. The idea of a republic was a given in the United States, so both papers could believe strongly in the idea of a republic and hold very different positions on other issues, like slavery. The issues that divided them as Whig and Democrat did not apply to the German context, since it was a separate context with a separate set of issues. Thus, where the question of a republic was at stake, they could take the same position, and also still oppose each other in articles about the German election.

This strong support of a republican outcome also appeared in the smaller papers. The *Ohio Staats-bote* took the position that a republic would be the best possible outcome, and mirrored the rhetoric that appeared in the other two papers. It produced much the same sentiment towards the monarchy as *Der Westbote*. In response to a report of the violent suppression of the revolution in Prussia, it proclaimed, “So helfe dir nur Gott Tyrann!...Und abwärts durch die Strassen rann Ihr Blut in allen Gossen.”<sup>184</sup> The warning was not just to the king of Prussia, but

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<sup>184</sup> “So God only God will help you, Tyrants!...and soon your blood will run in the gutters.” “Berlin: Liedder ‘Umnestirten im Ausland’”, *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 10th, 1848, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-10/ed-1/seq-1/>.

also all the “tyrants” who would be displaced by the revolutions. However, the king of Prussia did receive particular scorn as a conservative monarch who had tried to militarily suppress the revolutions. The paper considered all of the princes to be inherently tyrannical. It frames the revolutions in Germany as a struggle of the Volk against despots. It appealed to the example of the United States as an example that a violent revolution was necessary to overthrow a monarchy and create a republic. It claims that the Germans states should follow the example of the United States and overthrow all of the kings. At the end of April, the paper asked in response to the idea of a constitutional monarchy, “Könnte ihr euch denn nicht selbst regieren? Im Volk ruht die ganze Kraft. Das Volk kann selbst den Scepter führen, hat es die Freiheit sich verschaffen.”<sup>185</sup> The idea was that it was necessary to resort to a constitutional monarchy was absurd, according to the article, and it was possible for the people to take matters into their own hands. The paper also stated the same sentiment more bluntly in a later article, “Gegen Despotie: Jetzt! Jetzt! Oder nie!”<sup>186</sup> There was no middle ground in-between despotism and a republic, and it would be foolish to believe that promises from a king or a constitution would be enough to limit despotism. The paper referred to the idea of creating a constitutional monarchy as an “Irrtum.”<sup>187</sup> As the paper bluntly states their position, “Ja, das deutsche Volk wird u. muss die Republik haben.”<sup>188</sup> The Ohio Staats-bote was a smaller paper that also supported the idea of a republic as the ideal outcome in a way that mirrors the arguments that were made in both Der Westbote and Der Demokrat.

However, not all of the German language papers took the same pro-republic position, though it seemed to be the majority opinion. Out of the four papers Der liberale Beobachter was the exception to the pro-republican rhetoric. Though the paper did support the possibility of

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<sup>185</sup> “Could you not rule yourselves? The greatest power is in the people. The people can take the scepter of leadership, and they can secure freedom.” “Die deutsche Republik,” *Ohio Staats-bote*, April 26th, 1848, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-04-26/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>186</sup> “Against Despotism: Now! Now! Or never!” “Europa’s Erwachung”, *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 10th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-10/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>187</sup> “A mistake” “Europäische Nachrichten”, *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 10th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-10/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>188</sup> “Yes, the German people will and must have a republic.” “Europäische Nachrichten”, *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 14th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-17/ed-1/seq-2/>.

democracy and a republic, it viewed the creation of a constitutional monarchy as a more pragmatic solution for a unified Germany. However, like the other German American papers, in response to the initial announcement of the Revolutions, they celebrated the idea that there would be a republic. In an article from the 11th of April, the paper stated, “Das Volk von Frankreich und Deutschland ist längst ruf für eine Republik...und es unterliegt keinem Zweifel, daß Deutschland bald eine mächtige Republik sein wird.”<sup>189</sup> In this particular article the paper followed the pattern of the other four and welcomed the idea that Germany would follow the French in declaring a Republic. At this point, *Der liberale Beobachter* was in agreement with the other three papers. However, later articles started to make the difference clear. In response to the Prussian king starting to grant concessions, the paper describes it as, “Reihe Versprechungen von wichtigen Reformen,”<sup>190</sup> which it takes in good faith. Both *Der Demokrat* and *Der Westbote* claimed that these promises from the Prussian king were not sincere, or part of an act to secure his own power. However, *Der liberale Beobachter* treats these reforms as the start of the kind of liberalizing the country. It even goes so far in the article as to claim that these reforms are just as good as what could be hoped for in a republic.<sup>191</sup> The striking difference is that the paper is not so anti-monarchal that it assumes that Friedrich Wilhelm must be a tyrant making insincere promises. The tone that the paper takes towards the Prussian king is one that is critical of him, but welcoming of movements towards reform. The political goal in the words of the paper was, “Das Hauptsächlichste was aus den vielen Unruhen entstanden ist, ist die Wiederherstellung Deutschlands, als selbstständige Nation, ob, wie früher, unter der Verwaltung eines Kaisers, oder als Republik, mit einem National-Parlament.”<sup>192</sup> This statement makes it clear that the paper is open to more options in terms of the political formation of a new German state. The paper

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<sup>189</sup> “The people of Germany and France have long called for a republic...and there is no doubt that Germany will soon become a powerful republic.” “Die Folgen der französischen Revolution”, *Der liberale Beobachter*, April 11th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-04-11/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>190</sup> “A series of promises of important reforms” “Von Auslande” *Der liberale Beobachter*, April 25th, 1848, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-04-25/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> “The most important thing that has come from the unrest is the restoration of Germany as an independent country, if, like earlier, under the leadership of an emperor, or as a republic with a national parliament.” “Deutschland”, *Der liberale Beobachter*, May 9th, 1848. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-05-09/ed-1/seq-2/>.

instead places the emphasis on the goal of a unified Germany, and supports the most pragmatic solution to form such a state. The other primary goal of the formation of the German state, according to the paper was to liberalize and reform. The example of the kings who granted reforms and promises of a free press suggested that this was still possible under a constitutional monarchy. Because *Der liberale Beobachter* took the promises of rights from the kings in good faith, they could argue that it was possible to have both a monarchy and maintain the rights of the people. Though there is some emphasis on forming a representative form of government in *Der liberale Beobachter*, the paper is also supportive of a constitutional monarchy if it was able to unify the separate states.

This question of whether the unified Germany should be a republic or a constitutional monarchy was much more central in the German American debate than ever was in the German context. For most of the German revolutionaries, and many of the revolutionary movements across Europe, the goal was securing a parliament and constitutional rights.<sup>193</sup> In Germany, there was also the additional goal of creating a unified German state. The primary question that concerned the Frankfurt Parliament was not whether Germany should be a republic or a constitutional monarchy, but rather who should be the emperor of Germany and whether the German state should include parts of the Habsburg empire where there was not a German speaking majority.<sup>194</sup> Even the goal of creating a unified German state was not universally shared. For example, the German nationalists in Austria would not accept the idea if it meant that only the crown lands would be part of the new state.<sup>195</sup> Only a minority of the revolutionaries supported a fully democratic solution, and the election of deputies was limited by restrictions on who could vote, so it was hardly a democratic process in the way that the German Americans conceived of liberal democracy.<sup>196</sup> So, there were a multitude of political divisions in the German states as well. The German American perception that a republic would have been a viable option

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<sup>193</sup> Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, 188.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid*, 191.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*, 210,

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid*, 196.

was one that was only shared by a small majority of the German revolutionaries; the discussion of politics in German America was further left than that in Germany.

It is evident from the difference of opinion in the papers that the political endpoint of the revolutions was not something that was universally agreed upon in German America. Though all of them agreed that the purpose of their actions and activism was the “freedom of the fatherland,” the meaning of this nebulous sentiment differed from paper to paper. In the case of these four papers, the majority understood it as the liberation of the German states from the despotism of all the monarchs and the creation of a republic. They put the emphasis on freedom and rights, which they claimed could only be secured in a republic. By contrast, *Der liberale Beobachter* argued that a constitutional monarchy may be a necessary step to form a unified state. So, the emphasis was instead put on the idea of a unified Germany. The different arguments relied on a difference of emphasis. One viewed securing freedoms as the ultimate goal, and the other viewed forming a unified state as the ultimate goal.

### 3.2 Solidarity with Other Revolutions

The German American support of the revolutions of 1848 extended beyond the German states, and also included other revolutionary movements. All of the German language papers expressed solidarity with other revolutionary movements, and some envisioned a version of Europe that consisted of coexisting nation states. Taking this stance also meant addressing the future of the Habsburg possessions and the areas of Prussia that had formerly been a part of Poland, which could not be integrated into a German nation state. The position of the four papers was that there should be nation states made from these different areas, since they should not be integrated into a state that is exclusively German.

Many of the papers expressed their support for the idea of revolution in many countries, though Germany was their first priority. This idea was often phrased in such a way that supported the idea of revolution in multiple countries, but “especially in Germany.”<sup>197</sup> For example, *Der Demokrat* stated that their purpose was, “zur Unterstützung der Freiheitsbestrebung in Europa

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<sup>197</sup> “To support the fight for freedom in Europe, and especially in Germany,” “Einsendung der Herrn Pr. Georg Seidensticher an die deutsche Massen-Versammlung, von 22ten Marz, 1848,” *Der Demokrat*, April 3rd, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

und insbesondere in Deutschland.”<sup>198</sup> The two most vocal anti-monarchist papers most strongly voiced an idea of solidarity between revolutions, and general support for democracy. *Der Demokrat* typified this argument immediately in the wake of the revolution in France when it stated that it believed that, “daß die Fahne der Demokratie über allen Nationalfahnen erhaben steht daß die Demokraten aller Länder Hand in Hand gehen müssen, um ihre Befreiung zu bewirken.”<sup>199</sup> The image of joining hands for democracy was one that German Americans evoked repeatedly in their vision of the kind of revolution that was possible across Europe. *Der Ohio Staats-bote* also invoked this image when claimed that they supported a free Poland and free Hungary working hand in hand with a free Germany.<sup>200</sup> The papers invoked a vision of a Europe of cooperative republics that was somewhat reminiscent of the vision proposed by Mazzini. For example, *Der Demokrat* set out an ambitious idea of establishing democracy in every state in Europe, starting with France and Germany. The paper stated that this ideal outcome would be, “Wichtigkeit für Deutschland, für ganz Europa und für alle Freunde der Freiheit durch die ganze Welt.”<sup>201</sup> The list puts Germany first, because though they ideologically supported the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic, the fatherland was the primary concern. For example, the papers cheered the French revolution and also treated it as a development that set an example for Germany. There was also the aforementioned meeting in Philadelphia that was focused on the French Revolution and the possibility of triggering a similar revolution in Germany. However, the papers did maintain support for the French Revolution throughout the Spring of 1848. Both *Der Demokrat* and *Der Westbote* published articles that argued that the German and French revolutionaries had a common cause.<sup>202</sup> The *Ohio Staats-bote* similarity

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<sup>198</sup> “To support the fight for freedom in Europe, and especially in Germany.” *Der Demokrat*, 28th March, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>199</sup> “that the flag of democracy flies above all national flags, that the democrats of all lands have to go hand in hand to secure their liberation.”, “Europa” *Der Demokrat*, March 27, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>200</sup> “Europaistische Nachrichten”, *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 10th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-10/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>201</sup> “It is important for Germany, for the whole of Europe, and for all the happiness and freedom of the whole world.”, “Einsendung der Herrn Pr. Georg Seidensticher an die deutsche Massen-Versammlung, von 22ten Marz, 1848” *Der Demokrat*, April 3rd, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>202</sup> *Der Demokrat*, April 15th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

published a poem on the 19th of April that emphasized the similarity between France and Germany and urged solidarity.<sup>203</sup> Der Demokrat published an article that argued that Germans should put the cause of shared revolution above their own historical enmity with the French, because the desire for freedom negated the differences between the two nations.<sup>204</sup> So, there was a continued emphasis on the fraternity between the different revolutions throughout the Spring, but Germany was always the first priority.

Supporting the revolution in other countries and proposing a larger vision of democratic European nation states also struck at a central question in the negotiations of how to form a German state: What should be done with the non-German parts of the Habsburg Empire and with the Polish portions of Prussia? If the German nation was defined in Romantic terms as a state that contained only those who spoke German, then the multinational nature of the German great powers was problematic.<sup>205</sup> If a *Großdeutsch*<sup>206</sup> solution was implemented, then it would have to include the dismantling of large parts of the Habsburg domains, because these areas were ethnically and linguistically distinct from Germany. Simultaneously, these areas of the empire - most notably Hungary- declared their own national independence. Other areas, like the Tyrol region, were open for debate because they contained both German speaking and Italian speaking populations. Though the Habsburg empire was the most complicated example, Prussia also presented a problem that made the issue of other Revolutions impossible to ignore, even with a *Kleindeutsch* solution. Prussia had absorbed a large portion of Poland during the partitions, and thus had a large Polish minority. In order to realize the idea of a homogeneously German state, it would be necessary to remove substantial parts of Prussia, and the majority of the Habsburg domains.

German America supported the idea of Revolutions outside of Germany, and took the position that the Habsburg empire should be split into its composite parts. For example, Der

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<sup>203</sup>“Europäische Nachrichten” Ohio Staats-bote, April 19th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-04-19/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>204</sup> *Der Demokrat*, April 15th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>205</sup> Robert D. Billinger, Jr., “The War Scare of 1831 and Prussian-South German Plans for the End of Austrian Dominance in Germany” in *Central European History*, Sep., 1976, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Sep., 1976), 206.

<sup>206</sup> One that included Austria into a unified Germany.

Demokrat argued in the case of the Czech speaking portion of the Habsburg empire, “nicht zugeben zu können, daß Österreichs uns Böhemens Selbstständig durch eine staatliche Verbindung mit Deutschland beschränkt.”<sup>207</sup> On the 16th of May it reiterated this position by reprinting an article that claimed that Hungary, Italy and Bohemia should all become separate countries and Austria should be integrated into a larger German state.<sup>208</sup> On the topic of Italy, the paper also stated that, “Mit Mut und freudiger Hoffnung reihen wir uns daher an dieses freie Frankreich, an diese freie Schweiz, an dieses freie Italien, ein freies Deutschland an.”<sup>209</sup> So, the editor believed that supporting the freedom of the parts of the Habsburg empire was part of a larger development that would support general European freedom. However, within these calls for Italian freedom, the paper also claimed that the Tyrol region should remain a part of a German state because it was German territory.<sup>210</sup> This statement demonstrates that on the matter of disputed claims, like that between Austria and Italy, the paper still supported the German claim. Similarly, *Der Westbote* claimed that it supported the Austrian emperor coming to an agreement with Italy and supported “der Bund dem König von Sardinien, den Höfen von Rom, Neapel und Toskana.”<sup>211</sup> However, in the same article it also states that the Danish king has invaded in the North and, “sind die Italiäner ins südliche Deutschland -in Tyrol.”<sup>212</sup> So, though the paper was in favor of a free and unified Italy, it also suggested that the claim on Tyrol was the same as that on Schleswig. Other papers also stated that they were in favor of revolution in the Habsburg empire. For example, *Der Ohio Staats-bote* also claimed that creating a free and

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<sup>207</sup> “it is not possible that Austria and Bohemia independently are joined with Germany.”, “Europa”, *Der Demokrat*, May 9th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>208</sup> “With courage and enthusiastic hope we support this free France, a free Switzerland, a this free Italy, a free Germany.”, “Neues aus Europa”, *Der Demokrat*, May 16th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>209</sup> “Aufruf”, *Der Demokrat*, April 19th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> “The unity of the King of Sardinia, the courts of Rome, Naples and Tuscany.” “Ausland”, *Der Westbote*, 26th of May, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1209/rec/243>.

<sup>212</sup> “the Italians are in southern Germany- in Tyrol,” Ibid.



independent Hungary should be a goal of the revolution.<sup>213</sup> So, there was consistency in the call for freedom for parts of the Habsburg empire, but on the question of contested territory they sided with the German claim.

Though it was not as multiethnic as the Habsburg empire, Prussia also was a topic of discussion because of the territory gained during the partition of Poland. On the question of Poland, German American newspapers supported the recreation of a Polish state, which included the territory that was part of Prussia. For example, the *Ohio Staats-bote* described the negotiations about the Polish question, and argued that Prussia should relinquish its claims on Polish territory.<sup>214</sup> It also claimed that it would be wrong to include any part of Poland in a unified German state. There should be, according to the paper, a “Wiedergeburt Polens.”<sup>215</sup> This sentiment also appeared in the other papers. *Der Demokrat* stated clearly that, “Männer aller Nationen hatten sich eingefunden, um ihre Sympathien für das unglückliche Polen... zu geben.”<sup>216</sup> They expressed a strong sympathy for the Polish cause, and saw it as parallel to the German cause. It described the position of the Frankfurt Parliament on not supporting a Polish state as an “Unrecht.”<sup>217</sup> Out of the four papers, *Der Westbote* was the most outspoken in their opposition to both Russia and Prussia holding any part of Polish territory. The paper derisively described Prussia as a harlequins coat made of many different pieces.<sup>218</sup> The paper also claimed that, “Es sei heilige Pflicht Deutschlands für die Wiederherstellung Polens mitzuwirken.”<sup>219</sup> It

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<sup>213</sup> “Europaistische Nachrichten”, *Ohio Staats-bote* May 10th, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-10/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> “Rebirth of Poland,” *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> “Men of all nations have gathered to show their sympathy for unfortunate Poland.” “Europa” *Der Demokrat*, March 27, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>217</sup> “Injustice” *Der Demokrat*, May 13th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>218</sup> “Neues aus Europa”, *Der Westbote*, May 19th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1204/rec/242>.

<sup>219</sup> “It is the holy duty of Germany to work for the restoration of Poland.” “Deutscher Revolutions-Verein in Cincinnati, Ohio,” *Der Westbote*, May 12th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1199/rec/241>.

also insisted that Russia must give Poland her rights.<sup>220</sup> So, in the eyes of the editor of the *Westbote*, there was a clear answer on the Polish question which also aligned with the paper's harsh criticism of Prussia as a state. Though it is worth noting that sympathy for the Polish cause was common among liberal Germans in the 1830s, and the editors were repeating the common argument that Germany had a duty to reunify Poland.<sup>221</sup> So, this was not a fully novel position in the context of German political discourses. All of the papers expressed strong sympathy and support for the Polish cause, which added to a later feeling of frustration with the Frankfurt Parliament.

Solidarity was a common theme among German American newspapers because they supported freedom across Europe. But, much like the idea of a "free Germany" there was more nuance to this abstract concept that became clear in questions of practice, because when there were questions of claim, the papers prioritized the German speaking population. Though there was a broad discussion of supporting a free and unified Poland and Italy, there were caveats to this support. The German language papers supported Italy as long as the Italians did not lay claim to Tyrol, which they viewed as German. The case of Poland was seemingly clearer cut; they argued that Poland should be able to establish their own free state, but it is never explicitly clear what they viewed as the correct borders for the Polish state.

### 3.3 The "Invasion" of Schleswig

There was one event during the Spring of 1848 that had a major impact on the outlook of the Revolutions. When Denmark sent troops into the duchy of Schleswig to quell the uprisings in Schleswig and Holstein, it brought questions of the security of Germany to the fore, because the German states started discussing protecting the German speaking population in these duchies. Up to that point, the Revolutions had been largely internal, and the threat of outside intervention had not materialized. But, the invasion of Schleswig demonstrated that while the German states were deliberating about their own organization as a state, external forces could lay claim to what they

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<sup>220</sup> "Neues von Europa" *Der Westbote*, June 16th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1224/rec/246>.

<sup>221</sup> Jacco Pekelder, 'Chapter 2: 1830-1848: Polish-German Friendship', unpublished chapter of forthcoming book, *Europe and the Rise of Germany, 1830-1871*,

considered to be German territory. The moment also served to improve the reputation of the Prussian king, because Prussian troops rebuffed the Danish forces. So, it provided another point of consideration in the discussion of German politics in German America and also provided a different view of the king of Prussia, who had been painted as the enemy of the revolutions.

It is important to note that the situation in Schleswig and Holstein was a complicated problem based in the multinational nature of the two duchies, and was not as clear cut as the German language press presented it. On a legal level, they were not a part of the German states, because they were in a personal union with the Danish king.<sup>222</sup> There was, however, some tension in this arrangement due to the demographics of the duchies. Both duchies had substantial German speaking and Danish speaking populations, so in the era of nationalist uprisings, it was not clear who had dominion over the area. From the Danish side, the uprising was an illegitimate government, which required intervention, because it was occurring in the territory of the Danish king.<sup>223</sup> But, from the point of view of German nationalists, the duchies were part of the larger pattern of German nationalist uprisings, and the Danish troops were threatening to quell “German freedom.”<sup>224</sup> So, though the German language papers did discuss the Danish king’s actions within his own territory in terms of “invasion” and “encroachment” and refer to the Danish troops massing on the border of the German states, the Danish king was acting within his own legal right. However, for the sake of discussing the perspective of German America, it is necessary to discuss this development as a foreign threat, because German America discussed it as such.

The two papers that had the strongest stance against the Prussian king did not soften after the invasion, and instead argued that a German republic was capable of defending itself and did not need the support of kings to keep the republic safe. The first mention *Der Westbote* made to external threats was to Russia, rather than Denmark, as the editor expected that Russia would act to crush a liberal revolution. In that case, the editor believed that the German people were,

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<sup>222</sup> Michael Embree, “The Long Road to War” in *Bismarck’s First War: The Campaign of Schleswig and Jutland 1864* (Helion and Company, 2006), 18.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

<sup>224</sup> The same logic did not apply to Italian uprisings in Southern Tyrol.

“strong enough to fight the Russians,” on their own without support of a monarch.<sup>225</sup> The first report of the massing of both Prussian and Danish troops on the border of Schleswig came at the end of April, and were met with deeply conflicted sentiments in the most liberal papers. For example, *Der Demokrat* both grudgingly praised the quick response of the Prussian troops, but also in the same article claimed that the Prussian king should not impede the freedom of the German states.<sup>226</sup> There is a tension between praising action to defend against an external threat and not praising a king. But this makes no substantial difference in the way that the paper discusses the king of Prussia. A week later, it described the Revolution in Berlin as, “Freiheit! Freiheit! Schreien sie - Friedrich Wilhelm antwortet mit Kanon. Pam! Pam!”<sup>227</sup> The image still paints him as a tyrant who violently opposed the Revolutions. They suggested that though the Prussian king was defending the country against the Danish, that did not make him ally of the Revolutions. Later the paper emphasizes that both Prussia and Hannover are mobilizing against the Danish invasion.<sup>228</sup> Though the difference is subtle, this reporting reframes the effort not as a Prussian initiative alone, which deemphasizes the king of Prussia as a singular hero. It instead frames the action as a shared German initiative. This supported the idea that it was the strength of the people, not the kings, that protected the country. Among the papers that supported a republican solution this argument was the consistent response to questions of the security of the German states. In response to a speech where Friedrich Wilhelm claimed that Prussia had defended Germany during the Napoleonic wars, *Der Westbote* claimed that the liberation of the German states was carried out by people doing their duty, not the king. The article claims that the strength of the people and the leadership of the previous Prussian monarch defeated the French army, and the current Prussian king has no right to take credit for that.<sup>229</sup> This typified the kind of

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<sup>225</sup> *Der Westbote*, April 28th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1189/rec/239>.

<sup>226</sup> “Neues aus Europa”, *Der Demokrat*, April 27th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>227</sup> “Freedom! Freedom! They cry - Friedrich Wilhelm answers with cannons. Bam! Bam!”, “Neues aus Europa”, *Der Demokrat*, May 3rd, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>228</sup> “Dänmark und Preußen”, *Der Demokrat*, 14th of May, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>229</sup> “Später und wichtiger!” *Der Westbote*, April 7th, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1174/rec/236>.

argument that the pro-Republican papers made to defend a republican outcome, even under the threat of an invasion.

Der Demokrat published an article on May 29th that repeated the arguments made by those who favored a monarchy. They included the claim that the first French revolution proved that monarchy was the natural form of government, and that a monarchy was the only possible way to defend against outside forces. The paper countered each of these, and claimed that the example of North American republics shows, “was in Deutschland möglich sein soll.”<sup>230</sup> Specifically, it cited the American example as a case where a revolution did not result in a monarchy. The article also claims that Switzerland is another state that was capable of existing without resorting to a monarchy.<sup>231</sup> On the question of security, the article highlighted the ability of the United States to defend against its neighbors. It uses the examples of the war of 1812 and the Mexican-American war to show that a republic is capable of mobilizing in its own defense against hostile neighbors.<sup>232</sup> The argument that both Der Westbote and Der Demokrat made in response to the invasion of Schleswig-Holstein and the question of security was that the people could be strong enough on their own to protect themselves from their neighbors.

However, other papers did not take this hard line stance; the Ohio Staats-bote softened its stance towards the Prussian king after the invasion, because his actions did protect a German states. In its initial reporting, the paper was highly critical of the Prussian king. However, there was a shift during the invasion of Schleswig. Though the paper had suggested that a republic would be the best outcome, after the invasion it seemed to take a somewhat more sympathetic view of constitutional monarchy. On the 17th of May, the paper suggested a constitutional monarchy which was accompanied by a democratically elected government would also be acceptable; as it stated, “die constitutionelle Monarchie soll hinfort auf den bereitesten

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<sup>230</sup> “what is possible in Germany.” “Ankunft des Dampfschiff ‘Hiberia’” *Der Demokrat*, May 29th, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> From the perspective of a historian, this is a revisionist version of the war with Mexico, which was the product of American aggression, Manifest destiny philosophy, and a false report of a Mexican attack on the border. But, for the purpose of analysis, this interpretation reflects the mindset of those in the United States at the time, and the way that the experience of living in America was used in arguments about Germany.

Grundlagen beruhen.”<sup>233</sup> So, this very much represented a change in the stance of the paper. The paper clearly emphasized the possibility of both Danish invasion and Russian invasion. They claimed that these forces sought, “[die] Freiheit Deutschlands zu vernichten.”<sup>234</sup> The article remarked, with a sense of urgency, “Also haben wir zunächst mit Räuber und Diebsgesindel zu fechten. Weiß Gott, wie es in den nächsten Tagen hier aussehen wird.”<sup>235</sup> The urgency of this statement explains the shift from condemnation of the Prussian king to the begrudging support. The urgency of the situation prompted the paper to reconsider the harshness of their own position on the Prussian king, and to accept the argument that a constitutional monarchy could be a solution with a broad democratic base. The subject of the paper’s ire and the title of “Volksmörder” instead was passed to Metternich, as evidenced by the article on 21st of June that referred to him as, “der eisgraue Freiheitsmörder Metternich.”<sup>236</sup> The way that the paper spoke specifically about Friedrich Wilhelm shifted significantly after his defense of the German states from Denmark, which suggests that this demonstration of the necessity of Prussian military power did sway the editor to change his position. Though the paper still emphasized the need for a democratic solution, its position on Prussia and the idea of a constitutional monarchy began to soften, which demonstrates that the question of security and military protection did resonate with some who favored a republic.

Der liberale Beobachter also took the invasion of Schleswig as a demonstration of the necessity of a constitutional monarchy under Prussia. On the 23rd of May, the paper explained the Prussian victory in Schleswig in a way that glorified the efforts of the Prussian king. In the same paper, there was an article that insisted that the situation in Germany was a test of the “die große Frage über deutsche Einheit.”<sup>237</sup> The article also claimed that the invasion and the Prussian

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<sup>233</sup> “The constitutional monarchy should be built on a stable foundation.” *Ohio Staats-bote*, 17th of May, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-17/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>234</sup> “to destroy the freedom of Germany.” “Europäische Nachrichten”, *Ohio Staats-bote*, May 10th, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-10/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>235</sup> “So now we have to fight robbers and thieves. God knows what we will see in the next days.” Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> *Ohio Staats-bote*, June 21st, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-06-21/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>237</sup> “The great question of German unity”, “Von Ausland”, *Der liberale Beobachter*, May 23rd, 1848, Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-05-23/ed-1/seq-2/>.

ability to repulse it suggested that Prussia would be a vital part of a unified Germany.<sup>238</sup> The way that *Der liberale Beobachter* framed the argument was primarily pragmatic. The paper viewed the events in Schleswig as further proof that the focus of the discussion should be on unity, and the strength of the state. According to the paper, the neighboring countries were quick to threaten the German states, and the priority for unity should be to create a government that can unify and protect the country.<sup>239</sup> With that in mind, they argued that a constitutional monarchy was the most pragmatic option, even if a republic would be the ideal. The position that *Der liberale Beobachter* took was one that saw the invasion as a concrete example of why Germany needed a pragmatic unification, even if it was under less than the ideal democratic solution.

The Danish invasion of Schleswig was an important point in the discussion of German unification in German America, because it presented a reason to settle for a constitutional the monarchy - possibly under king who had led the defense of Schleswig. Among German America this moment was divisive, because different papers offered different answers to the question of the security of the borders of Germany. The strongly pro-republic papers did not waver in their support of the formation of a republic, and they instead cited examples of republics who were able to maintain their autonomy and their borders. The experience of the United States emerged as a point in the argument, because German Americans claimed that the United States was the best example of a republic formed by a revolution that was capable of maintaining its borders. So, they again cited their experience of the United States as something that could inform the German solution. However, other papers like the *Ohio Staats-bote* began to soften their formerly hard stances on the necessity of a republic, because they saw an external threat.

### 3.4 The Frankfurt Parliament

There were two primary points of focus that demonstrated the divided opinion of German America, and further illustrated the divides among the different viewpoints. The first was the so-called invasion of Schleswig, and the second and most notable of these was the formation of the

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<sup>238</sup> "Von Ausland", *Der liberale Beobachter*, May 23, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-05-23/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

Frankfurt parliament. The moment was substantial because it was the first concrete step towards bringing together deputies to discuss how to unify Germany. It did also include the first substantial voting in Germany, though it would still be a stretch to call it a fully democratic election. From the perspective of German America, it was a substantial step that could have been viewed as somewhat democratic. It represented the start of a formal political process to create a unified Germany. However, the formation of the Parliament was not universally celebrated among German America, and the response followed the same division between papers who favored unity and those that favored a republic.

The pro-Republic papers - *Der Demokrat* and *Der Westbote*- were insistent that there had to be a representative form of government to discuss the possibility of organizing a unified Germany. Before the formation of the Frankfurt parliament, the papers that favored a republic were praising the idea of a national gathering. For example, *Der Demokrat* made one of these appeals in the beginning of May when it stated that, "Ein Deutsche Parliament soll am Ende Mai in Dresden zusammen verrufen werden"<sup>240</sup> The paper suggested that such a parliament should be composed of democratically elected members who represented the people. So, the paper was in favor of answering the German question through a parliament. So, in theory they supported an elected assembly deciding the outcome of the revolutions. There were also these kind of suggestions in the other papers that promoted a republic. For example, *Der Westbote* also expressed optimism about the possibility of a parliament on the 19th of May, "Alle Hoffnungen werden jetzt auf das Parlament gesetzt, welches sich am 1. Mai in Frankfurt versammeln soll, um Deutschland's Wiedergeburt zu verkündigen."<sup>241</sup> In this article the paper expressed the idea that a parliament would be a good way to establish a republic, and that they could put their hope in the outcome. This is an enthusiastic response to a parliament in theory. The initial response of both of these papers was to express support for the idea of a parliament, and to see it as a step towards democracy

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<sup>240</sup> "A German Parliament should be called together at the end of May in Dresden." "Die Zukunft Deutschland", *Der Demokrat*, May 1st, 1848, Horner Research Library, German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>241</sup> "All hopes are not on the Parliament which will meet in Frankfurt on the 1st of May to create the rebirth of Germany." "Deutschland" *Der Westbote*, 19th of May, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1207/rec/242>.



However, this initial support was not consistently the case across all of the pro-republic papers. The *Ohio Staats-bote* expressed doubt about the possibility that the parliament would be able to be democratic. In their article on the formation of the Frankfurt Parliament urged the people to reject this particular form of a parliament.<sup>242</sup> Though the paper supported the idea of a democratic representative body, the paper did not view the Frankfurt parliament as this kind of body. It claimed that the Frankfurt parliament was not a body that represented the people, but rather one that represented the kings and the bourgeois.<sup>243</sup> The article claimed that the formation of the Parliament was not for the good of the people, and it was a way for the monarchs to maintain control while still appearing to grant the demands of the revolutionaries. The paper scolded the “sogenante ‘liberale’ Blätter” in Germany for their praise of the Parliament.<sup>244</sup> The *Ohio Staats-bote* was the first to suggest that the Frankfurt Parliament was not a representation of the people, because it was primarily serving the monarchy.

Though the *Ohio Staats-bote* was the first to raise these criticisms, the other two pro-republic papers soon also saw the Frankfurt parliament as an illegitimate body because it represented the powerful classes instead of the people. By the time that the Frankfurt parliament met, all three papers were urging the German people to continue fighting for a true republic. *Der Demokrat* questioned, “Wann wird Deutschland seinen Tag von Bunkershill haben? - Es hätte ihn jedoch schon gehabt vor die aufgehende Sonne der Freiheit Wolken hingeschoben - doch es ist eine Theaterdekoration- die Strahlen der Sonne werden diesen Nebel durchbrechen, das Volk mit seiner ganzen Kraft wird nachhelfen”<sup>245</sup> The idea of the statement was that the Parliament did not represent true freedom, but rather a kind of tableau meant to satisfy the revolutions. It was not a legitimately democratic gathering. The article continued stating that, “Bald werden die ...Stuhle in Frankfurt zusammenbrechen, wenn Ihr ...Nationalvertreter solche dadurch ja

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<sup>242</sup> “Frankfurt” *Ohio Staats-bote*, 10th of May, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-05-10/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> “the so-called liberal papers” *Ohio Staats-bote*, June 14th, 1848, page 2, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078466/1848-06-14/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>245</sup> “When will Germany have their day of Bunkers Hill? - Now there are clouds covering the sun of freedom -but it is only a theatre decoration-the rays of the son will break through this fog, with the help of the strength of the people.”, “Europaisches”, *Der Demokrat*, May 24th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

entweihen versucht, daß ihr die Republik dem Volke vorenthaltet.”<sup>246</sup> The harsh worded clearly indicated that the hope that the paper had put in an elected body that was capable of representing the people was not answered by the Parliament. It goes so far as to label the deputies of the Parliament as traitors to the cause of the nation. The next day the paper expressed the same accusation that both the assembly in France and the Frankfurt Parliament were not representing the people, and that the bourgeois and the monarchs were maintaining their own power through them.<sup>247</sup> There is a level of both anger and disappointment at the idea that the promise of a republic was slipping away. The paper continued to cover the Parliament in the same terms. On the 2nd of June, the paper stated that, “Diese Volksmörder betrachten jetzt schon das werden sollende deutschen Parlament in Frankfurt als ein Spielzeug.”<sup>248</sup> It also continued this scorn and stated that the deputies in Frankfurt, “ha[ben] seine Brüder und die Freiheit verrät[ten]”<sup>249</sup> The harsh tone that the paper took was indicative of how those who hoped for a republican outcome for the Revolutions saw the parliament as a betrayal of their ideals. *Der Westbote* also echoed this idea, and expressed a similar disappointment at the Parliament. On the 2nd of June, the paper printed that, “Der Prinz Johann von Oestreich ist bereits in Frankfurt angekommen; er hofft deutscher Kaiser zu werden....Übrigens ist das deutsche Volk jetzt mit den Wahlen beschäftigt und hoffentlich wird es Männer wählen, die den...Volksverrätern in Frankfurt das Kaiserspiel vertreiben werden.”<sup>250</sup> The paper centers on the image of the Parliament as a tool for an Austrian prince to make himself emperor, and thus not a legitimate representation of the will of the people. It also employed the same language about the betrayal of the people. The paper urged German Americans to return to Germany because there was still the need for Revolution, and

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<sup>246</sup> “Soon will the chairs in Frankfurt break, while you national traitors desecrate them and withhold the republic from the people.” Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> “Europäische” *Der Demokrat*, May 26th, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>248</sup> “These murderers of the people are treating the german Parliament in Frankfurt as a toy.”, “Europäische Angelegenheit”, *Der Demokrat*, June 2nd, 1848, Horner Research Library, The German Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>249</sup> “have betrayed their brothers and Freedom.” Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> “The Prince Johann of Austria is already in Frankfurt; he hopes to be the German emperor....meanwhile the german people are busy with elections, and hopefully will elect men, who will chase away the traitors in Frankfurt who play this emperor-game.” “Ausland”, *Der Westbote*, June 2nd, 1848, Ohio History Connection, <https://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16007coll43/id/1217/rec/244>.

Germany needed men who were true Republicans.<sup>251</sup> Both papers expressed a profound feeling of disappointment and betrayal at what they perceived as the conservative bent of the Parliament and the goal of creating a monarchy. This marked the end of the enthusiasm that had been evident in earlier reporting, since they saw the parliament as a reassertion of power by the ruling classes.

By contrast, *Der liberale Beobachter* reacted positively to the news that there was going to be a parliament in Frankfurt, and continued its neutral reporting. The paper had previously expressed the idea that a national parliament would be necessary to answer the question of German unification.<sup>252</sup> It was also positive about the idea of creating a Parliament, claiming that many in the fatherland supported the idea of representative government.<sup>253</sup> In contrast to the other papers who saw the deputies as traitors, *Der liberale Beobachter* treated it as an extension of the hope to create a unified Germany through a representative government. When the Parliament began to meet, it enthusiastically reported, “Das deutsche Parlament hat sich in Frankfurt versammelt.”<sup>254</sup> The tone that the paper takes about the Parliament is one of hopeful anticipation, rather than harsh condemnation.

The German language newspapers were sharply divided on the matter of the Frankfurt parliament, and the criticism aligned with what they saw as the ideal outcome. The papers who believed that a republic were the only option saw the Parliament as a betrayal because it was primarily serving the goal of creating a constitutional monarchy. The pro-republic papers felt betrayed because the creation of the Frankfurt Parliament made it increasingly likely that their calls for a republic would not be fulfilled. From across the Atlantic this was an even more frustrating development because the numbers of ways that German Americans could intervene was limited. On the other hand, those who had been open to the idea of a constitutional

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> “Von Ausland”, *Der liberale Beobachter*, May 23, 1848, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-05-23/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> “Von Ausland”, *Der liberale Beobachter*, June 20th, 1848, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87052123/1848-06-20/ed-1/seq-3/>.

monarchy took a neutral stance, because they welcomed the possibility of creating a unified state under a monarch.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Though the German American community was more unified in terms of identity and action than many scholars have argued, they did not uniformly agree on the goals of the Revolution. On an abstract level, the community could rally around the idea of “freedom” and especially the “freedom of the fatherland.” However, they did not understand concrete form of a free Germany in the same way. Many of the papers equated “freedom” to “republic” because they claimed that a king would not guarantee matter, and a constitutional monarchy would be nothing more than a lesser form of despotism. From the point of view of papers that prioritized a republic, the question of freedom was ultimately one of securing rights and freedoms through the formation of a republic. However, there were papers that equated “freedom” with “unity,” and those papers were more willing to accept the idea of a constitutional monarchy as long as it included guarantees of rights. Though they viewed a republic as the ultimate ideal, they instead focused on the practicality of forming a unified country. The divide between the two positions was one of prioritization, because one side of the debate prioritized the creation of a democratic government and the deposition of monarchs, while the other prioritized unification, even if it must be under a less than desirable monarch. The same sort of tension about the meaning of freedom also played out in the question of other revolutions. Though they supported the idea of other nations also being free, they take it for granted that the borders are clear. The example of the Italian claim on Tyrol is a clear example of this. Rhetorically, the papers support the idea of unifying Italy. However, they also state unequivocally that Tyrol is German territory. So, these differences demonstrate that it was easier to agree to an abstract concept, but divisions and contradictions began to appear in questions of practice.

It is necessary to ask the question of whether these political divides are substantial enough to claim that German America was more divided than the German states themselves. It is evident that German America could be, on the whole, characterized as further left than many of the German states. From across the Atlantic, the possibility of a republic seemed far more likely

than it did to those in Germany. However, this was not necessarily unique to German America. John Belchem makes the point in his study of the Irish American response that the experience of America skewed the perspective of Irish America to be far more liberal than their counterparts in Ireland.<sup>255</sup> The same appears to have occurred in the case of German America. Because they were able to experience a functioning republic, those who lived in the United States viewed the formation of a republic as far more likely and practical than it appeared to European Revolutionaries. For those who supported the idea of a republic, the news that revolutionaries in Europe - or the Frankfurt parliament in the German case- were not considering a republican solution was met with anger and disappointment. The vitriol that many German Americans expressed towards the Frankfurt parliament was a product of the frustration of their own republican hopes for the fatherland.

However, even with the differences between the diaspora opinion in the United States and those in Germany, there was not a greater degree of division in German America than there was in the German states. The German revolutionaries were not uniform in their view of the best form of government for the unified state. There was a very clear divide in the German discourse between favoring an Austrian or Prussian led state, which was resolved by virtue of the Austrian monarchy refusing to relinquish their non-German territory.<sup>256</sup> The pattern in German America followed much the same problem as that which occurred in Germany itself. The initial enthusiasm for a free Germany was cross cutting and forged a shared feeling of German identity, which led to enthusiastic action in favor of a “free Germany.” However, once it came to the question of how to form this new German state, the conversation became mired in political differences.

## **Conclusion**

With the questions of identity, action, and political difference addressed in the case of these four papers, it is possible to return to the guiding question of this thesis. The question of

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<sup>255</sup> John Belchem, “Nationalism, Republicanism and Exile: Irish Emigrants and the Revolutions of 1848” in *Past & Present*, No. 146 (Feb., 1995), 104.

<sup>256</sup> Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Harvard University Press, 2016), 215.

how the German language papers reflected the transnational ties of German America, is one that this case study can begin to answer. Though it is impossible to make an authoritative statement for the whole of the German speaking minority on the basis of four papers, it is possible to make a statement based on the microcosm. On one hand, though the four papers themselves provide a limited view of the developments in German America. But, on the other hand, because of the way that news was reported in German America, it is possible to use a paper to analyze developments outside the immediate community that the paper was based in. Each of the papers reported on what was happening in other cities, which paints a bigger picture of what was happening simultaneously in several cities and communities. Because German American papers were interested in what happened beyond their own community, they reported larger developments that were indicative of a tide of enthusiasm that extended beyond one editor or one paper. If *Der Westbote* was completely accurate in the statement that most papers enthusiastically reported the outbreak of the revolutions in Germany, the statement itself does speak to a wider pattern that the editors themselves were observing and reporting. There is enough evidence to conclude that there was a shared sentiment that extended beyond four papers. Beyond the editorial bias of the individual papers, the way that the papers printed articles also gives insight into how the news of the revolutions was received in other cities. Because the German language papers reprinted heavily from each other, it is possible to have articles from several different cities in the same paper. thus it is possible to reconstruct at least a partial view of what occurred in German America in 1848. At the very least, from these four papers it is possible to reconstruct the events in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and by virtue of these republishing networks, also in New York and Baltimore. Thus, it includes the three largest cities in New England in the period that also had significant German speaking populations. Though this is not all of German America, it is a significant segment of the population.

The first important point is that German Americans did think of themselves as German and referred to themselves as German. There are a number of statements where the papers explicitly state that they are Germans, or include themselves in part of a larger German population that extends beyond the German states. This kind of explicit language demonstrates that there was a concept of Germanness in German America, and that they included themselves

in it. The rhetoric that emerged once the news of the revolutions broke also spoke to the way that German Americans thought of themselves. The poems and articles across all four papers portrayed German America as a son and the homeland as the father. The paper communicated a strong sense of connection to Germany through the image of family and an appeal to filial loyalty and duty. It is evident that by their own definition, German Americans saw themselves as Germans, even if they are not in the German states.

This distinction of definition leads to the question of how German America conceptualized their own German identity. The necessary caveat is that though they saw themselves as German, this was contingent on their own definition of what it meant to be German. By virtue of the distance between the United States and Germany, and the period of time since most of the immigrants left the German states, which could be a decade even for those who had arrived during the wave of immigration in the 1830s, one cannot assume that the German American idea of what it meant to be German is the same as what Germans in the German states thought. The qualifications that made one “German” in a German American sense are rarely clearly stated in the papers. Many of the appeals for the fatherland took the reader’s connection to the fatherland as a given. But, for the sake of discussing identity, it is important to identify what made German America German in their own terms. There are two factors that appear in the newspapers in varying degrees. The first of these is a somewhat poorly defined concept of the German “Geist,” which appears in a poetic sense. It was the illusive and abstract idea of feeling a connection to the fatherland along with certain ill-defined “German virtues” like courage. As the revolutions progressed and certain political disagreements emerged, there were accusations of betraying this “Geist.” However, for the sake of definitions, the idea of a German “Geist” is unhelpful, because it is primarily an emotive concept grounded in feeling German. While it was useful for German American editors to evoke to remind German Americans of their “duty” to the homeland, it is a particularly nebulous concept.

The second qualifier for German American Germanness is speaking German as a language, and this is the far more useful of the two for the sake of analysis. The debate about the use of German in schools and the community proceeded the news of the Revolutions, and was very indicative of the tension between German America and the Anglo majority in the United

States. From the perspective of German America, language was the most important part of being German. This is evident in the way that they define the German nation as anyone who spoke German, with no other qualifications. Maintaining German as a language within their own communities was vital precisely because it was what made them distinctly German. So, the German language papers took an understanding of Germanness among their readership as a given, because those who did not fit their definition of German could not have read a paper published in German. The certainty that they express also speaks to the seeming agreement that people who spoke German were German. This also points to a tension with the Anglo-American majority, who understood the American identity as including the adoption of English as a language. Because German Americans put their emphasis primarily on German as a language, the incursion of English and the pressure from Anglo Americans to speak English was a threat to their own sense of being German.

From a transnational perspective, it is also necessary to ask how German Americans conceived of themselves as American as well, because they forged their own identity between the two countries. As already stated, this was not the version of American identity that Anglo America believed in, which included assimilation to the dominant language. For German America, being American was a question of values. What they saw as uniquely American was the experience of the republic and the freedoms that came with it. To be American in their eyes was to actively participate in democracy and to hold the values of the republic. So, the opposition that they held for the conservative monarchies in Germany was also a part of holding American values that prioritized a republic and freedom. Given the support of abolition among German Americans, one could even state that German Americans took the promise of freedom more to heart than Anglo-Americans did. In the period of the Spring of 1848, this is evident in the discussion of exporting American values to Germany. So, though their definition of American identity was not consistent with that of Anglo-Americans, it was internally consistent with their own ideas of identity.

There was no significant contradiction between their view of themselves as both German and American, and the combination of the two identities informed their response to the revolutions. It was possible to both speak German and thus maintain their own sense of being



German and also to have the values that were American. When it became a seeming possibility that a republic could form in Germany, this duality became the most apparent, because German Americans could voice their connection to the German fatherland and also express their desire for an American form of governance. So, to define the transnational identity of German America, it existed as a cultural feeling of being German primarily grounded in language and as a political affinity for the United States.<sup>257</sup> In the framework of an ideal republic, there was the possibility of existing as both.

This is an important point for the question of immigrant experience beyond the specific German question of 1848. The parts of immigrant identity do not necessarily have to be diametrically opposed. One can accept the political norms or values of their new homeland while still feeling a cultural connection to their old homeland. The American narrative especially has emphasized that the process of immigration is one where the immigrant group slowly adopts the cultural norms of the Anglo-American majority. To not do so is seen as a sign of disloyalty or some political tie to their land of origin. But, this example demonstrates that immigrants can regard the political system in their homeland as despotic, and still maintain a connection to it through cultural means like the use of language. It is also possible to praise the freedoms and rights of America in the language of the homeland. This example also demonstrates that immigrants react to the political developments in their country of origin, and use their experience in the United States to advocate for the liberalization of their country of origin.

From this point, it is possible to reevaluate the narrative of German America before the arrival of the revolutionaries, and the way in which the Spring of 1848 impacted German America. Historians have highlighted the change from the earlier 1840s to the period after the revolutions, which saw a strong surge in German identity in the United States. Scholars have highlighted the role of the refugees from Germany in this change in discourse, and while it is true that there was an influx of politically involved refugees as the revolutionary pushes fell apart and many of the most liberal revolutionaries left the German states, it is possible to add nuance to

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<sup>257</sup> This affinity for American political institutions would later be shaken by the American Civil War, which called into question whether Anglo-America believed in freedom as ardently as they claimed. Because of this, German Americans moved West and attempted to found communities that were more German. So, as the American identity became less certain, they became more invested in the German dimension of their identity.

their role in shaping the discourse. Much of the scholarship about the Forty-Eighters treat German America as a virtual *tabula rasa* when it comes to German identity. This narrative leans heavily on an elitist great man of history vision of identity where members of the German *intelligencia* come to the United States and provide the uneducated diaspora with an idea of what it means to be German. Acknowledging the concept of German identity that existed before the arrival of the refugees democratizes and decentralizes the concept of Germanness. It was possible for a population of less educated Germans outside of the core of the German states to articulate their own idea of what made them German without the prerequisite of a small group of educated men to guide them. In the era of romantic nationalism, it was also possible for any German speaking group to identify themselves as German on the basis of language, which highlights the necessity of a decentralized idea of German identity before the unification of the German states. A diaspora population could identify as German and articulate their own understanding what it meant to be German. In the case of German America, they also attempted to export their own identity back to the German states.

It is also possible to offer a different explanation for the change in discourse in German America without treating the Forty-Eighters as the only actors. There was not a firm statement of German identity before the outbreaks of the revolutions because the way that German Americans acted on their identity was localized to causes like maintaining German language education. From an external perspective, this does not seem to an expression of a cross cutting German identity. The news of the revolutions broke this pattern by providing a point around which a shared German identity could be expressed. German language newspapers had a unified message about the connection of German America to Germany, and the duty that they owed to their “old fatherland.” The consistent nature of this appeal across papers speaks to an intentional effort to provide a singular call to action based on a shared German identity. The papers were willing to put aside their political differences for the idea of German freedom.

Importantly, these calls for action did resonate beyond the pages of the paper, and German communities organized efforts to raise money and men for the German cause. Instead of analyzing the efficacy of these efforts, it is important to instead analyze what their existence meant about the German identity of German America. The emergence of a spontaneous effort to

support the Revolutions speaks to the resonance of the rhetoric of duty to the fatherland resonated with the average German. These efforts may have not had an impact on the developments in Germany for a number of reasons. The first of them is the lack of funds present in the German American community. No matter how enthusiastic, there was not significant wealth to give to the German cause. The second is that the Freikorps could never have realistically sent to Germany, because the intervention of American citizens in the affairs of another country could have been construed as an invasion. The significance of these efforts is not whether they were effective, but rather that they demonstrated a community coming together for a shared goal on the basis of a shared identity. Nor do the political divides between those that favored a republic and those who accepted the option of a constitutional monarchy inherently mean that there was lack of unity. German Americans were willing to join together for the cause of a free Germany, the question was how to achieve this freedom. However, the same question existed in the German states, so German America served as a mirror for similar political questions.

From this perspective, the Forty-Eighters are not founding figures of German identity in the United States, but rather figures who shifted an already existing version of German identity.<sup>258</sup> German America had an existing idea of what it meant to be German, and they had acted on it enthusiastically in the Spring of 1848. The Forty-Eighters entered an environment where they were welcomed specifically because of this enthusiasm, which made German America willing to welcome them and treat them as heroes. The editors of German language papers had reported about the revolutions extensively, and the German American communities had been supporting the efforts through the revolutions, so they esteem that they held for the revolutionaries was a direct result of their investment in the revolutions. The reaction of German America provides is striking because it demonstrates a nuanced transnational identity, which persisted in the community even after the end of the revolutionary moment.

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<sup>258</sup> A later study could also reconsider if these revolutionaries were as well accepted into German American society as previous historians claim, or whether there was tension between the existing idea of what it meant to be German and that of the Forty-Eighters.

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