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UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

WORLD WAR I
and
AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION,
1914-1917

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty
of the Graduate School of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts

Department of History

By

WALTER EDMUND HICKS

1949

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TITLE OF THESIS: World War One
and American Public
Opinion, 1914-1918

APPROVED BY READING COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF THE
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DATE: August, 1949

11 July 1950 RH

The machinery for weighing or measuring the popular will from week to week, or month to month has not been, and is not likely to be, invented.

Lord Bryce

The American Commonwealth

PREFACE

Peering into the tomes of history in an attempt to better comprehend the American mind during this critical period of our history, the author has encountered many conflicting and ambiguous statements. But by comparing these opinions and by a detailed study of original sources the author has endeavored to reach logical grounds for his reasoning.

The opinions here offered agree with those of others used, but only because the author through diligent study has arrived at like conclusions.

That his own historical integrity has not been jeopardized by his faith in others is the author's sincere hope.

WALTER EDMUND HICKS

University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky
October 10, 1949

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WORLD WAR I
and
AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION
1914-1917

I. A DEFINITION OF PUBLIC OPINION

When dealing with people, let us remember we are not dealing with creatures of logic. We are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures bustling with prejudices and motivated with pride and vanity.

Dale Carnegie
How to Win Friends

There are many reasons why the role of propaganda, in shaping public opinion in international politics and especially in war time, is receiving more careful scrutiny today than heretofore. We live among people who are puzzled more than ever, uneasy and vexed at the unknown cunning which seems to have duped and taken advantage of their implicit faith in what they read, see and hear. Little wonder that there is a¹ new suspicion and inquisitiveness abroad in the world.

Public opinion may be the label for a pseudo-scientific conception. It is also a catch-phrase of great popular power that has been worn smooth and non-descript by generations of reformers and politicians. Public opinion and the American ideal of the freedom of the press are inextricably and peculiarly woven together in our history. This contributes to the difficulties in distinguishing between public opinion and the press.

Public opinion is a vocalization of the attitudes of individuals concerned with particular controversial issues. Such openly expressed attitudes are found in complex societies which permit and encourage arguments and discussions as an essential method of arriving at either a provisional or a final settlement of matters of vital moment to the citizenry. There are, to be sure, many publics functioning in a society; one,

¹ Lasswell, Harold D.: Propaganda Technique in the World War, p. 2.

as it were, for every controversy which arises and attracts the attention of a sizeable number of followers. Obviously many of these groupings overlap. Furthermore, in our kind of culture the opinions of these social groups are important. Public opinion may then be defined as a collection of individual opinions representing a range of social groups on a subject of general interest on which there is no unanimous¹ agreement.

Again public opinion is based primarily upon the culture of the various groups with which the members are affiliated. Since controversial issues usually involve a conflict of group interests, attitudes towards a controversy are in a large measure determined by the special groups to which the individual belongs. Thus in controversies, opinions become irrelevant and confused by the fact that the different groups to which the individuals belong have a variety of notions as to the relative importance of a certain issue. Social attitudes, folkways or cultures are common factors in the mind-sets of those involved. They prepare the minds of group members to deal with the various classes of problems from numerous points of view. And we must remember, too, that the tempo of our culture does not easily prepare us to see all sides of a question. Of any public event we see at first only a single

¹ Lippman, Walter: Public Opinion, p. 3.

facet of it. Our picture of it is controlled in part by those who transmit knowledge to us about it. If the event is of secret or semi-secret status, and if little information is available on it, the picture which takes place in the mind is distorted at once. Furthermore as one attempts to fill in the gaps on the basis of insufficient data in order to complete the picture the resulting imaginings then become known as stereotypes, and a stereotype may be said to be^A simplified and often a distorted and rationalized concept of a group of persons, institution, or situation.¹

When an issue arises and a citizen forms an opinion about it, he seldom has the time, interest, or technical skill needed to garner the facts and the whole story about it even in favorable circumstances when essential facts are available. Instead there is likely to be too ready a reliance upon his personal acquired stereotypes to give him his cue. To be sure he knows something about the matter at hand. But that something is likely to be a stereotyped set of alleged facts steeped in unrecognized prejudices surrounding them. Too often these suffice. Consequently stereotypes simplify the complex world we live in and make it seem comprehensible and manageable and progressive. Stereotypes function also unwarily as defense and escape mechanisms inoculating us against the uncomfortable

¹ Ibid., p. 81.

necessity of changing our minds.

Yet this world in which we live is not necessarily the world we want it to be. It is simply the kind of a world we know and which we readily become contented with, adjusted to, and off-guard may inevitably expect it to be. For after all this stereotype kind of a world saves us time and might even become what might be described as a handy intellectual tool if we are not constantly on our guard. It tends also to preserve us from the hustle and bustle and confusion of a bewildering world and aids us in finding pat solutions to personal and public problems almost instantaneously without provocation. Yes, our opinions are influenced by the folkways, and the mores and the morals of the world or worlds which surround us and of which we are members and which we permit to become our own moralized and rationalized codification of facts along with an inclination to be too¹ prone to accept at face value.

Public opinion has often been generated and communicated by two extremes alternating methods. One, the application of physical force and, two, the method of persuasion through the use of symbols as illustrated by the written and spoken word. The resort to the use of physical force as a method by which a group is compelled to believe something is so alien to the "American

¹
Ibid., p. 126.

way" that it can be dismissed at once. The assistance of the alternative method is therefore seized upon to do the "trick." In the skillful enlistment of this latter method ulterior motives do not come under suspicion. The application of this unsuspected ruse is orderly, painless and presumably gives evidence of a respect for the personality of those appealed to. Prostitute the language "to this thing" you want to "get across" and that will take care of it. It will also help to dramatize it, pantomime it, parade it, surround it with ritual and audio-visual sugar-coated broadcast and brochure.

Language is the chief means for shaping public opinion and the clever use of it becomes the most reliable method for winning converts to a particular point of view without arousing emotional recoil. American newspapers in the first two decades of the twentieth century illustrate the truth of this claim as an incontestable means in both moulding and controlling the minds of their readers. When it is realized they comprised the only¹ reading material for ninety per cent of the American people during this period we sense immediately the power that they wielded over the minds of men, with each new addition suppressing or playing up pet angles in behalf of a capitalistic order which might need a little "pruning" or "trimming" here and there, but

¹ Peterson, H. C.: Propaganda for War-- The Campaign against American Neutrality, 1914-1917, p. 7.

not very much, in order to usher in the utopia just ahead. Thus have the owners and the hirelings of the press been guilty of finding ways of applying a self-imposed censorship by which they could preserve the status-quo, protect their vested interests and the monopolies of their friends and followers who approved their maneuvers. Here we have, of course, nothing less than a¹ deliberate attempt to propagandize and bamboozle the readers.

It is likewise well known that correspondents and editors are human beings and are consequently inclined to color the news according to their own ideas. It would be too much to expect them not to do so. With these two classes of writers in mind we can distinguish two so-called brands of censorship: 1. The deliberate suppression of facts while pretending to give complete news coverage and 2. the unintentional circumventing of them. We have here what might be called then the two chief tools at the disposal of propagandists. And we must hasten to add that there are many times when the unconscious influences operating are more effective than the deliberate efforts to produce the coveted² ends.

The three questions which are posed for us in the sequence are: 1. Is the information fed to us distorted or not?; 2.

¹

Lasswell, op. cit., p. 38.

²

Riegel, Robert E. and others; An Introduction to the Social Sciences, p. 1078.

Can we judge satisfactorily the motives behind the news presented?; and 3. Is the news distorted deliberately or unintentionally?

Such questions imply the primary reasons why propaganda provides no satisfactory guide to one who desires to weigh honestly and seriously the reliability of the information and the arguments used to bolster up the news administered. Propaganda as such, over and over again, becomes little more than a synonym for "lie."

Consider as well that propaganda is sometimes defined to mean the presentation of one side as against the giving of both sides. But is it right for one to teach what he believes at long last to be untrue or dangerous? Such a definition may be requiring that one should do the very thing he is later condemned for doing. In other words, is it not true that at times one is obliged to distort the news fed to him in order to teach the truth? But be that as it may the word propaganda still remains a word to be used to discredit the information and arguments with which one disagrees. Nor will it be amiss to recall that the word is used to describe the entrance of ulterior motives. In short, the word is inextricably intertwined with all information and activities, oral, written and pictorial, designed to influence and inflame another person's opinion or actions, and honestly requires the admission that all definitions of the word are often too academic for the many, since the few, have too often no scale of values other than those connoted by the words "good" and "bad."

Consequently, "propaganda," because of the uncertainties

involved pertaining to the ordinary accepted virtues, becomes a smear word standing for something unreliable, something if you please, ~~which~~ one does not want to have dealings with. It is a word in ill repute. It is used to discredit proposals, motives and actions of people with whom one, for one or more reasons, disagrees. Thus people rarely admit or consider themselves to be propagandists or the things that they think, say, write and do¹ to be propaganda.

An infallible method of measuring and summarizing public opinion has not as yet been perfected although many are the gestures made in this direction by individuals or organizations in which a pure precipitate of public opinion is vital to their interest. The statement of the leader of the group may be the opinion of the majority represented, but it is seldom the² opinion of everyone in the group.

There are incidents of the past which seem to prove conclusively that one hypnotic leader, without the enlistment of what is referred to as scientific analysis (especially in the field of politics) senses the pulse of public opinion sooner and more accurately than the application of the most scientific methods known to-date. It is also possible that leadership of this kind might be used to swing people into line and on to the band-

¹ Riegel and others; op. cit., pp. 1080-1082.

² Lippman, op. cit., p. 3.

wagon totally unaware of what they are headed for. In this form the one-sided spokesman of a small segment of the population may be knowingly or unknowingly a "tool" of the propagandist.

The rise of public opinion as a significant political and social force dates back to the eighteenth century. It is closely identified with the rise of Middle-class democracy. In due time it became a fetish, blossoming out in the expanding grasp of democratic desires to impregnate the minds of the peoples of Western Europe and America during the last two hundred years. Other familiar associates are: progress, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Of these, freedom of the press and freedom of public opinion are intimately linked together in their history and this interrelatedness contributes to one of the difficulties in distinguishing between public opinion and the "news." With the rise of the printing and newspaper industries it was but a short step for newspaper proprietors to proclaim that their journals reflected the¹ "public interest."

To repeat, the opinion of a single newspaper does not reflect the opinion of the hoi-polloi. It may be the opinion of the owner, editor or correspondent or the opinion of that small segment of the public which is vitally interested in the newspapers continuance and the furthering of vested interests known or unknown. A survey by a newspaper, in the period under consid-

1

Wilson, Logan and Kolb, William: Sociological Analysis, (Lee, Alfred McClung, Public Opinion in Relation to Culture) p. 310

eration reflected, for example, only a rough approximation of public opinion at best, but no more, for, at that time we had no device for measuring the opinion of a whole nation's population with any degree of accuracy. Neither did the surveys such as those conducted by the Literary Digest reflect the concerted opinion of the entire country when they were made. They often only reflected opinions of different newspapers throughout the nation. And, to be sure, there is the remote possibility that the individual newspaper reflected the correct opinion of the whole area to which it catered, but the chance of this being the case was very slight. Again there is the possibility that the newspaper was powerful enough to form and control public opinion within a certain area at a certain time, due to the fact, let us say, for example, that the newspaper comprised the sole reading material for ninety per cent of the American people during the period, 1914-1917.¹ But such conclusions are subject to correction.

The polls undertaken by the Literary Digest during the above mentioned period of our neutrality were forerunners of our more elaborate polls today. Then, there was no breaking down of the population into classes, either economically or socially. When the general public was polled the list of names came either from the Digest's own mailing list or from the telephone directory or some other more or less comparable listing. Nor did the poll consider the full range of possible opinions in a complex society and whether these ideas had been jelled to the place

¹
Peterson, op. cit., p. 7.

where they could be said to be based on abiding convictions. Besides the opinions recorded from such polls were too few in number, too shallow in depth and consequently altogether unreliable. However, the inaccuracy of these polls should not be charged to a false accounting of the organization conducting the poll. In the case of the Literary Digest it must be remembered, in fairness, that the magazine was attempting to break new ground and to secure a whole nation's opinion with the only known instrument at hand. In this case the editor was not a social scientist or a politician but a business man intent on trying to devise a sound method of polling the nation to detect its pulse for the benefit of the readers of his magazine. This step marked the birth of that which has since developed into what we now believe to be a "scientific instrument," even though the public opinion polls in vogue today likewise have their weaknesses.¹

The more or less scientific poll of today however takes cognizance of the ideological differences that have come to play such a tremendous role in American politics, and today's authorities in this new endeavor realize the potential danger here and are now engaged in experimenting with more and more reliable tools capable of measuring the intensity and breadth of the opinions held. The progress that has been made through the use of batteries of related questions have shown that "frames of reference...
...relatively firmly rooted" in "personal values" are credited

1

Wilson and Kolb, op. cit., p. 321.

with obtaining "essentially the same results" from different types of questioning from different points of view. Such an elaboration of the questioning process may lead eventually to a reliable recording of the sentiments involved and a recognition of the important part they play in a more inclusive tabulation of public opinion. And it is a long step between the expression of a socially acceptable tolerant opinion and literally being more considerate of another's religious and racial loyalties in the give and take of everyday living.¹

So despite the knowledge that no instruments were available in 1914 to gauge accurately the opinion of the American people we are reasonably safe in saying that at the outbreak of the European struggle they favored a policy of neutrality. They seemed determined to stand by that policy. Having said this we must also readily admit that there is no short cut to the arriving at such a conclusion in an effort to discover why the American people, detesting war and in favor of staying out of it, did enter it. Here emerges the necessity for looking at the social, economic, and religious sources and causes, stereotypes and ideologies if we would know and be assisted in solving the problems confronting us today.

¹
Loc. cit.

II. THE COURSE AND ACTION OF FOREIGN PROPAGANDA.

Section one: The theory of propaganda.

Section two: Reality.

Let any man speak long
enough, he will get believers.

Stevenson

The Master of Ballantrae

THEORY

The act of persuasion, known today as the art of propagandizing, is as old as history but it was not until the present century that it became known as an art or trade. In the complex world of today we are continually attempting to "swing" votes and power to our own trend of thought and the use of propaganda is now very commonplace. The use of propaganda to indoctrinate and to prosecute a war has made it an everyday term.

There are basic fundamentals that must be followed in all propaganda. One is to adhere to the truth as close as possible. Another basic idea is to arouse the interest of specific groups and a third is to nullify inconvenient ideas, always remembering too, that to secure a wide appeal one should use straight-forward manner or style. It should be written or spoken in a simple style so that it may be understood by the "man on the docks, or the peddler on the street corner." Paul Goebbels stated that propaganda must always be essentially simple and repetitious, for in the long run the successful propagandist is the person who is able to "reduce problems to the simplest terms and who has the courage to keep forever repeating them in this simplified form despite the objections of the intellectuals."¹

The strategic aims or four major objectives of Allied propaganda were:

¹
The Goebbels Diaries, p. 119.

1. To mobilize hatred against the enemy.
2. To preserve the friendship of Allies.
3. To preserve the friendship, and if possible, to procure the cooperation of neutrals.
4. To demoralize the enemy. 1

To mobilize hatred against an enemy the propagandist must first accuse him of being quarrelsome, crude and destructive. He is degenerate in his conduct of the war and conducts a lying propaganda. Then call him names and picture what the world would be like if the enemy did happen to be victorious. The war can also be represented as a war of race or as a holy war. The enemy invariably mobilizes first against a defenseless nation, either openly or secretly, and commits acts of war. The enemy further incriminates himself by endeavouring to maneuver our government into the position of an aggressor and by doing this he stands on a record of lawlessness, violence and malice, which offers unassailable proof of a deliberate intent to maim or destroy our great nation. To further his cause and build up this hatred the propagandist attempts to convince the public that his nation has entered the struggle to save business, family and church, and to add to prosperity, security and faith. Thus the enemy becomes the enemy of each and every one of us.²

Similar tactics can be used regarding allies, with whom ties of friendship should be preserved. The propaganda to bring

¹ Lasswell, op. cit., p. 195.

² Ibid, pp. 47-70.

this about may include constant assertions of respect and demonstrations of esteem, such as observing the allies' chief holidays. In seeking to influence neutrals the propagandist must introduce to the neutral the idea that his enemy is the neutral's enemy, and thus get the neutral to identify himself with the war aims of the propagandist.¹

The demoralizing of the enemy is chiefly accomplished, of course, by defeating him in the field. But the propagandist's part is to convince a nation that its troops are wavering. Leaflets and other printed propaganda may have little effect, but when one's own nation's events make propaganda read as a lie,² national demoralization sets in.

It must be emphasized that a group cannot be sure that its efforts will accomplish the desired results, as propaganda has definite limitations. The willingness of the people to believe, brought about by other influences in their environment which have been so strong that their thinking patterns are set, destroys its effectiveness.³ Finally, its effects are limited by counter-propaganda, which may be considered as the propaganda of the opposing faction.⁴ Propaganda is also limited in its inability to control

¹
Ibid., pp. 114-126.

²
Peterson, op. cit., preface.

³
Riegel, R. E., op. cit., p. 1087.

⁴
Ogburn, William F. and Nimkoff, Meyer F.: Sociology, p. 298.

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lists of war aims were pointed largely at home audiences but such statements were also intended to influence neutral opinion.¹ The various classes of American society had to be influenced but without antagonizing other classes. Social reform may be held out to wage-earners but middle-class people are likely to give their approval to war aims of a political or juristic character.

"If the problem of reconstructing the world is to be shorn of an apparent class bias, it must be conceived as a problem of a politico-juristic nature, for talk about world legislatures and courts tends to ingratiate itself where proposals for the administration of raw materials by world action, and for the use of the world taxing power to level up existing inequalities of opportunity are suspect."²

The League to Enforce Peace (1914-1919) is the best example of this branch of successful propaganda to arise during the period of our neutrality.

The active propagandist is certain to have a helping hand from everybody with an axe to grind. Those groups who do not take action immediately can be brought into the realm of the propagandist gradually, without their direct knowledge, by bringing to light those things which are of special interest to the group. To the economic and ecclesiastical groups already referred to could be added a constellation of artists, scientists, teachers, or sportsmen without end. The members of the talkative

¹ Lasswell, op. cit., p. 59.

² Ibid., pp. 64-65.

professions who depend for their living on their ability to arouse emotions are practically indispensable.

Slowly but surely the successful propagandist brings his unsuspecting victims into the realm of imagining himself in the cold cruel war via one way or another. We must remember that most people are more interested in themselves than in anything else in the world. So when the propagandist has involved the public in the struggle to the extent that the welfare of the person depends on the outcome of the war, following the general¹ pattern placed before him, the propagandist has succeeded.

For a member of the general public who has been victimized this way it proves exceedingly hard to trace the connection between the responsible authorities and their propaganda. When drastic action by the government follows a heavy outpouring of propaganda and the officials are questioned as to their authority for such action, they may contend that the pressure of public opinion forced their hand. Thus it is a vicious circle once again;² one a slave to the other. So far as there are formulations of public opinion, legal rules cannot exist until public opinion has become fixed and settled, and cannot well change until public opinion has definitely changed. It follows that law is likely to

¹ Lippman, op. cit., p. 178.

² Read, James Morgan: Atrocity Propaganda, p. 17.

lag somewhat behind public opinion whenever the latter is active and growing.¹ Thus the necessity arises for the government to mould the opinion of the public until the public demands that the measures proposed by the authorities are made law.

The successful propagandist is the one who can create confusion among his victims and out of this confusion mould their minds to do his bidding in an unsuspecting manner. He must be careful not to let the confusion lead to mob-violence where this might cause antagonism to all that he is attempting to create in their minds. Dividing their thoughts and then conquering them by directing their thoughts into the channel he has prepared² is his main attack. Mobs can also create fear and thus be good propaganda at times.

The minds of the general public must be made to justify their part in the struggle. This is brought about by the general wish of all mankind that good be triumphant in the universe. It must, therefore, be that one's own nation is vindicating the right against the wrong. In the very act of delivering the blow the nation calls for unity and victory. It is the business of the propagandist to amplify and repeat the call. Then as right makes might, the mind assumes the idea that we are struggling with the enemy in the name of peace and security. This is the

¹ Ford, James: Social Problems and Social Policy, p. 897.

² Gillette and Reinhardt, op. cit., p. 643.

greatest war aim and in it the public finds the "peacefulness of
being at war."¹

"When the public believes that the
enemy began the war and blocks a perm-
anent, profitably and godly peace, the
propagandist has achieved his supreme
purpose." 2

-0-

¹ Lasswell, op. cit., pp. 54-58.

² Ibid., p. 77.

ACTUAL PRACTICE

Every nation in the war tried to procure the friendship and, if possible, the cooperation of the United States. But Great Britain, worldly wise from the experiences gained through the governing and controlling of her great empire, had an early start in the attempt to mould the American mind. In a sense this headstart was not brought about by direct propaganda but by friendly incidents in international relations. One incident involved the Venezuela boundary dispute in 1896 which threatened war between the two English speaking nations in the application of the Monroe Doctrine. When the action became public, prominent men in both countries threw their weight to the side of conciliation. Joseph Chamberlain, an influential member of the cabinet, expressed official British opinion when he declared in a speech in Birmingham in January, 1896, "We do not covet one single inch of American territory. War between the two nations would be an absurdity as well as a crime. I should look forward with pleasure to the possibility of the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack floating together in defense of a common cause sanctioned by humanity and justice."¹

Further cementing of Anglo-American friendship was fostered by an incident at the Battle of Manila Bay, when the

¹ Bemis, Samuel Flagg: A Diplomatic History of the United States, p. 421.

British fleet (as the newspapers reported it) checked a possible German intervention.¹ (This story was much exaggerated, but had influence.) At any rate, British diplomacy favored American policy during the Spanish War and after.

Since the turn of the century America had been favored with a stream of anti-German propaganda from Great Britain. Since American newspapers rarely maintained correspondents on the continent their foreign news came by way of London, where it was highly colored by the anti-German policies of The Times and other British newspapers, most of it emanating from newspapers owned or controlled by Lord Northcliffe.²

This headstart of fifteen years in the battle of propaganda stood Great Britain in good stead. Their immediate problem at the outset of war was to assure themselves of the support of the leaders of American life, and in this regard they were

¹ Rhodes, James Ford: History of the United States, Vol. 9, p. 160.

²

Lord Northcliffe, (1865-1922) in 1908 obtained control of The Times, to own which had always been one of the aims of his life. From 1900 onwards, through his newspapers, he had exercised an ever-increasing influence on politics. He had at one time been anxious, like Edward VII, and Cecil Rhodes, to obtain a friendly understanding between England and Germany, but German policy during the Boer war caused him to abandon the idea as impracticable. His newspapers consistently pleaded the cause of a strong navy, and as consistently warned the nation for 20 years of the peril from Germany. From 1902 he sought to effect an entente with France, and also to promote agreements with Russia and the United States, whose sentiments and prejudices he had learnt in many visits. Before the United States entered the war he was offered and declined the post of British Ambassador at Washington. He also owned the Express and the Daily Mail. The Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Ed. Vol. 16, p. 526.

fortunate. The American aristocrat was distinctly Anglophile. To assume a pro-British attitude was the "thing to do" among cultured Americans. This was accentuated by the fact that the economic aristocracy did most of its foreign business through London.¹ One of the Morgan partners, Thomas Lamont, stated: "Like most of our contemporaries and friends and neighbors we (J. P. Morgan and Company) wanted the Allies to win the war from the outset. We were pro-Ally by inheritance, by instinct, by opinion."²

At the beginning of the struggle to control opinion Germany possessed one advantage. Next to the British Isles, Germany had made the largest contribution to the American population. The greater number of German-Americans were of the second or third generation, men whose fathers or grandfathers had entered the country between the forties and the nineties of the last century and were now assimilated. After the United States entered the war they were patriotic, with only a small minority being traitorous, but previously they voiced pro-German opinions. Also unfriendly to the Allies were the Jews who had been persecuted by the Russians, England's Ally, and the Irish who could never³ forgive the British Empire for its subjection of Ireland. The

¹ Peterson, op. cit., p. 8.

² Time Magazine, Vol. XXVII, No. 3 (Jan. 20, 1936) p. 16.

³ Millis, Walter: The Road to War, p. 6.

Germans had conducted a form of propaganda, starting in 1902 when the Kaiser's brother, Prince Henry, visited America. A museum of German culture was established at Harvard; an exchange professor was sent to Columbia; a number of prominent Americans were given honorific ribbons to wear, but such feeble efforts made little headway against the British, and in 1914 American publicists with any views at all on foreign affairs were apt to¹ be rather pro-British and anti-German.

Many prominent Germans were aware of the task that faced the Fatherland without a stupendous propaganda campaign to counteract the flow of British words. One of these men was Dr. Ernest Daenell, a German University professor.

"Nothing has occurred in the past which America can charge against us, yet there is one tremendous obstacle, between America and Germany.

"We must overcome the peculiar historical feeling existing between America and England; for those Americans who are responsible for American politics and for the shaping of public opinion are of Anglo-Saxon extraction." 2

From the very beginning of the war, Germany, like all of the warring nations, conducted a campaign of patriotic propaganda at home to keep up the morale of the German people and the troops. This work had been put into the hands of the "Kriegs-

¹ The Literary Digest, Vol. XLIX; No. 21 (Nov. 21, 1914) p. 1010.

² Swain, Joseph Ward: Beginning the Twentieth Century, p. 474.

presseamt", which had also the task of issuing the war news to the German press. This double duty resulted in a failure to organize an effective propaganda system in the Fatherland, since the "Kriegspresseamt" concentrated its efforts mainly on the war news.¹

The first move in the war of words occurred on August 5, 1914, when the British cut the cables between Germany and the United States, leaving the German government with wireless telegraphy as their only direct means of access to the American public.² The second move was the censorship of the press of England, and although directed against subversive activities throughout the Empire, indirectly affected American opinion as American news dispatches, handled by London newspapers, came under this censorship.³

The third move was the censorship of outgoing mail and cables to control information passing between Europe and America. Schreiner of the Associated Press estimated that at this time (1915) nearly three-quarters of the dispatches written by American correspondents in Central Europe were perishing under the shears of the British censors.⁴

¹ Bruntz, George G.: Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918, p. 194.

² Peterson, op. cit., pp. 4-12.

³ Ibid., p. 13.

⁴ Ibid., p. 16; see also Millis, op. cit., p. 147.

The first organization for the dissemination of British propaganda was a Neutral Countries Subcommittee, which, though begun on a private basis in August 1914, was taken over by the government's Central Committee (Central Committee for National Patriotic Organizations) the following month. The method of the subcommittee was as far as possible one of direct personal approach. Material was sent out, not in the name of the committee, but in the name of various distinguished Britishers, whose acquaintances, colleagues, fellow workers, or business associates in neutral lands received-- oftentimes unwillingly-- propaganda material prepared and sent by the committee. By this means every possible variety of interests in the neutral countries was reached. Some 250,000 pamphlets, booklets and other publications were thus distributed between August 1914 and January 1, 1916. The first official propaganda organization in England for activity elsewhere was the War Propaganda Bureau, established by the Foreign office in the latter part of 1914. It concerned itself with the distribution of leaflets, pamphlets and other material in Allied and neutral countries. This official organization was nothing more than the Neutral Countries Subcommittee under official government sanction and control. The director of the bureau was the Rt. Hon. C. F. Masterman, and its headquarters were at Wellington House, the office of the National Health Insurance Company. The existence of this committee was unknown to the general public, as it was thought best to attach as little publicity as possible to its operations at home and in Allied

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and neutral countries.

One distinguished English expert in this field wrote: "Better than any pumped-in propaganda abroad was the method of making the leaders of the Imperial, neutral or Allied press themselves the propagandists when they returned home." Not bribery but direct personal approach.² In England, "American journalists, publicists, authors, statesmen, greeters, and munition-makers" were courted assiduously. "Clubs were open to them and teas and dinners were given for them. The American wives of Englishmen, led by Lady Astor, formed a battalion of solicitude lest Americans in London became homesick."³ These native American propagandists were volunteers, some being individually enlisted in some cases, but in the main they were regimented into "soldiers of the king" by a process of eliminating, or at least curtailing, enemy interpretations of the war and by dominating the news with exaggerated and warped pro-Ally accounts of what was happening or had happened. Once these Americans had acquired the "correct" frame of mind, they were "enlisted" for the "duration of the war." The formal propaganda groups acted merely as connecting and reinforcing elements of the British propaganda organizations. The

¹ Bruntz, op. cit., pp. 19-21.

² Peterson, op. cit., p. 25 (Lord Beaverbrook, Politicians and the Press, London, 1927, p. 12).

³ Ibid., p. 27 (Palmer, Frederick, With My Own Eyes, p. 332).

real propagandists were the Americans-- our preachers, teachers,
politicians and journalists.¹

The first step in direct action propaganda or censorship to directly effect America occurred just six months before America entered the war, when the few remaining cables were closed to the Hearst newspaper syndicate and their correspondents expelled. This meant that all newspapers receiving their foreign news from the International News Service would have to conform to censorship or seek a new source of news. Hearst's London representative was instructed to tell him that the prohibition would be effective at once unless Hearst would give his personal assurance that all dispatches would be printed exactly as received after passage through the British censorship. When he heard the news Hearst said, "I am going to tell them to go to hell," whereupon the British made good their threat, giving as official grounds "the continued garbling of messages and breach of faith on the part of the International News Service." Hearst resorted² to the pirating of news from a rival press association.

From the partial studies which have been made of German propaganda one thing stands out clearly; it suffered from military control and ineffective organization. Professor Banse, the Nazi military specialist, attributes the superiority of

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Ibid., p. 32.

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Riegel, Oscar W.: Mobilizing for Chaos, p. 25.

English propaganda to the fact that it was run by civilians, the German by soldiers. "The latter is the wrong way, because it is not the soldier's but the psychologists' opinion that counts here."¹ H. D. Lasswell contrasts the strong coordination of the British propaganda system in the United States with the minimum of coordinated propaganda effort in Germany, where each department went ahead in its own way, and the only formal cooperation was² in the press conference, which met two or three times a week. Others do not agree that the German propaganda machine was defective. Sidney Rogerson maintains that "in 1914 Germany was the only power in Europe which had deliberately built up a national propaganda system. She had been at pains to ensure that news favorable to Germany was disseminated in as thoroughly organized a manner as she had organized her army, her navy, and her industry." Will Irwin holds much the same opinion, that German prop-³aganda had the advantage in the early days of the war.

But if one is to follow through on the splendid organization of German industry and military power, we shall discover that this very idea, organization, was skillfully used by British propagandists to undermine American opinion of Germany by making efficiency and organization synonymous with regimentation and

¹ Read, op. cit., p. 104.

² Lasswell, op. cit., p. 22.

³ Read, op. cit., p. 105.

autocracy and in conflict with the American ideal of freedom.

John Cowper Powys, staff lecturer on Literature for Oxford University Extension Delegacy, in his reply to Professor Munsterberg's¹ writings on German culture, used emotional language to undermine this American opinion of German organization.

"Let Americans who waver in their allegiance to the cause of the future of the human spirit because of Munsterberg's talk by 'Cossacks and their Progroms' and English and French with their 'colored races' think of the growth of their own republic. Let them think of those great principles of individual liberty, as against all government-machines, upon which the American ideal is based. Let them think of Jefferson and of Emerson, of Franklin and of Walt Whitman; and let them decide whether they prefer to live in a world dominated by over-drilled and over-bearing 'efficiency,' or in a world of free, instinctive beauty, and free, instinctive faith!"²

The Germans, according to the admission of numerous authorities, like George Sylvester Viereck, editor of The Fatherland, were most inept at propaganda. Further evidence of inefficiency is given by Count Von Bernstorff, German ambassador to the

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Hugo Munsterberg was a German-American psychologist and philosopher. He was in charge of the psychological laboratory at Harvard from 1892-1895. A few years later he became the head of the department of Philosophy at Harvard. He was the exchange professor from Harvard at the University of Berlin in 1910-1911. Became professor of Philosophy of Radcliffe College in 1916. One of the leading German sympathizers in America.

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Powys, John Cowper: The War and Culture, p. 79.

United States, Count Czerin, the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs during a part of the war and Kaiser Wilhelm himself. Those chiefly responsible for disseminating the doctrines of the Central powers in America were Dr. Bernhard Dernberg, formerly Secretary of State for the Colonies, who came officially as the representative of the Red Cross, and Dr. Heinrich Albert, attached to the Embassy as Commercial Attache. George Sylvester Viereck, as editor of The Fatherland, was already at work before the German propaganda machine commenced operations through the establishment of the German Information Bureau in 1915. With the help of various Germans, news releases were sent out to over 500 papers.

In December, 1914, Dr. William Bayard Hale, a former clergyman, who had been a journalist for many years as the literary editor of the New York Times and editor of the World's Work, was employed to prepare propaganda literature. He was a close friend of Woodrow Wilson. This bureau, which never had more than a dozen men in it, took care of the ordinary work of a propaganda organization. It published pamphlets, gave favorable support to authors desiring to publish books which were favorable to Germany, and later arranged for the release of some newsreels. It was realized, of course, that the newspaper was the most effective propaganda medium in the United States. Consequently, much attention was given to the problem of creating a more sympathetic

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Abrams, Ray H.: Preachers Present Arms, p. 19.

attitude in the press. The Germans were appalled by the attitude of American newspapers. The few friendly statements which were published were naturally unimportant in comparison with the flood¹ of articles which were unfriendly. Pro-German columns were conducted by H. L. Mencken, in the Baltimore Sun, and by Edmund von Mach in the Boston Transcript. First published in August, 1914,² The Fatherland was undiluted pro-Germanism. But these were drops in an ocean of pro-Ally propaganda.

German propaganda addressed itself primarily to groups from which it could expect a sympathetic response. It sought the old-fashioned American with Revolutionary traditions; the cotton grower of the South, almost bankrupted by the blockade; the Irish with a grudge against England; the Jew with a grudge against Russia; and last, not least, the German-American. The isolationists whose world ends with the Rocky Mountains lent a willing ear to the voice of the propagandists. The pacifists, except for those who regarded the Allied enterprise as a "war to end war," clasped hands with the pro-Germans to prevent Uncle Sam from increasing the ranks of the belligerents. The radicals cooperated for reasons of their own. Pacifism was the motive of some resentment against the capitalistic groups, the banks which loaned money to the Allies, and the munition makers whose war babies were skyrocketing in the stock market, influenced others; still others

¹ Peterson, op. cit., p. 137.

² Viereck, George Sylvester: Spreading Germs of Hate, p. 49.

were deliberately seduced by bribes.¹ At one time German propagandists in America agreed on a mailing list composed of all those listed in "Who's Who in America" in addition to all members of Congress and the state legislatures, but this was not carried out.² Later, in order to reach the intelligentsia, especially those Americans who had studied at German Universities, the Germans supported a new organization known as the University League.³ The aim of the University League was to be a nucleus of Kultur.

The German propagandists had the cooperation of the German-American Alliance, which was well organized in the German strongholds over the nation: St. Louis, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Milwaukee. There were numerous German social clubs and societies. The Kriegsbund was composed of those who had served in the German army. There were several veterans posts of the war of 1870. The Geneva Society was a specialized organization of German waiters. The Turner Societies and all sorts of benevolent organizations were thriving in every German district. The Lutheran Church was a strong asset of the Germans, for there were 6,000 congregations in the United States, whose communicants numbered some three million.⁴ The American Truth

¹
Ibid., p. 46.

²
Ibid., p. 57.

³
Ibid., p. 94.

⁴
Lasswell, op. cit., p. 150.

Society, headed by Mr. Jeremiah O'Leary, poured forth German propaganda under seemingly domestic auspices. The American Humanity League, the American Independence Union, and many other devotedly pacifistic organizations of dubious parentage were very active. On June 19, 1916, they held a great mass meeting in New York with Mr. Bryan as principal speaker, and with Representative Frank Buchanan, member of the House Committee on Naval Affairs, as another, and with diplomatic representatives of the Central Powers on the platform including Captains Boy-Ed and Von Papen,¹ who were German propagandists. A vast throng appeared and extra speakers harangued the overflow in the streets. Yet it did not help the embargo movements and had anyone learned that it was Captains Boy-Ed and Von Papen² who supplied the funds, it would probably have destroyed it.

The British propaganda on the conduct of the war was mostly based upon the appalling political stupidities committed by the Germans. Starting with the invasion of Belgium and ending with the Zimmerman note, the Germans committed a series of political blunders which were simply incomparable. New to the field of world power they had little appreciation of the fact that their acts had to be justified by something besides exped-

¹

Franz Von Papen, later German Chancellor and diplomat under Hitler, acquitted at Nuremburg trials, 1947.

²

Millis, op. cit., p. 203.

iciency. In the German attempt to sway American opinion they were hampered by their ignorance of American psychology. This rather than British cleverness swayed the balance of power towards the side of the Allies in the molding of American opinion. By judicious editing and rather specialized emphasis these German errors were turned into veritable acts of frightfulness. The emphasis on the fearful plights of "women and children" characterized all British propaganda, but Wellington House realized that this procedure could reach perfection only if it were made less abstract. The outstanding example of this type work was the Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages¹ which dealt with the Belgian atrocities. Due to the length of the original report it was later condensed into easier reading and in order that "mankind" might have access to it, it was put on sale at the nominal price of one penny. The tragedy of Edith Cavell, when given artistic treatment, came to be the second ranking

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James Bryce, 1st. Viscount Bryce (1838-1922), English statesman, jurist and author, was chairman of the British commission to study the stories of German outrages in Belgium and France. The character of the report of the commission (hereinafter referred to as the Bryce Report) helps to explain how inaccuracies and exaggerations so frequently crept into the text. Report itself was a booklet of 60 pages, the Appendix containing the proofs ran to 300 pages. Some 500 depositions were appended to the report, a selection from a total collection of 1,200. Most of the depositions were made by Belgian refugees in England, some from Allied soldiers and a small number were excerpts from the diaries of German soldiers. Actually not one clear-cut case of confessed "atrociousness" was in any of them, although many tell of the execution of alleged franc tireurs and more, of plunderings. Read, op. cit., p. 204.

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atrocities story of the war.

The German submarine warfare also brought the war home to America and made it possible for the Allies to claim that this was proof to substantiate their other claims of German barbarity. In spite of all mitigating factors, the sinking of the Lusitania was the most damaging of all the political errors made by the Germans during the war. It was disastrous to Germany because it was a striking and dramatic event. The spectacle of the innocent passengers made victims of German ruthlessness outweighed any actualities of contributory responsibility of the United States, Great Britain and the Cunard Company, or the dubious correctness of the American policy concerning traveling in the war zone. It branded Germany as the malefactor. The entire field of British propaganda was benefitted by this incident. The most marked advantage was gained with the Americans who had been enlisted or drafted as British propagandists. They saw a complete justification of their attitudes. The editors on the Atlantic seaboard lost their heads completely and all found it a type of sensation which sold their newspapers for them.

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The arrival of the German submarine Deutschland at Baltimore in July, 1916, received much attention in the American

¹ Peterson, op. cit., p. 51.

² Ibid., pp. 109, 125.

press-- which was well divided on the merits of such a mission. Slipping through the British blockade, the submarine announced itself as being here for the purpose of taking on badly needed supplies for the German government, but one can also imagine that it was here for propaganda purposes as the pay load of a submarine is very little even when compared with the smallest freighter. The Baltimore American believed that the incident was the beginning of "a new era in the world's marine history," and the Boston Journal declared it "man's greatest single victory over the sea." Other newspapers that could see value in the mission included the New York Globe which stated, "a pioneer, a merchant boat pure and simple," while the New Haven Journal-Courier believed the incident would aid the nation in remaining neutral.

But other representatives of the American press felt differently. The Brooklyn Eagle asked, "zeppelins next?" while the Springfield Union believed the incident would "avail them little," and the New York Sun considered it of little importance. The Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph stated ironically, "The Deutschland will carry at least 1,400 tons of nickel and rubber for the starving babies of Germany." The general summary of the press, towards the incident, proved that a slight majority of American papers commenting on the incident, had already made up their mind¹ as to whom they were supporting. German propaganda had a huge

¹
Lit. Dig. LIII; 4, (July 22, 1916) p. 169.

obstacle to overcome.

Even the retaliation of the British government, the blacklisting of American firms which had supplied the Deutschland, found much support in the press. The Brooklyn Eagle remained consistent in its stand, calling the British action, "justifiable" while the Journal of Commerce, a spokesman for American moneyed interests, believed that the firms were "run and controlled from Berlin." Fighting for what they considered the law of the sea and the rights of nations were the New York Evening Mail which considered the action as "violating a fundamental of international law" and the New York World which believed that "Britain was inviting retaliation." The German language papers fought the British with a huge flow of words, but to little avail.¹

Whether the German government discovered that their friendly visits to America were not having the desired effects and decided to change their policy is uncertain but on the morning of October 9, 1916, the American public was amazed to read that the U-53 commanded by Captain Hans Rose had penetrated the waters of Narragansett Bay and had sunk five ships almost within sight of the coast. Two of the ships belonged to neutral powers, Holland and Norway. This was the only effort of Germany to invade American waters. If this act was intended to scare America out of entering the war, it had had psychological direction, for in-

¹
Lit. Dig., LIII; 5 (July 29, 1916) p. 235.

stead of keeping America out of the war it proved to many the danger of German seapower.¹ The New York Evening Post stated, "in quarters close to the Administration the extension of the German submarine campaign to the Atlantic seaboard of the United States is regarded as constituting the gravest menace to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries which has appeared since the sinking of the Lusitania."²

Not only did the Germans commit political blunders, they also failed in the first step of opinion formulation, that of meeting the public on the public's level. Ambassador Bernstorff complained of the inadequacy of the material sent to America from Berlin:

"The Press-service never succeeded in adapting itself to American requirements. The same may be said of most of the German propaganda which reached America in fairly large quantities since the third month of the war, partly in German and partly in not always irreproachable English. This, like the Press telegrams, showed a complete lack of understanding of American national psychology. The outstanding characteristic of the Average American is rather a great, even though superficial, sentimentality. There is now news for which a way cannot be guaranteed through the whole country, if clothed in sentimental form." 3

Another mistake of the German authorities was in never

¹ Allen, George H. and others: The Great War, Vol. 4, p. 428.

² Lit. Dig., LIII, 17 (October 21, 1916) p. 1015.

³ Lasswell, op. cit., p. 34 (Bernstorff, My Three Years in America, p. 53).

fully appreciating the absolute necessity of counter-acting anti-German feeling in the new world. Propaganda was underestimated too long, the organizations which were handling it were inadequate, and the material issued was never sufficient. Upon his return to Germany, Von Papen reported to General Falkenhayn:

"General, if you do not succeed in keeping the United States from joining the coalition of our enemies, you will lose the war; on this point there can be absolutely no doubt. The enormous material and moral resources at the disposal of the United States are so wholly underestimated here that in my opinion it is above all things essential to enlighten public opinion to an extent quite different from that which has hitherto been the case." 1

The Berlin authorities realized the problem and attempted to rectify their mistakes. In 1916 a syndicate dominated by Dr. E. A. Rumely bought the New York Evening Mail. Unsuccessful attempts were also made through Samuel Untermyer to purchase the New York Sun. The International, a monthly magazine of literature and comment, was bought in 1915. It, however, turned out to be an unsatisfactory investment. There is some suspicion that the Jewish paper, Die Wahrheit was financed with German funds. The most successful of the investments was the Fatherland, a weekly magazine edited by Viereck, but little was achieved by these efforts. The almost unanimous opposition of the American press could not be overcome.

1 Peterson, op. cit., p. 124.

2 Ibid., p. 139; for further information, see, Pearson, Drew: Washington Merry-Go-Round, June 12, 1948, The Clarksburg Telegram, Clarksburg, West Virginia, p. 7.

But despite their bad start, the German authorities did learn one lesson-- by 1916 there were few political blunders. The British also found it impossible to arouse any new indignation over German activities in the United States, since the propaganda and sabotage work of the latter had been practically eliminated. The Germans also took advantage of a new method of transmission, the radio, and sent full reports of American correspondents in Berlin and on the German fronts.¹

The Germans on the field of battle were also beginning to supply counter-propaganda by stopping the Allied victory drive which had been foretold with reams of words. The best the British could now do was to boast that the Germans had not defeated them.²

The first big German campaign in America was to defeat the initial loan to the Allies and the pro-Germans adopted the picturesque device of having sandwich men parade in front of Mr. Morgan's office, warning against the loan. German-Americans threatened to boycott banks and insurance companies investing in the Anglo-French loan. In several cities, especially Milwaukee, this agitation, aided by the National German-American Alliance, by the American Truth Society and others, seriously interfered with the handling of the bonds. However, the very fact that the pro-Germans took such an active part in the campaign against the loan

¹ Seymour, Charles: Woodrow Wilson and the World War, p. 160.

² Peterson, op. cit., p. 242.

intensified the activities of the pro-Allies in its favor.¹

An attempt to influence Congressional action involved the program of the Embargo Conference which was organized by the German propaganda bureau to bring a halt to the shipping of munitions. About 250,000 messages were sent to Congress and J. J. Tobias, of the Friends of Peace, a kindred organization, emphasized this threat by stating publicly that five million Teutonic voters were going to "raise hell" with any party not in favor of this proposed embargo.²

One of the most subtle forms of propaganda and also a new idea in propaganda was the use of motion pictures among foreign-born munition workers. The picture financed by the Austro-Hungarian government showed Austro-Hungarian workmen making shells which might kill their relatives on the other side of the ocean. In one scene the munition factory burns down. The fire is attributed to a rival manufacturer, but the suggestion is obvious. However, no sentimental appeal could compete successfully with high wages.³

The Germans, first to use atrocity stories, failed to propagate them successfully.⁴ The German authorities were quick to

¹ Viereck, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

² Ibid., pp. 100-101.

³ Ibid., p. 103.

⁴ Read, op. cit., p. 73.

publish official reports establishing the "facts" of atrocities and undoubtedly convinced the German people, but they could not keep pace with the Allies in the battle for public opinion throughout the world. A major weakness in their tactics was the excessive time and energy they used in defending themselves against Allied atrocity charges; if the items on defense of atrocities in the German press were weighed against those on charges of atrocities, the former would probably predominate. The Allies, on the other hand, paid little if any attention to the German charges. Another weakness of German propaganda lay in the work of the official agencies. Atrocity reports were published by governmental departments and lacked the prestige accruing to the reports of Bryce in England or of the appointed commissions in France and Belgium, on which noted jurists and professors served. A third failing of the German atrocity propaganda was the absence of pamphlets and articles detailing the enemy crimes. The official reports were all large and unwieldy, completely unfitted for popular distribution and consumption. A fourth defect was the failure to translate them into the English language. Some of this was done, but very little compared with the flood of German atrocities released by the Allies. Of course the atrocity propaganda suffered, like all German propaganda, from the Allied control of the cables and news channels throughout most of the world. Still, much more could have been done in the circulation of pamphlets and brochures.

The German propaganda bureau did make one strong appeal to the American public which had favorable results. This was the

German discussion of British interference with American trade and mails. It was successful because it dealt with something of importance to the United States. Thus for once the Germans utilized the British practice of dwelling on community of interests, and for a moment convinced the American people that their desires were identical with those of Germany. The only other really successful German propaganda was that directed against the export of munitions. This was kept up over a considerable length of time and Americans agreed that the munitions trade was not righteous. The Germans failed to talk of sensations. They philosophized and expected the people to listen to reason.¹

The work of the German propaganda bureau was also hampered by official United States government representatives, with the stealing of Dr. Albert's portfolio in July, 1915, the prime example. The American explanation of the mystery of the purloined portfolio is furnished by W. H. Houghton of the United States Secret Service, in the Saturday Evening Post. An agent named Frank Burke was shadowing Dr. Albert on orders, saw him leave the portfolio and immediately picked it up. Whatever the facts in the portfolio mystery were, the Albert brief case was immediately turned over to President Wilson. The President entrusted the hornet's nest to Colonel House and photostatic copies found their way into the office of the New York World. The publication of the Albert papers was a German catastrophe. It dramatized German

¹ Peterson, op. cit., pp. 141-142.

propaganda. Henceforth the Allied propagandists could go as far as they liked. The stamp of propaganda was fastened upon the
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Germans.

Other governmental interference was the tapping of telephone lines from the German embassy and the recording of every telephone message from the German embassy to the outside world. The conversations between Embassy officials and their friends in New York were spiced with uncomplimentary references to high personages in the White House and the State Department.²

German activities in the United States were in themselves of no great importance in accomplishing the objectives for which they had been designed. The propaganda convinced few people who were not already adherents of the German cause; purchases were too small to make any great difference to the economic warfare of the Central Powers; the sabotage only delayed-- it did not stop the supplying of war materials to the Allies. These German operations were of consequence in that they gave British propagandists horrible examples in America which served to illustrate dramatically that the Germans were America's enemies and they were as evil as they had been pictured. The true significance of the German activities in the history of this period lies in the fact that the publicity given to them augmented greatly the

¹ Viereck, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

² Ibid., p. 109.

anti-German feeling among the American people.¹ Suffice it to say that the American people got the idea that the German people and the German government were two separate things, and that the German government was a menace to the world. The German propaganda, none too well received at first, was ruined further in its effectiveness by the sinking of the Lusitania. Minor misfortunes rocked the boat, but did not destroy it. The German propaganda craft was wrecked by German torpedoes. Whenever the propagandists had succeeded in inveigling public opinion against Allied aggressions, bang! -- another American ship would be blown up by a submarine.² The New Republic carried this idea to the extreme when it stated, ".... the German government cannot and does not care to understand the democratic view of the war."³ The finishing crash came with the exposure of the Zimmerman note-- "We cannot," said Viereck, "remain the friends of a country that is plotting to destroy our own."⁴

In the House of Commons twenty years after the war some straightforward comments on British propaganda were delivered by Mr. Harold Nicolson, ex-diplomat:

".... I do not want to be self-righteous, because in a national emer-

¹ Peterson, op. cit., p. 151.

² Viereck, op. cit., p. 59.

³ Baker, Ray Stannard: Woodrow Wilson Life and Letters, Vol. 6, p. 410 (New Republic, Dec. 30, 1916, p. 226).

⁴ Viereck, op. cit., p. 114.

gency we can be as untruthful as, or more untruthful than, anybody else. During the war we lied damnably. Let us be clear about that. (An Honorable Member: Splendidly?) No, damnably, not splendidly. I think some of our lies have done us tremendous harm and I should not myself like to see such propaganda again." 1

Much of the British atrocity propaganda was deliberate deception built upon erroneous reports and misleading impressions. The facts were frequently questionable, the interpretations misleading, and it was this kind of propaganda that Mr. Nicolson deplored. Nevertheless much of it was spread by people who sincerely believed what they were saying; their faith only added potency to the propaganda.² The best British propaganda was truth-- not necessarily the whole truth.

The British propagandists in carrying out their work followed certain general lines which might be called techniques. In part they were as follows; 1. They told only that part of the truth which benefitted their cause; 2. They utilized background material to imply things for which there was no evidence; 3. They exploited to the fullest the emotions and ideals of those being educated; 4. They gave their propaganda an aura of authority by using big names, by quoting their enemy, or by appealing to legality; 5. They made their arguments simple and eliminated all

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Read, op. cit., p. 187.

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Loc. cit.

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qualifying statements; 6. They used endless repetition.

There were a number of factors which contributed to the great success of Sir Gilbert Parker and his associates. In the first place, there was a pro-British attitude among leading Americans at the outbreak of hostilities. Secondly, their propaganda was unobtrusive. Viereck quoting a British propagandist stated: "We spoke your language. Our men merged with the crowd. They passed as Americans. In every newspaper office, in every great industrial concern, there were Englishmen whose national origin no one suspected or questioned."² In the third place, their principal enemy was a new rising nation with all the unpleasant characteristics nominally encountered in the newly rich and newly powerful. Finally, their control of the conventional channels of American opinion made it unnecessary for them to compete on an equal footing with the Germans.³ Sir Gilbert Parker admitted to the last of these reasons:

"Among other things, we supplied three hundred and sixty newspapers in the smaller states of the United States with an English newspaper which gave a weekly review and comment on the affairs of the war. We established connection with the man in the street through cinema pictures of the army and navy, as well as through interviews, articles pamphlets, etc.... We advised and stimulated many people to write articles.... we had re-

¹ Peterson, op. cit., p. 36.

² Viereck, op. cit., p. 122.

³ Peterson, op. cit., p. 33.

ports from important Americans constantly, and established association by personal correspondence with influential and eminent people of every profession in the United States." ¹

"Practically since the day war broke out," was Sir Gilbert's cheerful remark, "I was responsible for American publicity." ²

The Allied Propaganda, moreover, enjoyed the inestimable advantage of being self-financing. Our public clamored for the books, articles and motion-pictures films which conveyed it. Old established American publishing houses found it profitable, and did not think it unpatriotic, to enter into agreements with the Entente governments for the distribution of propagandist war books, and there was a huge trade in volumes on trench life from the French and British standpoint. Those who voiced the German side of the case found no such markets. The German representatives in the United States had to give financial assistance ³ to their outlets.

One of the lessons to be drawn from the success of British propaganda in the United States is the importance of per-

¹ Slosson, Preston William: A History of American Life, Vol. XII "The Great Crusade and After, 1914-1928", p. 9. (Sir Gilbert Parker: The United States and War, Harper's Magazine, CXXXVI (1918), p. 552).

² Millis, op. cit., p. 63.

³ Ibid., p. 202.

sons as means of carrying suggestion. The powers behind the impersonal agencies must be reached, and this is best managed by personal contact.¹

The most nearly perfect example of the British propaganda bureau taking advantage of sensations to attract the attention of the American public, concerned the famous Bryce report. Perhaps it was only a coincident that on the same day that the American public was notified of the sinking of the Lusitania, when the boiling indignation against Germany was at its height, that this report was dropped into the maelstrom. The Belgian atrocities, if not precisely forgotten, had been sinking into the background under the weight of an accumulating skepticism. The whole thing had been rather overdone. But with the Bryce report, published at just that emotional moment, every doubt was obliterated. There was no name in England which could have inspired more confidence in an American public than that of Lord Bryce; his six colleagues were only less impressive. "Proof,"² cried the New York Times, "now comes to hand."

The ~~Reasons~~ for the effectiveness of the Allied propaganda may be summed up in the words of an impartial historian, Carlton J. H. Hayes:

"Entente propaganda in the United

¹ Lasswell, op. cit., pp. 212-213.

² Millis, op. cit., p. 183.

States was even more general than that
of the Teutons; it was also more adroit,
more sympathetic, and more conformable
to American prejudices and American wishes." ¹

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¹
Abrams, op. cit., p. 19.

III. THE REACTION OF THE AMERICAN PRESS.

A newspaper is a private enterprise, owing nothing to the public, which grants it no franchise. It is, therefore, "affected" with no public interest. It is emphatically the property of its owner who is selling a manufactured product at his own risk.

Wall Street Journal

The newspaper field must not be overlooked in attempting to sift out the course of public opinion during the period of our neutrality, prior to the entrance of the United States into the First World War. During this period the daily journals comprised approximately ninety per cent of the reading material of the American public and, although we have no hard and fast proof for the belief, we feel that they were bound to have influenced the forming of many opinions. To the everyday reader, interested in the nation's welfare, the newspaper provided the doings and say^{ings} of the world, and the people as a whole might have said, with a famous American, "All I know is what I read in the newspapers."

Training in how to read the newspapers, knowing what difficulties in their compilation to allow for, detecting prejudice, supplementing daily news in the longer discussions to be found in magazines, are all part of the foundation of intelligent citizenship. The newspaper has its own task and function. There is no justification in making it, as it were, the scapegoat for failures of the community conscience. Yet newspapers are powerful weapons. Individual papers have been important if not the decisive influence on different occasions in actually bringing¹ about a war and in preventing wars.

¹
Libby, C. F. : The Press and World Peace, (The Causes of War), p. 182.

All the reporters in the world working all the hours of the day could not witness all the happenings in the world. Newspapers do not try to keep an eye on all mankind-- just certain spots. This makes the press agent or publicity man a valuable person who can present these spots in the most favorable or unfavorable light. Thus every organization with a desire to express an opinion becomes a wedge in placing its story in the paper.¹ Newspapermen have a feeling for words and moods and they know that the public is not convinced by logic, but² seduced by stories.

The swift interchange of threats among the Great Powers in the last week of July and the outbreak of hostilities in August brought the European crisis to the American front page. The New York Times in particular distinguished itself by printing in full the official British correspondence, running to more than a hundred documents, as soon as the British government made it available. From the outbreak of the war until the entrance of the United States made necessary a sort of military censorship, the American press continuously laid before its readers the fullest account of current events which could then

¹ Lippman, op. cit., pp. 338, 345, 377.

² Lasswell, op. cit., p. 32.

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be obtained anywhere in the world.

The general reaction of the American press to the European blood-bath was a "Thank God for the Atlantic Ocean." The Chicago Herald proposed a rising vote of thanks to Christopher Columbus. The New York Evening Post poured its contempt upon the three continental emperors, Francis Joseph of Austria-Hungary, Nicholas of Russia, and William of Germany-- "one of them senile, another subject to melancholia, and a third often showing signs of a disturbed mental balance"-- who had given the signal for the holocaust. "Our isolated position and freedom from entangling alliances," the Literary Digest summed up, "inspire our press with the cheering assurance that we are in no peril of being drawn into the European quarrel." ² American sympathies were divided, but opinion was united in the belief ³ that the United States could never be other than a spectator.

As many editors looked upon the situation they began to visualize incidents that might affect them in days to come. The St. Louis Republic stated, "As the shock of the present experience passes away the capital of the world will be invested in such quantities as never before in the industrial and commercial enterprises of a country 4,000 miles from the crossed

¹ Slosson, op. cit., p. 3.

² Hale, William Harlan: The March of Freedom. A Layman's History of the American People, p. 207.

³ Seymour, Charles: American Diplomacy During the World War, p. 5.

bayonets of Europe." The New York Commercial surveyed the scene stating, "If England can keep control of the seas our trade in breadstuffs and meats will be enormous and highly profitable, because Russia, the chief wheat grower of the world, will be shut in and the grain crops of the valley of the Danube will be practically destroyed." The New York Journal of Commerce viewed the situation differently, feeling that "higher prices for clothing because of wool imports shut off will be necessary and the same for rubber, copper and tin," while the Sun believed that the supply of women's fashions from Paris would be shut off.¹

On the other hand there was a widespread tendency on the part of the American press to hold Germany and her ruler largely responsible for the war. The New York Globe believed that "it is difficult to admit that German interests were menaced beyond reasonable tolerance.... American opinion is almost solidly arrayed against Germany as the aggressor, ruthlessly plunging Europe into what looks like the bloodiest of wars to satisfy the overwhelming ambition of the Emperor." But the New York Herald felt differently, believing that "the Kaiser up to the very last moment almost went down on his knees to Russia to induce her to desist from mobilization."² The staid

¹ Lit. Dig., XLIX, 7 (Aug. 15, 1914) pp. 256-257.

² Ibid., p. 254.

Times also believed the conflict was the "least justified of all wars since man emerged from barbarism....", seeing the Kaiser as the aggressor.¹ The Springfield Republican bending backwards to remain neutral "supposed" a parallel to Austria's case: "Suppose Texas filled with rebellious Mexicans anxious to secede to Mexico, and a President of the United States ~~Assass-~~²inated by a Texan affiliated with the Mexicans." But the Literary Digest expressed the common opinion "that while our trade will be stimulated, we will eventually share in the economic loss of such a disaster."³

From a survey of the American press at the beginning of hostilities it appeared that, out of a total of 367 editors, 105 admitted favor for the Allies and 20 for the German cause, the other 242 disavowing any preference. The feeling of the communities represented was given as pro-Ally in 189 cases, pro-German in 38, divided in 140. One might also feel that the editors were no different in choosing their favorite than the members of the community-- only more cautious in expressing an opinion. The expression of war-time sentiment was partly sectional. In both cases the Middle West was more pro-German than the East, the Far West or the South.⁴ The evaluation of the

¹ Lit. Dig., XLIX, 6 (Aug. 8, 1914) p. 215.

² Ibid., p. 216.

³ Ibid., p. 215.

⁴ Ibid., XLIX, 20 (Nov. 14, 1914) p. 939.

midwest was probably wrong with the pollsters mistaking neutrality for partisanship or taking the isolated instances of German-American citizens in Chicago and Milwaukee as representing the entire section. Sharp comment by eastern newspapers on the "pacifism" of the midwest provoked a corresponding sensitivity, an exchange which brought an amusing sequel, when, after the United States entered the war, western editors could show that recruiting proceeded most rapidly in the "pacifist" states.¹

Some persons urged from the start that the causes of democracy and civilization were so closely bound up with the fortunes of the Entente nations that it was the moral duty of the United States to join these powers in arms. But the country as a whole saw no possible course save neutrality, a policy dictated alike by present interest and by a century and a quarter of consistent practice. August 4, when five nations had entered the war, President Wilson issued a formal proclamation of neutrality, which was repeated as successive states entered the contest; and two weeks later he made a special appeal to his fellow-citizens to be "neutral in fact as well as in name.... We must be impartial in thought as well as in action...."² Wilson re-

¹ Lit. Dig., LIV, 11 (May 19, 1917) p. 1486.

² Ogg, Frederic Austin: The American Nation: A History, Vol. 27, National Progress, p. 329.

quested this "impartiality", fearing hyphenated influences when official neutrality was the obvious policy. Our foreign relations were based upon a theory or tradition of isolation, but economically we were entangled vitally in every part of the world. The government could assert its determined neutrality, for it had little politically at stake; but could American industry and finance be kept neutral?¹ The New York Times immediately reiterated the stand taken by the President stating, "It is a source of great comfort and satisfaction to feel that in such a time as this we have a President who knows so well how to do and say the right thing," and on October 16 they praised him again believing that President Wilson "has taken the exact stand and has expressed it with admirable accuracy."² Henry Watterson, in his own mind separating the German people from the German government, was anything but impartial to the government, as he wrote in the Louisville Courier-Journal, "May Heaven protect the Vaterland from contamination and give the German people a chance!³ To Hell with the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs."

In general, it may be said that throughout the nation the people listened to Wilson's proclamation of neutrality with great respect and probably intended to carry it out to the letter. But a sustained neutrality under the circumstances was too much

¹ Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, pp. 173-174.

² Ibid., pp. 95, 162.

³ Millis, op. cit., p. 67.

to expect. "Morally neutral the country never was," asserted John Dewey, "and probably the only stupid thing President Wilson did was to suppose, in his early proclamation, that it could be."¹ Another minor criticism of the President came from the New York Times, just four days after they had praised his stand. The staid Times believed that the President's "scholarly surroundings" persuaded him to take "too kindly a view of the good intentions of foreign nations."²

With the German invasion of Belgium the American press was suddenly flooded with atrocity stories. An answer to many of them came from a group of American newspapermen in Belgium who had been overtaken by the German advance and had continued thereafter with the German armies. Early in September a bundle of Allied and neutral newspapers fell into their hands; they were astounded and shocked by what they read concerning the operations they had just been witnessing. Harry Hansen, Irvin Cobb, John T. McCutcheon, Roger Lewis and O'Donnell Bennett dispatched a joint cable to the Associated Press:

"In spirit fairness we unite in declaring German atrocities groundless as far as we were able to observe. After spending two weeks with German army accompanying troops upward hundred miles we unable report single instance unprovoked reprisal.

¹ Abrams, op. cit., p. 21. (John Dewey, American philosopher and educator and long-time Columbia University professor.)

² Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 180.

Also unable confirm rumors proved groundless.... Discipline German soldiers excellent as observed. No drunkenness. To truth these statements we pledge professional personal word." 1

Moreover, the American consul-General at Antwerp telegraphed the State Department that positively no bodily harm had come to Belgian women and children in that city, although the precipitate execution of the expulsion order might have worked hardships on some of them. "In times like these, stories of terrible atrocities will crop out everywhere but let Americans keep cool and remember audiatur et altera pars." (the other party must also be given a hearing.) The State Department immediately answered Consul General Diederich informing him that "Our neutrality does not permit an expression of opinion by our diplomatic or consular officers." ² This State Department message might have been the extreme form of neutrality or the first hint that the Allies were our "secret champion" in the European struggle. Herbert Hoover, head of the Belgian Relief Commission, summed up the case of the Belgian deportations:

It is our belief that the brutality of the operation was largely the fault of the local commandants and lack of adequate arrangements for the reception and distribution of the evacuees. We do not believe any such brutalities were committed with intent of high authorities. We believe they

¹ Millis, op. cit., p. 68.

² Read, op. cit., p. 45.

honestly and expeditiously corrected the matter as far as they were able when it came to their attention, and we are informed that disciplinary measures were taken. We do not believe the stories of rape, or concubinage, etc., spread in the propagandist press.

"The incident is one of sufficiently terrible order, but as things go in this war it has resulted in less volume of human suffering than many other continuing barbarities in Europe." 1

"There has been nothing in the history of the German race," declared the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, "to lend credibility to stories of such atrocities." 2 The Milwaukee Free-Press, printed in a distinctly German-American district, protested against the "unfair and insincere" emphasis which our newspapers and magazines had laid upon the atrocity charges against Germany. It pondered "what these same publications would be doing if the French and English, or the Russians, were fighting on German soil, if they were besieging and taking German cities. The same destruction would be their lot...." 3

The first break in pro-Ally sentiment occurred in late September, 1914, when England, fighting desperately to halt the German war machine, began to halt American ships for searching. The Wall Street Journal, from the predominantly pro-Allied east, could find no fault in the action. "A conduct

1
Read, op. cit., p. 171.

2
Lit. Dig., XLIX, 11 (Sept. 12, 1914) p. 141.

3
Ibid., XLIX, 17 (Oct. 24, 1914) p. 777.

friendly and impartial does not make it the duty of the government to prevent its citizens from trading with any of the belligerent powers.... The risk is his own.... the loading and clearing from port."¹ But a week later when three American tankers¹ headed for Denmark were halted, some of the American reaction was violent. "A few more acts of piracy of this British kind," stated the New York Telegraph, "will force the American navy into action." But the New York Journal of Commerce talked calmness and felt "that there is nothing to get excited about." Complaining bitterly of the go-easy policy of the government, the Brooklyn Eagle remarked that "we need not expect any display of volcanic indignation from Washington." The ships were later² released following an official government protest.

On December 8, 1914, speaking to Congress, President Wilson stated that provision for voluntary military training should be extended, and that the organized militia of the states should be "developed and strengthened."³ The war in Europe had called attention to the small size of our army and here began an agitation for "preparedness." Wilson refused to become alarmed, suggesting merely improvement of the militia.

¹ Lit. Dig., XLIX, 16 (Oct. 17, 1914) p. 725.

² Ibid., XLIX, 18 (Oct. 31, 1914) p. 832.

³ Ogg, op. cit., p. 286.

The call for "preparedness" found the editors of the Literary Digest placing an opinion poll before American newspaper editors, requesting information as to what size our Army and Navy should be. Three questions were asked: 1. Are our national defenses adequate?; 2. Do you favor a stronger standing army?; 3. Do you favor a stronger standing navy?

The newspapers participating gave a slight edge to the preparedness plan. Two hundred and seventy-five felt that our defenses were inadequate with 119 believing them sufficient. Two hundred and forty felt that a larger army was necessary with 158 opposed and 285 favored a larger navy with 109 opposed. The Buffalo Times went so far as to state that "they could see a yellow peril arising," but the idea of Germany as¹ a potential enemy was not mentioned.

The following month another poll was taken, this time concerning the prohibiting of arms and ammunition to warring nations, as a means of halting the struggle and also of assuring our neutrality. Four hundred and forty newspapers replied with 224 stating "no," 167 favoring the prohibiting and 29 being non-committal. The answers from cities of 50,000 or over favored the selling of weapons of war and the smaller towns asked for prohibition by a small majority. The Digest stated "their votes

¹
Lit. Dig., L, 4 (Jan. 23, 1915) p. 137.

were backed by hundreds of reasons of all sorts."¹

A boiled-down version of American opinion in the early part of 1915, if the Literary Digest poll was accurate, seemed to show the general public for preparedness in case the program of neutrality failed. But also with the new year came the submarine war that brought the European struggle closer to the American fireside and was later to cause a general swing away from our neutral policy. The first American citizen to die from the direct result of German torpedoes was on the British liner Falaba. The editorial pages roared out their defiance of the act. "A crime against humanity," stated the Philadelphia Public Ledger and the New York Herald-Tribune labeled it "an assassination." The Journal of Commerce believed it "an atrocity against which the civilized world should protest with one voice," and the New York Post condemned it with one word; "piracy." The Washington Post calling for the public to remain calm, adopted a middle-of-the-road attitude and believed the action as bad for one side as the other.² Comment from the South and West on this incident was not carried by the Digest, in this or subsequent issues.

It was on May 1, that the Lusitania eased out of her berth in New York and began her last tragic voyage to Europe.

¹ Lit. Dig., L, 6 (Feb. 6, 1915) p. 225.

² Ibid., L, 15 (April 10, 1915) p. 789.

"Sails, Undisturbed by German Warning," declared the Times in a front page column. The passengers who were aboard could not credit the extremes of ferocity to which maddened nations could descend. They even commented lightly on the warning as "silly, tommy-rot."¹ But Friday, May 7, 124 American lives were lost with the Lusitania off the Irish coast.

The following day the morning papers were shouting the news in bigger and blacker headlines than they had used since the early days of the war, and their editorial pages were blazing with horror and indignation. "From our Department of State," cried the New York Times, "there must go to the Imperial Government at Berlin a demand that the Germans shall no longer make war like savages drunk with blood." The Tribune closed its philippic with an appeal to a moving passage in our history: "The nation which remembered the sailors of the Maine will not forget the civilians of the Lusitania!" Theodore Roosevelt leaped shouting into print; "This represents not merely piracy but piracy on a vaster scale of murder than old-time pirates ever practiced." From the violently pro-Ally Northeast the great wave of shock, outrage and denunciation spread throughout the newspapers, at least, of every part of the country. Only two English-language papers in the United States-- one in St. Louis and the other in

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Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 323.

Milwaukee-- could be found defending the sinking. The Memphis Commercial-Appeal was ready "to consider a declaration of war." from Louisville the voice of Henry Watterson thundered in vivid imagery:

"Truly, the Nation of the black hand and bloody heart has got in its work.... The decree of Satan went forth from Berlin, The instruments of Satan were forged at Essen. There was but a single Satanic abatement. Satan's ambassador at Washington-- shameless in his infamy, under the sign manual of Satan's Embassy, insolent in its disregard of law or consequences-- gave warning.... Shall any just man say that Count Von Bernstorff is not guilty of murder? This holy Sabbath every pulpit in America should send a prayer to God in protest.... and more than all the Christian president of the United States, a cool and brave man, sprung from a line of heroes and saints-- ceasing longer to protest, should act, leaving no doubt.... that he is a leader of men and nations and that he holds aloft the Sword of the Lord and Gideon."

"Condemnation of the act," as the editors of the Literary Digest were forced to leave it, "seems to be limited only by the restrictions of the English language." The language had hardly given out before the pencils of the cartoonists were reinforcing it with every kind of stirring and terrible visual appeal. The preachers sprang to follow Marse Henry's advice. A few, like Bishop Greer, could urge the nation to think calmly; more typical was the cry of the Rev. John Henry Jowett that "it is a colossal sin against God and it is premeditated murder." The New York Sun felt that the loss of the

Lusitania, "was no different from the other sinkings except in size, but realized that a lot more excitement had been created."¹

But the reaction of the Northeast was not the reaction of the nation. Secretary of Agriculture, David F. Houston, happened to be in California when the disaster came. He was to meet a delegation of Los Angeles business men that morning; the Secretary was full of the news, but the business men merely "talked for a few minutes about the tragedy without excitement" and did not mention the subject again through the rest of a long morning. "Nor did any reporter of any local newspaper seek to interview me on the matter," though Mr. Houston was one of the most influential members of the Cabinet. "No citizen brought it up during the remainder of my stay in the West which lasted several weeks."² The overwhelming consensus appeared to be that the President should instantly compel Germany to disavow, to make reparation and to abandon her submarine war, but at the same time making sure not to get the United States into trouble. "The American people," as the Savannah News observed, "don't want their government to be placed in the position of retreating from any position it has taken."³

¹ Lit. Dig., L, 20 (May 15, 1915) p. 1133.

² Millis, op. cit., p. 174.

³ Ibid., p. 175.

Wilson's attempt to preserve calm was criticized by some. Three days after the sinking of the Lusitania, President Wilson addressing 15,000 recently naturalized citizens in Philadelphia, stated: "There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight. There is such a thing as a nation being so right that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right."¹ The New York Times expressed the solemn opinion that "this utterance of the President does not respond to the feeling of the people." The White House was flooded instantly with telegrams of condemnation; and before the swift storm of elegant disapproval the President was weak enough to announce that the speech had been made without reference to the Lusitania. The loyal World hastened to express its relief at this disavowal. "We have a pride that will make us fight," it said, "Let there be no illusion on this score in Berlin or elsewhere."² Henry Cabot Lodge, prominent member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and political opponent of the President, felt that the statement "shocked him the same as many others and I never again recovered confidence in Mr. Wilson's ability to deal with the most perilous situation which had ever confronted the United States, in relations with the other nations of the earth."³

The note of President Wilson following the sinking of the Lusitania stated that he would hold the Germans to strict

¹ Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 334.

² Millis, op. cit., p. 178.

³ Lodge, Henry Cabot: The Senate and the League of Nations, p. 32.

"accountability" and his firmness, untouched by hysteria, seemed to meet public favor. The second note was more severe and caused Secretary of State Bryan's resignation.

Public reaction to Bryan's resignation was divided. The Mobile Register stated; "If Germany is misled into actions still further violative of our rights, the resultant hostility will be largely attributable to Mr. Bryan, whose sole idea is peace", and the Philadelphia Record sarcastically added, "The biggest popular vote he will ever receive will be in endorsing his resignation." But in the West and Southwest Bryan was given the benefit of the doubt. The St. Louis Republic added, "American people will not fail to give Mr. Bryan full credit for his sincerity, his patriotism, his good spirit, but in the issue now joined the country is with the president." The Socialist New York Call condemned the capitalists with a sweeping statement. "The DuPonts and Schwabs have at last pried from President Wilson's cabinet the last piece of timber that resolutely barred the door against war."¹

It was at this time that the French and their position² in world affairs were placed before the American public. The Outlook for May 12, 1915, carried an article entitled, "Plain

¹ Lit. Dig., L, 25 (June 19, 1915) pp. 1449-1450.

² The Literary Digest carries no report on American action towards France in the same manner or style in which Great Britain is criticized. Reports are of a general nature dealing mostly with her war effort.

Words from America to Sister Nations in Europe," by "Civis Americanus." To France the writer said:

"We shall never forget your friendship and help in the days when we won our freedom.... We cannot see that this war is in any way one of your choosing or of your making. No threat of yours, no claim of yours, entered into the witches cauldron.

"You have not talked much, but you have fought well. You have suffered enormously, but you have not lost your nerve. Your silent General, your silent soldiers, your sober self-sacrificing people have made a splendid record." 1

France received further praise from Wayne MacVeigh in the North American Review for July, 1915. MacVeigh stated:

"I know nothing more sublime in all history than the passion for liberty which animates today the children of France in their combat for their country and for the world against the crushing forces of Attila's Huns." 2

France was praised frequently for not carrying on the campaign of propaganda that Britain and Germany had undertaken; she was praised for sharing American ideals of democracy; she was praised because her action had disproved notions current in America of her decadence, corruption, and instability. The Philadelphia North American on July 7, 1915 stated that they were surprised to find her so "quiet" and "stubborn."

".... the stirring thing is that France the frivolous,

1 White, Elizabeth Brett: American Opinion of France, p. 273.

2 Loc. cit.

France the debonair, France the carefree and laughterloving, has met the supreme ordeal of her existence in a manner to teach the whole world lessons of steadiness, of sobriety, of dogged courage, of concentrated efficiency, and of uncomplaining sacrifice."¹

Henry Watterson had a kind word for the French.

"I have not loved Paris as a Parisian, but as an American.... I used to love to go there and to behold the majesty of France. I have always known what all the world now knows, that beneath the gayety of the French there burns a patriotic and consuming fire, a high sense of public honor; a fine spirit of freedom.... Alone they did it-- the French people -- the hard-working, frugal, loyal commonalty of France-- without asking the loan of a sou from the world outside." 2

Proof that the American press could still see both sides of a problem when so desired, occurred in June, 1915, with the announcement that Italy had entered the war on the side of the Allies. "Cold-blooded calculation," remarked the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Washington Post saw "territorial covetous" as the reason. The Augusta Chronicle called the action "treachery" and the New York World remarked that "Morally she stands with Germany. Both tore up treaties of international significance." The Milwaukee Free-Press called the entry one "of the blackest chapters of the war" and the New York Post stated, "That it must be assumed that the Allies outbid Germany."

¹ White, op. cit., p. 273.

² Watterson, Henry: Marse Henry an Autobiography, Vol. 2, p. 69.

Few papers defended the action of the Italian government, despite her linkage to the Allied cause.¹

Col. Edward M. House, personal advisor to President Wilson, writing to Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Minister, June 17, 1915, summarized American public opinion:

".... the vast majority of our people desire the President to be very firm in his attitude towards Germany and yet avoid war. They have told me that in their opinion the country was willing to accept the consequences."²

A like opinion was expressed by several newspapers the same month, following the announcement that additional American lives had been lost with the sinking of the British liner, Arabic. In the East the New York World announced that "every passenger ship, regardless of flag flying, presumably carries American citizens," while the Tribune believed that it was "time to act; without delay give the German ambassador his passport." The West also backed the East with the Phoenix Republican, the Cheyenne Leader and the Salt Lake Tribune calling for a "rupture of diplomatic relations." The Literary Digest could find but one paper, the German-American Cincinnati Volksblatt placing the blame anywhere but on the Imperial government. "Difficulties," the Volksblatt stated, "with Germany could be easily averted if

¹ Lit. Dig., L, 26 (June 26, 1915) p. 1543.

² Seymour, Charles: The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, p. 12.

Americans would place themselves under the protection of their own flag and not of a foreign country."¹

Realizing the situation the nation was in, President Wilson fought for peace but at the same time he was determined to be prepared in case his plans failed. His previous call for preparedness without conscription (December 8, 1914) coupled with his St. Louis speech when he asserted that the American Navy "ought in my opinion, to be incomparably the greatest navy in the world," brought praise from the editors for what might have been two widely separate reasons. The Washington Post, which had been maintaining a middle-of-the-road attitude, felt that "we have the biggest job-- we need the biggest navy." The Milwaukee Sentinel, the only American paper labeled by Wellington House as being pro-German² felt the same way. "We must have enough power," the editor stated, "to defend the freedom of the seas."³ Apathy in Congress and dissension in his own party forced President Wilson, as the Cleveland Plain Dealer remarked, to carry the case for preparedness before "the real court of authority-- the men and women of the United States." Sectional feelings also flared up in support of the President's call for preparedness and the

¹ Lit. Dig., LI, 9 (Aug. 28, 1915) p. 387.

² Peterson, op. cit., p. 164.

³ Lit. Dig., LII, 8 (Feb. 19, 1916) p. 419.

Winston-Salem Journal believed that the "people of the midwest, not much worked up over preparedness will be awakened by the President," The New York World called for the facts, stating that the "president is entitled to a hearing.... and had handled the foreign affairs of the country during the most trying period since the civil war." The Press editor, seeking to look into the heart of the call stated, "He still hates the sword.... his heart is not in it."¹

At the close of February, 1916, the Literary Digest editors placed another poll before the editors of the American press, this time asking; 1. What should be the size of the Army and the Navy? 2. Is militarism a peril to America? The answers proved to be almost an even split on the latter question with the biggest complaint being that the President would control the local militia over the voice of the governor if taken into federal service which would make for too much patronage.² Averaging up the figures submitted from 500 editors the Digest found them asking for a larger regular army of 285,078 with a reserve of 1,215,359. Forty per cent wanted a navy second only to Britain with the remainder asking for the largest in the world. Along the Atlantic seaboard only 11 editors feared the rise of militarism with 85 seeing no harm in an increase in the services.

¹ Lit. Dig., LII, 6 (Feb. 5, 1916) p. 269.

² Ibid., LII, 10 (March 4, 1916) p. 547.

Further West the editors called for a smaller army but a still¹ larger navy and the fear of militarism was still strong.

The raid on Columbus, New Mexico, March 9, 1916 by bandits under the leadership of Pancho Villa gave people calling for preparedness an additional argument. The new Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, who had taken over March 9, 1916, following the resignation of Lindley M. Garrison due to President Wilson's failure to back his proposed plan for conscription, was already on record for preparedness if possible without conscription.

The Cleveland Plain Dealer, already on record as backing Secretary Baker and a preparedness plan, called it an "example of what unpreparedness means." The Kansas City Star pondered the idea of what might have happened and "suppose it had been a first class power, instead of a bandit?" Col. Edwin F. Glenn, chief of staff of the Eastern Division of the Army, and a man fully entrusted with national security stated, "The cold fact is that the American army today is the most pathetic thing any nation ever knew or contemplated, and other nations know it very well, I can assure you." Machine guns had failed and transportation was far from² successful.

A report by two British journalists on the American press was published in September, one defending and one condemning

¹ Lit. Dig., LII, 11 (March 11, 1916) p. 617.

² Ibid., LII, 14 (April 1, 1916) p. 883.

American opinion towards the Allies. Both were probably biased. Arraon Watson, following a cross-country trip stated:

"Going west the less interest there seems to be in the events, which are making a charnel house of Europe.

"America has no journalist who makes an expert study of the war.... and there is no demand that the newspapers shall supply complete and unbiased news."

Mr. H. S. Perris, also a journalist, after a trip to Chicago reported:

"I believe, on the contrary, that no press in the world has, on the whole been more fully informed of the underlying causes and issues of the war, and the general course of events, than the leading journals of the United States." 1

Both reports were probably true to a certain extent. The West was little interested in the conduct of European affairs, but it was stretching a point to say that no American journalist had made an "expert study of the war." Recognizing that American news came largely through British hands, many American journals were still printing both sides of the story as far as possible.

At 8:30, Saturday evening, February 24, 1917, there arrived in the State Department a sensational cable from Mr. Page, our Ambassador to England. The British Foreign Minister, Mr. Balfour, the Ambassador reported, had just handed him the text of a cipher telegram from Zimmerman, German Foreign Minister, to the Imperial Government's Ambassador to Mexico, which had been trans-

1

Ibid., LI, 11 (Sept. 11, 1916) pp. 528-529.

mitted on January 19, through the American Embassy in Berlin to the German Embassy in Washington.

"We intend to begin on the 1st of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavour in spite of this to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding we make Mexico a proposal of alliance on the following basis; make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. You will inform the President of the above most secretly as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States is certain and add the suggestion that he should, on his own initiative, invite Japan to immediate adherence....." 1

The reaction of the American press was violent while the German-American press could "see" fraud and British trickery written throughout the message. The Springfield Republican, already anti-German, called it the voice that could "solidify America," and the Oshkosh Northwesterner remarked, "Patriotism has been fanned into a flame of fervent loyalty." The St. Louis Amerika declared "no hesitation in declaring it a forgery," while the New York Fatherland labeled it, "brazen forgery; impudent hoax." The Milwaukee Free-Press, called the only pro-German American newspaper printed in English, remarked it was a note² "which even a schoolboy's sense should suspect of spuriousness." But there can be no doubt as to its genuineness for Zimmerman when confronted for reasons for his action stated that "Germany in

¹ Ibid., LIV, 10 (March 10, 1917) p. 607.

² Ibid., LIV, 11 (March 17, 1917) p. 687.

order to win the war needed Allies."¹

The press as a whole supported the action of arming our merchant vessels, following the publication of the Zimmerman note, and the Boston Journal believed that the "outcome commonly expected is war." The Detroit Journal felt that the President "has taken the right course and dangerous," while the Milwaukee Journal believed the "action will be endorsed by every citizen." The Nashville Tennessean, a little more conservative, felt that "90 per cent of the people will applaud him," and the Chicago Herald could see "no turning back." The New York Sun attempted to speak for the State Department and remarked, "Government officials expect war unless Germany does an about face."²

Following a meeting of the Cabinet, March 20, the Literary Digest reported that we changed from "armed neutrality" to "a state of war."³ Commenting on the coming session of Congress, most of the American press seemed to feel the same way. "It will be the duty of Congress to recognize the fact of war and authorize the President....", stated the New York Times. The Boston Transcript felt that "Germany was at war with us and we should be at war with Germany." The New York Tribune wanted to know "what we were going to do about it?" and the Cleveland Press believed "war is inevitable."⁴

¹ Halsey, Francis Whiting, The Literary Digest History of the World War, Vol. 4, p. 15; see also Ency. Brit. Vol. 23, p. 950.

² Lit. Dig., LIV, 12 (March 24, 1917) p. 801.

³ Ibid., LIV, 13 (March 31, 1917) p. 881.

⁴ Loc. cit.

The action of Congress, April 6, 1917, in declaring war against Germany found the American press united behind the call to arms. The Chicago Herald stated; "If this, indeed, be not the voice of the nation, we are not fit to be a nation," and the Courier-Journal remarked that it was the "most significant and momentous deliverance on the part of the American people since the Declaration of Independence." The Boston Transcript heard the voice of the people with the remark, "the president has heeded the mandate of the people." The pro-German press and the German-American press also fell into line. The Milwaukee Free-Press patriotically calling that "where the flag leads all America will follow" and the New York Staats-Zeitung could see one goal and "but one duty-- America."¹

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¹
Lit. Dig., LIV, 15 (April 14, 1917) p. 1002.

IV. THE REACTION OF CHURCH AND PACIFIST GROUPS.

Where God hath a temple,
the devil will have a chapel.

Robert Burton

Anatomy of Melancholy

general found the American clergy condemning the warring nations and asking for peace. The Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal diocese of New York, Dr. David H. Greer, was one of the first to call for peace, publishing a prayer for use in the churches of his diocese during the war stating, "We are brethren.... open the eyes of the people.... hatred and violence is weakness.... bring to a speedy end.... war shall be no more."¹ The last proclamation of Pope Pius X was issued the day of his death (August 19, 1914) calling to all Roman Catholics to pray for the "speedily removal of the evil causes of war, giving to them who rule to think the thoughts of peace."² The Rev. Frederick Lynch writing in the Christian Work and Evangelist (nondenominational), August 29, 1914, stated that "Christianity has been thrown to the dogs, and the nations have gone mad."³ The Lutheran (Philadelphia) organ of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America agreed; "All nations have drunk deep at the well of irreligion and mannomism.... all nations are equally to blame."⁴

Rev. Holden E. Sampson of the Corpus Christi

¹ Lit. Dig., XLIX, 8 (Aug. 22, 1914) p. 312.

² Ibid., XLIX, 9 (Aug. 29, 1914) p. 329.

³ Ibid., XLIX, 11 (Sept. 12, 1914) p. 463.

⁴ Ibid., XLIX, 13 (Sept. 26, 1914) p. 578.

Church of New York City, was one of the few voices of dissent. Writing in the New York World he stated, "war is not all bad. ... there are some good things.... we are too self-centered and shrink from death."¹

The nation's response to the President's call for prayers for peace "could not have been more general or more fervent" in the words of the New York Times.² The Living Church (Milwaukee) added that the nation should "pray for international peace."³ Whatever the course and final settlement of the war, stated the Brooklyn Eagle, the position of the Catholic Church has been demonstrated in the Pope's recent encyclical. "No critic in the world can misunderstand it."⁴

By Christmas of 1914 members of the ministerial groups were actively engaged in the American League to Limit Armaments to combat the forces calling for increased defense. Those engaged included Bishop David H. Greer, Percy Stickney Grant of the Church of the Ascension, New York City, and William Pierson Merrill, minister of the Brick Presbyterian

¹ Ibid., p. 578.

² Ibid., XLIX, 16 (Oct. 17, 1914) p. 742.

³ Loc. cit.

⁴ Ibid., XLIX, 23 (Dec. 5, 1914) p. 1126.

Church of New York City. Bishop Greer also headed the Church Peace Union and maintained that "peace will never be obtained by the use of force. The teachings of Christ, the manner of his life and of his death, were proof that he would be opposed to war."¹

The efforts of the pacifist organizations to enlist church support tended to increase the antagonism of some of the clergy towards them. Dr. Charles A. Eaton wanted to know "who are these people imposing on simple half-baked women, making their husbands hang their heads in shame?" Malcom J. MacLeod couldn't believe that if Jesus were living in the present he would be a pacifist; "I believe there are times when to be a pacifist is to be perilously near being a traitor."² Dr. Walter Rauschenbusch of the Rochester Theological Seminary, writing in The Congregationalist (Boston), first confessed to German descent and then stated "there is not a nation at war which has not some justification and some spiritual values at stake." He defended Germany but not to the extreme, stating, "Nations rarely fight for moral issues alone."³ The governor of Connecticut, active in the work of the Baptist

¹ Abrams, op. cit., p. 24.

² Ibid., p. 45.

³ Lit. Dig., XLIX, 19 (Nov. 7, 1914) p. 892.

Church, requested the churches "to gather a census of the state's war material in men."¹

The Literary Digest could see no division along denominational lines in the ministerial stand against an increase in armaments and stated "there is no significance in the fact that it is the Protestant Christian Work (New York) which believes Mr. Bryan's peace treaties worth a big army in every state." The Catholic response was the same. The Catholic Monitor (Newark) stated, "It is to the credit of our people that they are sincerely desirous of peace." All denominations called for "moral rearmament."² In his struggle to combat militarism, Dr. Frederick Lynch wrote in The Christian Work, "Our noise in the world is not measured by our guns. Our safety does not depend upon our navy but upon our reputation."³

But what attitude would churchmen take when war's problems came closer to our shores? A survey of the opinions of church leaders of the nation was published by the New York Times, May 10, 1915, three days after the Lusitania was torpedoed. Collecting pulpit expressions the Times reported that the general reaction of the clergy was: "A crime against civilization; an act not to be condoned; not piracy but organized murder; abhorrent even to

¹ Abrams, op. cit., p. 46.

² Lit. Dig., XLIX, 26 (Dec. 26, 1914) p. 1281.

³ Ibid., L, 11 (March 15, 1915) p. 551.

the standards of bloody war." The Rev. John Henry Jowett stated, "It is a colossal sin against God and it is premeditated murder," and Rev. Henry Sloane Coffin saw the action as a conflict between "barbarism and civilization."¹ The Times editorialized, "Possibly some of the clergy have counseled turning the other cheek, but if so we have not seen their words in print."² But some words were in print. The Rev. John Haynes Holmes of the Church of the Messiah, New York, stated, ".... show that America believes in peace", while Rev. J. F. Keller of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Cleveland, remarked, "These passengers were warned before they sailed.. .. war is war."³ The influence of national origins is seen in some cases. In Chicago, an appeal was published on Saturday, May 8, in several Chicago newspaper articles signed by Lutheran clergymen, calling upon the German pastors in the interest of "truth and justice" to call the attention of their congregations to the fact that "the German government had been forced by England to the horrible steps, and, according to international law, is not responsible for the loss of American life." One Lutheran pastor⁴ pointed out that the passengers had committed suicide.

¹ Abrams, op. cit., p. 28.

² Lit. Dig., L, 21 (May 22, 1915) p. 1218.

³ Loc. cit.

⁴ Abrams, op. cit., p. 28.

The loss of American lives due to submarines placed the word "preparedness" foremost in the minds of many Americans. The Security League had already issued a call for increased armaments and the younger business men and millionaires, back now from their bloodless trenches at Plattsburg, were organizing the Military Training Camp Association to put more powerful pressures than General Wood himself could exert upon the Congress about to convene. Colleges were adopting Reserve Officers Training Corps.¹

Both the Congregational and Disciples of Christ Churches struck back against this call with official statements. The National Council of the Congregational Church, meeting at New Haven, Conn., passed a resolution pointing out ".... the futility of gigantic armaments as the guaranty of international security and justice."² The Christian Century (Chicago) the official organ of the Disciples of Christ, remarked that it was "time for religion to enter politics to strive against militarism."³

With the arrival of the new year (1916) The Literary Digest felt that "while much of the pacifist sentiment has

¹ Millis, op. cit., p. 235.

² Lit. Dig., LI, 21 (Nov. 20, 1915) p. 1009.

³ Ibid., 24 (Dec. 11, 1915) p. 1256.

emanated from clergymen, it appears to be an error to look upon this body of men as a whole as holding to the doctrine of non-resistance and opposing the wide-spread sentiment in favor of preparedness," and published a poll of Presbyterian ministers taken by The Continent (Chicago). The Digest editors also felt that a complete nation-wide view was impossible due to the scarcity of Presbyterian ministers in the New England and Southern states.

The poll:

1. Are you in favor of complete disarmament by the United States?
Yes, 95; No, 305; No vote, 29.

2. Are you in favor of an Army and Navy sufficient in numbers and efficiency to withstand ordinary attack while new forces are being organized?
Yes, 375; No, 60; No vote, 37.

3. Are you afraid of the dangers of militarism?
Yes, 115; No, 278; No vote, 37.

4. Assuming that all war is wrong should we ignore the possibility of attack by some nation which does not accept that belief?
Yes, 76; No, 278; No vote, 47.

5. A variety of reasons were given as to the best method of defense.

The editor of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, probably finding the results of the poll agreeing with his own ideas, stated that the "Presbyterians are a good cross-section of the country.. .. the doctrine of national preparedness is decidedly more popular in this country than had been supposed."¹

¹
Ibid., LII, 2 (Jan. 8., 1916) p. 156.

About the same time a poll of ministers of twenty-denominations in Brooklyn, conducted by the Daily Eagle, found a large majority favoring preparedness. A total of 151 favored an increase in armaments with six qualifying their approval and but 14 opposed. The Eagle, probably remembering that the ordination into the ministry does not insure one against cultural influences, editorialized, "It seems that ministers in a given locality are perhaps affected by the same influences as other citizens and are just as good patriots as laymen."¹ Charles A. Eaton, through the pages of The Independent (March, 1916) gave assurances that "this war is the greatest blessing that has ever fallen on mankind since the German Reformation."²

Sunday, October 4, 1915, the day set aside by President Wilson for prayers for peace, was widely observed in the churches. The New York Times featured the occasion on the front page: WHOLE NATION PRAYS FOR PEACE. Most of the clergy caught the spirit of the day, making strong appeals. Bishop William Lawrence of Massachusetts believed that "people were becoming convinced that war was wickedness, useless, and stupid." Malcolm James MacLeod, of the Collegiate Church of Saint Nicholas, New York City, asked his hearers to "think of the dead boys today, the maimed and the crippled. I don't care whether they are Germans, English or Russ-

¹ Ibid., LII, 15 (April 8, 1916) p. 972.

² Abrams, op. cit., p. 33.

ians. They are all their mother's sons and the sacredness of human life is degraded. Worst of all is the moral degradation and the legacy of hate."¹

The British government, realizing the value of having the clergy speaking for the Allied cause, published a book in 1915 entitled Sixty American Opinions on the War and the names of certain clergymen found their way into the pages. One of them was Frank Isley Paradise, rector of Grace Church, West Medford, Mass., who in January, 1915, had said from his pulpit:

"At length, I do believe we shall catch the spirit of battle, and fling back the challenge of German nationalism. For we too have a conscious national destiny. The God of Israel has annointed us to champion the cause of the poor, the weak, and the down-trodden. We too shall struggle for world power. It will be the healing power of Christian civilization." ²

But statements such as these were the exception, rather than the rule.

President Wilson's call for peace following his re-election (December 18, 1916) found support in the pages of The American Hebrew. "We count it more than fortunate that we have at the head of the nation a man who towers head and shoulders not only above our statesmen, but also above the trained statesmen of Europe.... a burning passion for peace and righteousness."³

¹
Ibid., p. 22.

²
Ibid., p. 27.

³
Lit. Dig., LIV, 1 (Jan. 6, 1917) p. 24.

Following the German note of January 31, 1917, notifying the world of unrestricted submarine warfare and making our entry into the war almost inevitable, The Living Church (Milwaukee) and The Churchman (New York) welcomed the suggestion of the Episcopalian Bishop "to place flags in all our churches to teach the relationship of the church to patriotism and its Christian expression."¹

Following the rupture of diplomatic relations (March 4) and despite the isolated actions of certain ministers in continuing their fight for peace, the New York Federation of Churches decided to "mobilize its Christian strength behind President Wilson, pledging to him all the service of which we are severally and collectively capable and to make a stand for the immediate establishment of universal service." Sunday, March 11, 1917 was designated as "War Sunday" in the New York Churches. One hundred and fifty-eight churches favored the call with 52 voting against it. Results: Presbyterian, 27 for, 22 against; Baptist, 16 for, 1 against; Congregationalist, 10 for, 0 against; Episcopal, 27 for, 3 against; Methodist, 23 for, 4 against; Reformed, 19 for, 3 against. Voting in a group the Evangelical Association, the Society of Friends, the German Evangelical Synod, the Lutheran Danish, the Reformed Episcopal and Universalist rejected the motion 11 to 2.

Some ministers proclaimed the "Holy War" from many pulpits. In Brooklyn, Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis brought his congregation to its feet in un-ecclesiastical cheers with his

¹
Ibid., LIV, 8 (Feb. 24, 1917) p. 473.

sermon: "Why We Should Go to War with Germany." A resolution in favor of conscription and pledging support for war was adopted by 158 congregations in the city. "Our churches," said the Reverend Charles A. Eaton in the Madison Avenue Baptist Church, "have been preaching what amounts to a moral asphyxiation. Pacifists afflict the country.... They make me want to swear, pray, laugh and weep." It was a performance echoed¹ in countless other cities.

The announcement that Congress would meet in special session, Monday, April 2, 1917, focused public attention on what was expected to be the President's war message. A survey of the churches of New York City found militancy again rising from the pulpit. Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis in Henry Ward Beecher's Church stated, "It is the solemn duty to send to Europe.... money, soldiers and guns in the ~~nation~~ France sent to America." The congregation immediately drew up a resolution, asking Congress² to declare war. Rabbi Samuel Schulman of Temple Beth-el, toned down his call for war, but asked for a united front, ".... no impression to go abroad that the country is divided." A Catholic spokesman, Father Jahn Hughes of the Paulist Fathers, echoed the cry. "We priests are ready and I say 'God bless us.'"³

¹ Ibid., LIV, 12 (March 24, 1917) p. 820.

² Ibid., 15 (April 14, 1917) p. 1064.

³ Loc. cit.

There was at least one New York minister of the Gospel who refused to be swept away by the tides of war emotion. At the Church of the Messiah at Park Avenue and 34th Street, the Reverend Mr. John Haynes Holmes, a worker for peace since the outbreak of the European struggle, refused to alter his opinion and his morning sermon was a passionate declaration of faith:

"If war is right, then Christianity is wrong, false, a lie.... No order of a President or a Governor will persuade me or force me to this business of killing.... Other clergymen may pray to God for victory for our arms. I will not. In this church, if nowhere else, the Germans will still be included in the family of God's children." 1

Reverend Mr. Holmes' sermon gave his trustees a bad afternoon. "Dr. Holmes is an idealist," one of them explained to the reporters, but this was not "the time to put his idealism into practice. We are not going to lie down and let Germany or anybody else wipe up the floor with us.... The Church of the Messiah is going to fight first.... to protect American right and American lives, and after we have protected them we will go on with our ideals." 2

Some of the most extended efforts in the field of propaganda were made in the religious fields, but as to its effect we may only surmise on the fact that the majority of the churches

1

Ibid., p. 1064.

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Millis, op. cit., p. 429.

blessed our entry into the war. Wellington House, the headquarters for British propaganda, sent appeals to all religious sects but specialized on Episcopalians, because of their British background and the Catholics, due to the large number of Irish in the church. They popularized and almost canonized Cardinal Mercier.¹ A vast amount of literature was sent to American priests and preachers and many news stories seem to have been composed especially for their benefit.² The flaming vocabulary of religion still has the power to move the hearts of many men, and it is a poor propagandist who neglects the spiritual and ecclesiastical interpretation of the war by the spokesman of every sect.³ "The churches of practically every description can be relied upon to bless a popular war, and to see in it an opportunity for the triumph of whatever Godly design they choose to further."⁴

The following week after our official entry into the war, the Literary Digest could not find one official church spokesman crying out for peace. The Methodist, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Episcopal echoed the call of the people.

¹ Desire Joseph Mercier: Belgium Cardinal, Archbishop of Malines and primate of Belgium. 1851-1926. Noted for his fearless and determined attitude against the invading Germans. Received by King and Queen of England, 12 Sept., 1914, in celebration. On death of Pope Pius X, French and English Cardinals proposed him for Pope. German and Austrian against move calling it, "church in politics."

² Peterson, op. cit., p. 28.

³ Lasswell, op. cit., p. 71.

⁴ Ibid., p. 73.

Even the Society of Friends (Quaker, Philadelphia) whose faith forbade them to bear arms informed the government that "organiza-¹tion and systematic giving is our duty."

Despite the war-like stand taken by a majority of the clergy, other church leaders, as mentioned above, were working daily for the cause of peace. It was a long hard struggle, for organizations, such as the National Security League, were publishing a most convincing type of anti-pacifist propaganda.

"In the vocabulary of the league the terms 'German, pro-German, pacifist,' and 'anti-preparedness advocate' became synonymous and indistinguishable. One who favored the Allied cause was a patriotic American: one who favored the German side -- nay, even one who sought to maintain a neutral position-- was a 'hyphenated American, a dangerous alien, a spy, a traitor.' In its cry for increased armaments it claimed to be 'the best peace society in the United States.'" ²

The popularity of peace societies in this country in 1914 led many observers interested in that movement to believe that the "Golden Age of Man" was just ahead. Michael Clune, addressing the annual meeting of the New York Peace Society in May of that year, reflected the spirit of optimism. "Ambition," said he, "will never again drench a continent in blood. A higher civilization than war's is appearing." At the outbreak of the European war, the American Peace Society, through its president

¹ Lit. Dig., LIV, 18 (May 5, 1917) p. 1334.

² Abrams, op. cit., p. 24.

Senator Theodore E. Burton, and Arthur D. Call, the secretary, issued a statement to the people of the United States, declaring that causes of the conflict to be military preparedness in Europe, and asked our citizens to unite "in prayer and supplication today and tomorrow, and on each succeeding day until world peace is restored."¹

The first organized movement in America directed towards the cessation of hostilities was placed before the public during the winter of 1915. Headed by the Englishwoman, Mrs. Pethwick Lawrence, and assisted by the brilliant Hungarian, Rosika Schwimmer, a crusade against "the common enemy of mankind" was preached throughout the nation. This movement inspired Jane Addams to found the Woman's Peace Party, dedicated to urging the immediate discussion of reasonable peace terms.² The following spring Jane Addams led a large delegation to The Hague hoping to found a women's world wide peace conference that would call the governments to their senses and end the conflict. But as the golden stream of war orders spread through our economy, such efforts by visionary females were regarded with an only more scornful amusement. The more sophisticated peace movement was careful to avoid entanglement in anything so "impractical," clinging to the more popular objective of

¹ Ibid., p. 161.

² Millis, op. cit., p. 125.

organizing peace only after the current war had ended in victory for the Allies. It was on June 17, 1916, that the League to Enforce Peace, the flower of this altruistic agitation, was formally launched at Philadelphia. Ex-President Taft was at its head; Dr. A. Lawrence Lowell was chairman of its executive committee; and many other eminent and high-minded men were enlisted in its ranks. A powerful propaganda engine had been created to add the military strength of the United States to the guarantee of a "permanent" peace system, once the Allies¹ should have safely destroyed "Prussian Militarism."

On December 4, 1915, the steamship Oscar II, chartered by Henry Ford, sailed for Europe with 83 peace missionaries aboard to "get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas."² But too many important people had withdrawn from the vessel and the entire attempt was a fiasco. Ford left the party at Oslo, Norway, although a few die-hards moved on to Germany and France only to find their efforts useless.

The fight to force peace through negotiations was dying a slow death in the struggle against those who favored peace after victory. Then on the night of February 3, 1917, just three days after the German note informing the world of unrestricted submarine warfare, the pacifists made their last stand. William Jennings Bryan, speaking to a crowd of five thousand or more in

¹ Millis, op. cit., p. 198.

² Halsey, op. cit., Vol. 10, p. 435.

New York City, was cheered when he avowed that the United States would not "get down and wallow in the mire of human blood." Out of this meeting, the Emergency Peace Federation, sponsored by several peace organizations, took form. In the next three months it raised over \$76,000 for its work. In Washington, an Emergency Peace Federation Committee was formed, while in Chicago, long an active peace center under the inspiration of Jane Addams and Louis P. Lochner, the pacifists began to take steps calculated to prevent our involvement in war. On February 12, a large delegation of pacifists encamped at Washington. Meetings were staged and conferences with Congressmen held. David Lawrence wrote to the New York Evening Post: "Somehow, the pacifists got a better reception than their most enthusiastic followers have believed was possible in the national capital."¹

Early the next month Jane Addams visited President Wilson and told of her reception:

"He still spoke to us as to fellow pacifists to whom he was forced to confess that war had become inevitable. He said that as head of a great nation participating in the war, he would have a seat in the peace conference, but that if he remained the representative of a neutral country he could at best be on call through a crack in the door. It was as if his heart's desire spoke through his words and dictated his view of the situation."²

Certain pacifist groups, notably the flying squadron of speakers led by Chancellor-Emeritus David Starr Jordan of Stanford

¹ Abrams, op. cit., p. 44.

² Swain, Joseph Ward: Beginning the Twentieth Century, pp. 498-499.

University, continued their energetic but futile efforts to stem¹ the tide of war.

As the country edged closer to the brink of war complaints began to pour in from the more radically-minded members of the peace societies, claiming that the organizations were "side-stepping and watchfully waiting," and were "parties to a conspiracy of silence." As if to substantiate these claims, various branches of the Society told of blacksliding members. The President of the Derry Peace Society in New Hampshire complained because the leading members of the state organization "had joined the great preparedness army just now sweeping the country." On the eve of our declaration of war, the Society stated the rather obvious fact that the decision to enter or refrain from entering the war had "to be made by the United States government," since the American Peace Society could not "decide the question." On the last day of March, 1917, the Springfield Republican (Mass.) had already congratulated the organization on being such a "good loser."²

Another group that must be taken into consideration was the Socialist Party, the avowed party of pacifism. Meeting in Convention at St. Louis, in 1917, the party declared the struggle a capitalist war and promised opposition to its prosecution, a step which led to the eventual arrest of many Socialist leaders, among them Eugene V. Debs, frequently the

¹ Mock, James R. and Larson, Cedric: Words that Won the War, p. 25.

² Abrams, op. cit., p. 161.

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Socialist party's candidate for president. The great wartime schism in the ranks of the Socialists did not occur until the middle of April, 1917, but throughout March the press had carried stories reporting the conversion of individual Socialists who had previously opposed entrance into what they regarded as an imperialist war. Those who left the fold did so on the belief that the war was a war against autocracy.

The basic reason for the trend of the American churches from peace, to preparedness, to war, is apparent. Christians and Jews have simply used the Bible to aid in rationalizing any practice or idea which they were carrying out and believed to be justified. It is thus a commonplace that the Bible has been quoted to justify nearly every practice and belief known to man; war and peace, slavery and anti-slavery, child labor, polygamy and monogamy, celibacy, the burning of witches and the torture of heretics, capital punishment, women suffrage, communism, capitalism, the charging of interest, temperance and absolute prohibition, faith healing and etc. And finally the love of country exceeds the love of mankind. Priests and ministers called each other names and accused one another of worshipping false gods. ² It became a "Holy War." Another vital relationship is that which exists between the religion of Christianity and the religion of Nationalism. The churches were consistent in the record of supporting all popular wars and proved, what had long been sus-

¹ American Labor Year Book, 1917-1918, pp. 373-379.

² Abrams, op. cit., p. 252.

peacted, that Christianity has been becoming increasingly nationalistic, while the god of Nationalism is more powerful in his ability to command obedience and devotion unto death than is Jehovah himself. Nationalism reached its highest development during the First World War. There were thousands of appropriate places of Christian worship, as in the First Baptist Church of New London, Conn., for example, the pastor, a chaplain during the war, preached in his uniform with a machine gun and an American flag on the platform beside him.¹

The conception of war as inevitable and as salutary under certain conditions is held by many conservative theologians. They do not regard it as having a place in the ideal order but regard it as a necessary evil. A still more serious consequence of a literal interpretation of Jesus' teaching concerning non-resistance is its bearing on the state. Its primary purpose is to defend itself and its citizens from unjust attack. This is the function of the army and the police. Without such use of force the state would disintegrate and there would be anarchy. The attempt is often made to draw a fundamental moral distinction between an army and a police force. But in theory there is no essential difference. Indeed, anyone who believes in the state and understands what this means must also believe that under

¹ Abrams, op. cit., p. 245.

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certain circumstances war is morally justifiable.

The steady stream of atrocity stories, the suppressing of all evidences of better feeling on the part of any section of the German people, the disheartening effects of the pronouncement of the German intellectuals, the honest and sincere revulsion of feeling against a nation that action of whose leaders had plunged mankind into these unspeakable horrors--all worked to make righteous anger seem a Christian duty. The fact remains that in the heat of the struggle the judgment of many a minister did not conspicuously rise above that of the average citizen.² The members of the cloth and their followers were susceptible to war psychology and crowd-thinking in the same manner as were the other citizens. They possessed no prophylactic against the mob mind.³

In the first of the World Wars organized Christianity tended in general to endorse the cause of the Allies against the Central Powers, although favoring neutrality, and later supported the participation of the United States, in a war which they had come to regard as righteous.⁴

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¹ Knudson, Albert B.: The Principles of Christian Ethics, p. 225.

² Brown, William Adams: The Church in America, p. 97.

³ Abrams, op. cit., p. 246.

⁴ Latourette, Kenneth Scott: A History of the Expansion of Christianity, Vol. VII, Advance Through the Storm, p. 148.

V. THE REACTION OF BUSINESS AND LABOR.

**Business is a combination
of war and sport.**

Andre Maurois

The most convenient classification of the principal causes of wars as we see them to have arisen in history is; religious, political and economic. The latter two, especially,¹ are intertwined beyond the hope of disentanglement.

The story of American political involvement as a result of economic pressures is easily followed by a series of successive steps. First, a policy of strict neutrality was followed. Then the permitting of private loans to belligerent nations followed. Third was the period of armed neutrality and then war itself.

It must be remembered that British trade restrictions were not devised for the purpose of drawing the United States into war. The primary object was to injure the enemies of Great Britain by every means legal and illegal. It sought, according to Winston Churchill, to treat, "the whole of Germany as if it were a beleaguered fortress, and avowedly sought to starve the whole population-- men, women, and children, old and young, wounded and sound, into submission."² The British government at the outset of the war realized that American economic assistance would be needed to bring the struggle in Europe to a successful conclusion, but only gradually did they realize the extent of their dependence on the American economy.³

¹ Salter, Sir Arthur; Thomson, Sir. J. Arthur; Johnston, G. A.; Zimmermann, Alfred; Andrews, C. F.; Libby, Frederick J.; Atkinson, Henry A.; Steed, Wickham and others: The Causes of War, (Salter, The Economic Causes of War,) pp. 15-16.

² Peterson, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

³ Ibid., p. 71.

From almost the first, British naval power and policy made American foreign trade dependent upon the actions of the British government. It also caused the Germans to retaliate and thus come in conflict with the American government. Later, large munitions contracts in this country meant high wages and higher profits for thousands of people in American industry. The next act was loans to Britain. These gave some Americans a vested interest in the Allied cause. All three combined to create good will between the United States and Great Britain and, indirectly, to create ill-will between the United States and Germany. Each¹ step was propaganda in the most practical sense of the word.

The American policy at the outbreak of the war was in strict accord with the rules of international law, which states, "Neutrals may legitimately carry on all sorts of trade, and belligerents may interrupt all."² Thus Britain, controlling the surface of the seas, was able to halt American trade to the continent without destruction of American lives and shipping, and Germany, forced to retaliate with her only weapon, the submarine, found herself alienating the American public. The aspects of the economic warfare as carried on by Great Britain, although fully within the bounds of international law, was described by many in the war-

¹ Peterson, op. cit., p. 71.

² Woolsey, Theodore D.: Introduction to the Study of International Law, Chpt. 2, Sec. 184, par. 3, p. 309.

time phrase, "Great Britain rules the waves and waives the rules."¹
Representative Towner of Iowa was one of the few who looked into the future and foresaw the danger. As early as August 28, 1914, he spoke against our business policy on the floor of Congress. To ship food and clothing to the Allies, he warned his countrymen, was to aid them in their struggle with Germany and Austria. "At best we would be fortunate if we could avoid being drawn into the war;" but to encourage even commercial exports to one side, when the other was debarred from our markets, would be "to invite our own entanglement."²

Towner took the position of Secretary of State Bryan who believed that if we are neutral, all belligerents should receive exactly the same treatment at our hands, [this would involve strict prohibition of all trade and relations with all nations as reselling of our material by another neutral nation might involve us] even though this would involve the government in³ a new interpretation of international and United States law, as we were at the time functioning under previously agreed upon rules. The President took the stand that rules could not be changed for the advantage of one contestant while the struggle was on, and set his face

¹ Peterson, op. cit., p. 77.

² Millis, op. cit., p. 99.

³ Bryan, William Jennings and Mary Baird: The Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan, p. 395.

resolutely against any action which would be clearly a violation¹ of American neutrality.

Our growing trade with England had its repercussions in Germany, and Mr. Gerard, our ambassador in Berlin, reported that "my job is made harder by these sales of munitions"; a growing bitterness toward the United States was not difficult to detect² in the Central Powers.

If he could not stop the trading now going on with warring nations, then he might stop the possibility of any loans to these nations, was the attitude of Secretary Bryan. In a letter to the President, August 10, 1914, Bryan wrote:

"Money is the worst of all contraband because it commands everything else.... If we approved of such loans.... our citizens would be divided into groups, each group loaning money to the country which it favors and this money could not be furnished without expressions of sympathy.... The powerful financial interests which would be connected with these loans would be tempted to support the interests of the government to which they loaned." ³

Once again Secretary Bryan was attempting to lead the government into making its own international law, for international law does not require of the neutral sovereign that he should keep the citizen or subject within the same strict lines of neutrality

¹ Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 128.

² Millis, op. cit., p. 101.

³ Peterson, op. cit., p. 86.

which he is bound to maintain for himself. "The private person, if the law of his own state or some special treaty does not forbid, can lend money to the enemy of a state at peace with his own country for purposes of war, or can enter into its services as a soldier, without involving the government of his country in guilt." The editor of the Springfield Republican knew his law:

"That our government is making the international law of the future by its disapproval of loans to nations at war is the opinion of the Springfield Republican, which reminds us that the present law does not forbid loans of money to a belligerent state by private citizens of neutral states." 2

On August 15, 1914 the announcement of the President's policy, in regard to loans to a nation at war, was telegraphed to J. P. Morgan and Company.

"There is no reason why loans should not be made to the governments of neutral nations, but in the judgment of this government, loans by American bankers to any foreign government which is at war are inconsistent with the true spirit of neutrality." 3

In consequence of this announcement no loans were made at that time.

But on October 23, a technical distinction between loans

¹ Woolsey, op. cit., Chpt. 2, Sec. 173, p. 290.

² Lit. Dig., XLIX, 10 (Sept. 5, 1914) p. 404.

³ Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 176.

and bank credits was made following advice to the President by Robert Lansing, advisor to the State Department.

".... Since the beginning of the war, I am informed that one bank alone has received cabled instructions for the payment of more than \$50,000,000 for American goods and that the volume of this business is increasing. Owing to war conditions, this buying is necessarily for cash and it is of such magnitude that the cash credits of the European governments are being fast depleted. Lately it has been urged by certain manufacturers and by representatives of some of the foreign governments, that the banks should provide temporary credits for these purchases

.... ".... the critical time for American finance in our international relations is during the next three or four months and, if we allow these purchases to go elsewhere, we will have neglected our foreign trade at the time of our greatest need and greatest opportunity....

"For the purpose of enabling European governments to make cash payments, it is suggested to grant to them short time banking credits, to both belligerent and neutral governments, and when necessary or desirable replenish their cash balances on this side by the purchase of short time Treasury warrants." 1

With Allied credits established, the "opportunity" for increasing our foreign trade that Mr. Lansing stated, was not long in coming. Trade with the Allied countries increased approximately 141 percent from 1914 to 1915. After 1915 the outstanding indebtedness of the Allies in the United States was increasing by leaps

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Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 186.

and bounds. The New York press, with the notable exception of the Hearst and the German-language papers, gave the loan stalwart¹ support.

The general sentiment of the nation for the remainder of the year seemed to be peace and prosperity which the New York Times summed up in a New Years Day, 1915, editorial:

".... The promise of the new year is that we shall accomplish a peaceful penetration of the world's markets to an extent we have never dreamed of. What others have shed blood to obtain through politics and force we shall attain while bestowing our benevolence.

".... It is a new translation of the old beatitude, revised; 'Blessed are the keepers of the peace for prosperity shall be within their homes and palaces.'"²

The Times was wrong. Prosperity did come, but not through peace. Credits to the British government created prosperity for the American businessman, farmer and worker and editorial pages were reflecting the general trend of good times. The New York American called the surge of prosperity "our financial emancipation from the European struggle."³ But few looked far enough ahead to realize what would happen to the American prosperity bubble when the credits ran out. These credits by banks hampered the Federal Reserve System but bond loans, if permitted, would remove the problem. Mor-

¹ Peterson, op. cit., pp. 92, 103.

² Lit. Dig., L, 2 (Jan. 9, 1915) p. 39.

³ Ibid., 16 (April 17, 1915) p. 859.

gan once again requested a ruling from the President on the feasibility of loans and this time Lansing answered via memorandum stating that such loans were permissible as there was a difference between the "true spirit of neutrality" and "strict legality." There is no record of a written discussion by the President and his advisors but the situation was discussed.¹

The Morgan Company signed a contract with the Reading Commission on September 25, 1915. The loan was for \$500,000,000 and it was issued with a two per cent "spread" through a syndicate of sixty-one New York Houses with 1,500 members throughout the country, and hence to thousands of individual investors. Chicago, the financial capital of the Middle West with a considerable German population, remained cool. The only serious attack upon the loan, however, was on grounds, not of national policy, but of financial safety. This was met by the argument that the Allies did not really need money but only foreign exchange. This same argument was used to put pressure on the government. When on October 14, the books were closed, the somewhat ticklish situation had proved a success.² Spring Rice, the British ambassador, stated in one of his reports concerning the loan: "When it became apparent that a loan was necessary in order to give credit for American

¹ Baker, op. cit., Vol. 4, p. 187.

² Millis, op. cit., p. 221.

exports to Europe, many secret forces began to act in its favor. The Government itself undoubtedly wished it, mainly because a continuance of American trade depended upon a credit."¹

Soon American ships were carrying practically nothing but British supplies. Business with the Allied powers grew by leaps and bounds, with but one cloud on the horizon; the war might end. Every time there was talk of peace, munitions stocks went down from five to 40 per cent. War had brought us prosperity, peace threatened to bring calamity. Gradually other worries began to trouble American industry and finance. Suppose the Germans won-- what then? "No, that could never happen. We have the word of A.D. Moyes, financial editor of the New York Times, that Wall Street picked the Allies to win at the very start and never wavered in this firm belief."²

The stock market reports throughout 1916 reveal strikingly the close economic relationship between the United States and the Allies. The news of the German victory at Jutland caused a big drop in the market while the exploits of the U-53 (submarine) created a temporary panic in which \$500,000,000 was lost in 15 minutes. Early in December the New York Times recorded that the German peace offer had sent all stocks down. The next day prices

¹ Millis, op. cit., p. 220.

² Engelbrecht, H. D. and Hanighen, F. C.: Merchants of Death, pp. 174-175.

grose because there was no fear of "peace." At the time of the Wilson peace offer, the Times stated: "Sales of more than 300,000 shares force most violent slump known in fifteen years."¹ Banks' credits were sharply curtailed, and the Allied governments were able to renew their bills with the most extreme difficulty. The news of the diplomatic break with Germany on the 4th of February, 1917, sent Bethlehem Steel up 30 points. Mr. Henry P. Davidson, a partner in J. P. Morgan and Company, had been one of the most active opponents of Germany's "insincere" peace offers; he had wished for American participation in the war in order to "cleanse us from our self-righteousness."²

The cotton market also followed the stock market in the fear that war might end. By January, 1915, the price of cotton began gradually to rise, and continued until the fall of 1916, when the German peace proposal caused uncertainty again. On February 3, the day after diplomatic relations with Germany were severed, the price began to rise sharply and the advance continued until the spring of 1918, when government price regulations were threatened and later inaugurated. For the greater part of the period from July 27, 1914 to February 3, 1917, prices were³ below the 1913 average.

¹ Peterson, op. cit., p. 267.

² Lasswell, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

³ Baruch, Bernard M.: American Industry in the War, p. 245.

Thus America was lending herself prosperity; a prosperity which in the end many economists believe can be nothing but false encomy and with the most dangerous form of lending money known to financiers; the lending of money by private individuals to a foreign nation. The loan may¹ be considered purely a private transaction, without political considerations, but when default occurs, it may result in governmental action. An important source of friction in international relations arises from the use of the diplomatic machine to assist nations in collecting debts.

The September issue of LaFollette's Magazine (published and edited by Senator Robert M. LaFollette, Wisconsin) carried a caustic editorial:

"With the first clash of the great European war came President Wilson's solemn appeal.... 'The United States must be neutral in fact as well as in name'.... But when you can boom stocks 600 per cent in manufacturing munitions -- to the Bottomless Pit with neutrality! What do Morgan and Schwab care for world peace when there are big profits in world war?.... The stocks of the Schwab properties which stood at a market value of seven millions before they began supplying the Allies.... are today given an aggregate 'value' of forty-nine millions. And now we are about to engage in furnishing the Allies funds.... We are underwriting the success of the cause of the Allies. We have ceased to be 'neutral in fact as well as in name.'" 2

¹ Salter, op. cit., p. 17.

² Millis, op. cit., p. 218.

The last statement was probably true for a considerable number of Americans. Throughout the summer prosperity had been rising in an ever dizzier curve; by September the steel trade had "never seen demand so overwhelming and at the same times its output expanding on such a scale under steadily rising prices", by October the railway terminals, both east and west, were beginning to break down under a greater jam of traffic than had been¹ witnessed in the most prosperous years of the past.

Not until the closing days of 1914, and not strongly until the following spring was the suggestion pushed that the United States by a threat of embargo on war materials might force the British to abandon those drastic interferences with neutral trade which were illegal in the eyes of the American government. Apparently we did not recognize the international significance of our immense economic power, and we probably could not have used it, if we had, since embargoes would have resulted in an economic shock that American business was unprepared to withstand either by knowledge, or vision, or fortitude. Moreover, in the hope that the war would soon end-- or yield to the President's efforts to bring about peace-- there always lurked an excuse for avoiding drastic measures. Thus by the end of the year 1914 the traffic in war materials with the Allies had become deeply entrenched in America's economic organization, and the

¹ Millis, op. cit., p. 218.

possibility of keeping out of the war by the diplomacy of neutrality, was greatly reduced.¹

Despite the financial backing and the steady stream of war materials flowing to the Allies, the amount of American materials reaching the German army through neutral European nations enraged the British. Germany had been cut off from the direct purchase of American goods by the British Navy, but a trickle of supplies continued to reach them. These goods were furnished by European neutrals by one of two methods; first, the direct re-exportation of materials imported from abroad which formed a considerable volume of the trade of Germany and the neutrals and which had by no means ceased. The second form was the export of domestic products and the filling of the deficit by importation from abroad, mainly from the United States, despite the fact that they had promised that no material imported from America would be exported to Germany.²

The British answer to this situation was the contraband list; a long list of materials which might be used in furthering German war aims, were not to be shipped by American merchants to European neutrals. This seemed a bold stroke but when one is involved in making war, any action to further one's own aims is considered justifiable. With the list came a warning

¹ Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 181.

² Clark, J. Maurice: Hamilton, Walton H.; and Moulton, Harold G.: Readings in the Economics of War, p. 285 (adapted from, Moore, James Louis, The New York Times, August 19, 1917).

from the British that all merchant ships going to Europe would be seized and searched and contraband would be taken over and fair remuneration given. But still Britian had to be careful not to antagonize America too far. Perhaps nothing in the early days of the war enraged the British military chiefs more than the fact that cotton was permitted to go from the United States to Germany. That Germany was using this cotton in the manufacture of torpedoes to sink British ships and projectiles to kill British soldeirs in trenches was well known; nor did many people deny that Great Britian had the right to put cotton on the contraband list. Yet, Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign minister, in the pursuit of his larger end, refused to take this step. He knew that the prosperity of the Southern states depended exclusively upon the cotton crop. He also knew that the South had raised the 1914 crop with no knowledge that a war was impending and that to deny the southern planters their usual access to the German markets would all but ruin them. He believed that such a ruling would immediately alienate the sympathy of a large section of the United States and make our southern Senators and Congressmen enemies of Great Britian. For this reason he did not declare cotton contraband until August 20, 1915.¹ The South was immediately alarmed, one reason being the 1914 crop-- 2,000,000 more bales than usual.² Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo met the situation

¹ Hendrick, Burton J.: The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page, Vol. 1, p. 367.

² Baruch, op. cit., p. 245.

by issuing a statement to the press to the effect that the Treasury would deposit, if it should become necessary, \$30,000,000 or more in Southern Federal Reserve Banks for loans on cotton warehouse certificates (August 23, 1915).¹

It appeared as if relations between the United States and Great Britain might become strained on the question of neutral trade and the examination of the mails.² Even the cartoonists were beginning to sharpen their pencils with a new, though still friendly asperity, and John Bull's rotund form began to appear in our papers, often with a string of stolen American cargoes under his arm, in attitudes less than heroic. "Thousands of American importers," as Mr. Lansing wrote Mr. Page, were clamoring to the State Department against the British stoppage of cargoes from Germany. They were threatening to hold mass meetings to "denounce the dictatorial and illegal policy of Great Britain toward the United States" and lobbying for an export embargo as long as Great Britain continued to treat them "with contumely and contempt."³

On December 3, 1914, Ambassador Page was bluntly informed that there was "sharp criticism in this country" of British high-handedness, and that something would have to be done. This new stiffness at last appears to have prodded Page into some realization of the true position and he replied on December 7, with

¹ Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 378.

² Allen, George H. and others: The Great War, Vol. 4, pp. 374-375.

³ Millis, op. cit., p. 222.

a proposed "working arrangement" with Great Britain.¹ The press of the nation was also split on the question of what to do. The New Yorker Herald (German language) labeled our unrestricted trade with the Allies "dollar diplomacy" and added that "all the powder and gun factories of the entire land are working at break-neck speed, for whom?...." They requested that all readers write to their representatives to force the government (to act) and hinted that "American arms-manufacturers don't care now whether there's a revolution in Mexico or not."² But the majority of the American press backed the President for his stand and the New York Morning Telegraph commented that it was the "frank belief of many along shore that the British admiralty, under the guise of guarding British interests is making an extension of American ocean trade as difficult as possible."³

As the full effect of the British stand became apparent to the American public the Literary Digest reported that "our press as a whole is by no means willing to accept Sir Edward Grey's statement of fact at its face value or to consider his arguments conclusive." The Washington Post was very indignant. "Just as Germany destroyed Belgium on the plea of military necessity, England proposes to destroy American commerce." A few of the press, mostly from the pro-British section of the nation, could see a

¹ Ibid., p. 119.

² Lit. Dig., L, 1 (Jan. 2, 1915) pp. 3, 8.

³ Ibid., 2 (Jan. 9, 1915) p. 38.

silver lining in Grey's reply and hinted to the public that "the note gives promise of an early and satisfactory understanding." Only two members of the fourth estate, the New Haven Journal-Courier¹ and the Wall Street Journal believed the answer satisfactory.

At both ends of the Atlantic passage, American trade with the Central Powers was subject before the end of 1914 to a "voluntary system" of British supervision as astonishing in its extent as it was probably abhorrent both to domestic and international law. "One hesitates to think of the storm of popular outrage which would have resulted had the Germans been in a position to exert one tenth of the interference which was scarcely² noticed when practiced by the Allies."

But the possibility of an outbreak with Great Britain due to the hampering of our commercial relations with the Central Powers was averted-- not by a relaxing of British restrictions or a change of heart of the American public and government-- but by the short-sightedness of Germany. For on February 5, 1915, the newspapers of the United States were blazing with the headline: Germany Proclaims a War Zone. At the precise moment when American resentment against the British trade controls might conceivably have produced some tangible results the Germans had created a diversion in which all thought of the trade controversy was soon to³ be swallowed up and lost.

¹ Ibid., 4 (Jan. 23, 1915) pp. 131, 132, 133.

² Millis, op. cit., p. 114.

³ Ibid., p. 134.

The British overlooked nothing in an attempt to bring American industrial might behind them. At the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor in the fall of 1914, the regularly accredited delegates from the British Trades Union Congress, who usually came, were missing; in their stead, however, there turned up "two British labor men," Mr. James Seddon and Mr. Albert Bellamy, who were eagerly received and questioned about the war by the American labor chieftains.¹ Whether the British labor representatives tipped the balance or completely changed the opinions of American Labor leaders is uncertain, but at least the results were the same. Many of the labor groups, which were eyed with suspicion because of their supposed disinclination to prosecute the "Capitalists' war," as agitators called it, were similarly eager to display their patriotism. When a big munitions strike broke out in the Bridgeport factories, in 1915, Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, rushed off at once to stop it and so² "protect the good name and safety of the labor movement."

With the breakoff of diplomatic relations following the unrestricted submarine warfare note, February 3, 1917, Mr. Gompers cabled Carl Legien, the president of the German Trades Union Federation, demanding that he put pressure on his government to halt submarine warfare; and when the German presently responded with

¹ Ibid., p. 65.

² Ibid., p. 206.

the suggestion that Mr. Gompers put pressure on England to raise the food blockade, the great American labor leader felt that Leigen's answer was a patent "evasion of duty."¹ The four Railroad Brotherhoods announced on March 10, 1917 that their threatened strike would be called off in the event of war² and there were some longshorement³ and munition worker's strikes of considerable proportions; but it seems rather doubtful that labor's National Peace Council could rightly claim credit for them.

The huge volume of business enjoyed by the United States during the last year of neutrality helps to explain why no military action or economic sanctions were taken against Great Britain for her contraband list and her censoring of mail. Exports jumped from over two and one-half million dollars to four and one-third billion.⁴ The war economics as a whole made the United States a financial, if not a political, ally of Great Britain and France. As soon as the Germans struck back at the blockade and the utilization of the New World as a base of supplies, they found themselves confronted not only by the might of Great Britain and her allies, but also by that of the United States. As far as the economic warfare was concerned, the American declaration of war took place in 1915.⁵

¹
Ibid., p. 389.

²
Mock and Larson, op. cit., p. 26.

³
Millis, op. cit., p. 206.

⁴
Peterson, op. cit., p. 256.

⁵
Ibid., p. 108.

War costs money, and the expense falls by no means wholly on the belligerents. If the European conflict brought the United States industrial prosperity, it also imposed-- even in the years of neutrality-- a heavy fiscal burden. On the one hand, the army, the navy, the merchant marine and other services called for increased outlays; on the other, diminished imports cut off customs receipts, with 1915 being the smallest year since 1899, but thereafter until shortly after the close of the war governmental revenue showed a steady increase.¹

Each time that the Berlin Government made a concession to the United States, such as warning before sinking, it expected that Washington would force corresponding concessions from the Allies. But the United States possessed no means of bringing effective pressure to bear upon the Allies without injuring so deeply its own commercial interest that the price seemed too high to pay.² As was explained by Secretary Lansing, in his reply to the Austrian protest, August 12, 1915, the United States, accustomed to rely on small defensive forces and on the right and power to purchase arms and ammunition from neutral nations in case of foreign attack, was the last nation in the world that could afford to establish a precedent of the kind that was asked.³

¹ Ogg, op. cit., Vol. 27, p. 351.

² Seymour, Am. Dip., p. 13.

³ Ogg, op. cit., Vol. 27, p. 332.

Most of the restrictions that appeared likely to touch American interests were gradually arranged by private negotiations. Certainly commerce and trade were never more profitable for Americans. The Allied command of the sea, on the whole, was not exercised in a way seriously to injure American pockets, but it did injure American pride.¹

The declaration of the unrestricted submarine warfare in January, 1917, proved the straw that broke the back of American neutrality.

Business interests were bound up with the maintenance of foreign trade which was controlled by the Allies. But this fact by no means justifies the belief that those interests forced the United States into the war. From the economic point of view continued neutrality was for them the most desirable goal, just as for Wilson it was the main political purpose. If conditions of neutrality had remained bearable there would have been no intervention.²

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¹ Seymour, Am. Dip., p. 44.

² Ibid., pp. 24-25.

VI. CONCLUSION.

War is not "inevitable,"
but proceeds from definite and
removable causes.

G. Lowes Dickinson

At the onset of the European struggle the fact was clear that the American people would find it more than ordinarily difficult to avoid taking sides as this was a World War; and the United States, the historic asylum of the oppressed, contained a "menagerie of nationalities,"¹ But this did not mean that the Americans² people wanted to get into the fight, nor did it mean that they now loved Great Britain. Although the majority of those who took sides seem to have favored the Allies, this feeling was probably more anti-German than pro-British.

The popular American conception that neutrality is a clearly defined status is erroneous. On the contrary, we shall come closer to a correct view if we think of neutrality merely as a policy, which, within certain limits, has an almost infinite number of permutations and combinations. No two authorities can agree on a definition of the precise rights and duties of neutrals, except as regards specific and (for us) minor matters such as the withholding of direct aid by a neutral nation to a belligerent, or the duty of a neutral government to refuse to allow its territory to be used as a base for military operations against a belligerent. The trade rights of a neutral are as broad as the power the neutral

¹ Bailey, Thomas A.: A Diplomatic History of the American People, p. 610.

² Of the 367 editors who replied to a Lit. Dig. poll, 20 favored the Germans, 105 the Allies, and 242 neutrality; XLIX, 20 (Nov. 14, 1914) p. 939.

is willing and able to assert to maintain those rights. Neutrality should mean that policy which a country at peace adopts toward countries at war.¹

In the opening decade of the twentieth century, unbeknownst to many Americans, the United States had become a world power. The country's foreign trade had been growing by leaps and bounds; by 1913 exports reached a value of nearly two and a half billion dollars. Exports which bulked so large in the national economy exercised, of course, a corresponding important political influence at Washington.² There are many writers who attribute America's entry into the war solely or largely to these financial bonds by which she was bound to the Allies, and to the foreign propaganda by which she was duped; but these forces must not be over-emphasized. Most Americans favored the Allies before the war orders arrived or the loans were floated, and the loans were as much an expression of sympathy as a mere business transaction. In 1915 the Germans, too, tried to borrow in this country; but only a few German-Americans lent, though the German armies were then victorious on every front.³

Mr. Millis, in his interesting book, gives us the impression that the United States was caught in the world war primarily

¹ Dulles, Allen W. and Armstrong, Hamilton Fish: Can We be Neutral? p. 7.

² Ibid., p. 20.

³ Swain, op. cit., p. 473.

because of the preponderance of British propaganda, the subtleties of British diplomacy, and the influence of vested financial, commercial and industrial interests whose fortunes became tied up with an Allied victory. These factors all counted. But to single them out and stress them so heavily seems to us to allow too little for the natural predisposition of many Americans for certain principles and their antipathy for certain others. Mr. Millis tends to ignore the fundamental reasons why American sentiment turned in favor of the Allies and against Germany. It is not necessary to hunt for a demon either in Wall Street or in Downing Street to explain the American attitude toward the war. Whatever may have been the effect of hired propaganda or the influence of financial and commercial interests, they do not fully account for our intervention.¹

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Dulles and Armstrong, op. cit., p. 22; Thus one looks in vain for a reference to the fact that there was a treaty guaranteeing Belgium, that Germany had signed it, and that Germany's violation of it exercised an instantaneous and persistent effect on American feeling toward Germany. The Belgian deportations are called "an attack upon the unemployment problem in Belgium and Northern France"; it is not mentioned that in 1917 Germany ordered the stoppage of all public works undertaken by the Belgian communes and provinces for the relief of unemployment, that she had already removed to Germany many of the instruments and machines of labor, that the forced labor to which the deportees were condemned was work for the enemy, often on military roads and trenches near the front, that hence the Belgians were willing to suffer punishment and go into exile rather than work, and that many Americans pitied and applauded them. When Mr. Millis describes the staff of the American Legation in Brussels and the American correspondents as naive for not emphasizing that Belgian francs tireurs were technically guilty of atrocities in sniping at the invading troops and that the German high command was technically justified in lining up local hostages and shooting them, he misses the point;

There can be no doubt that there was much Allied propaganda; but there is considerable doubt as to its effect. It seems reasonably clear that American opinion was anti-German before the war began; it also seems clear that American opinion was outraged by the acts of Germany. Belgium was a fact; the Lusitania was a fact. And although British propaganda unquestionably embellished these facts, its effect would have been incomparably weaker without them.¹

We were unprepared as a people and as a government to deal with the conditions created by a general European war. There was no time in the summer of 1914 to sit down quietly to weigh the consequences of alternative courses to meet a situation which daily became more complicated, much less to think out a long-range policy. All that our government could do was cling to the best precedents available, even though second thought might have raised doubts as to whether they really were applicable to the new conditions of maritime warfare, especially when the war was being waged by the mighty antagonists now locked in a death grip. We stuck to

no emphasis on the illegality of the Belgian civilians action or the legality of the German military reprisals would have made the American public of that day feel that the Belgian defenders were not acting heroically and justifiably and that the German invaders were not acting in a contrary sense. Other cases could be cited of failure to appreciate the origins of the sentiment which as the war developed played an important part in shaping American policy. The hostile and criminal acts of German agents in the United States irritated the public much more than Mr. Millis can remember-- and were placed in a different category from the propaganda and publicity work of Allied writers and lecturers. It seems to us unrealistic to imagine that deep-rooted sentiment can be dismissed as an important factor in determining the policies of nations; perhaps, it is unjustified to assume that its elimination is necessarily desirable, even though one can prove in specific cases it might well be.

¹ Bailey, op. cit., p. 613.

the precedents; and they led us step by step nearer the arena.

What really happened was that from the very beginning of the war American sympathies were engaged. On top of that, and of decisive importance, the course which the Government took in demanding observance of its traditional neutral rights engaged the national honor of the United States in the defense of the principle that its trade should continue and that its nationals were entitled to protection in the exercise of that trade. When those rights were curtailed by Great Britain, we protested. When our citizens who were exercising those rights were killed by Germany, when our ships were sunk, and when Germany formally challenged our asserted rights, then we went to war. If the basic conception of our policy was sound, what other course in self-respect could we have followed?

Americans sometimes have vague preferences among foreign countries. Though some persons found deep reasons for these preferences, many who loudly preferred one country to another based their choice upon nothing more important than tradition, or the food and treatment accorded to them in the hotels and trains of various countries they had visited. England was the country that loomed largest in the American mind, and aristocratic "Anglomaniacs" admired her tremendously; the common language and traditions, and the idea of Anglo-Saxon solidarity, impressed many; the English and Scotch immigrants in America generally retained a kindly feeling for the mother country. But England was also the most hated nation; many people considered it a matter of patriotism to hate the former mother coun-

try-- a sentiment which the millions of Irish never allowed to grow¹
cold.

The German immigrants were equally well disposed towards their former Fatherland, while many intellectual leaders in America had been trained in German universities, and admired Germany's achievements in science and social reform.

Even the Irish did not curse the government from which they fled more bitterly than did the Russian Jews in America. In the days just before the war, many Americans thought of France more favorably than in earlier years; but in regard to the other countries² of Europe people were ignorant and apathetic.

Sir Edward Grey knew his history:

"Relations with the United States differ from those of Great Britain with any other country. The two countries have one language in common, and the jurisprudence of both is founded upon the common law of England. The American constitution was drawn up and made by men of British race, whose descendants form a large part of the present population of the United States and are still proud of their race and conscious of the kinship in blood and the common origin and traditions. The whole people are attached to democratic government and human freedom."

Sir Edward added, however:

"The sense of common race and origin is closely associated with the historical memory of bitter war. Americans do not always seem to realize that those who left Britain to escape from King and prelates

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Swain, op. cit., p. 474.

2

Loc. cit.

were not the only British of their generations who loved liberty. Others stayed behind, and in time there was established in Britain a democracy as free as that founded in the New World on the other side of the Atlantic. Successive generations in Britain have been brought up to regard the separation of the American Colonies as the work of a narrow-minded King, who has been dead for a hundred years, and the outcome of a political system that seems to us to-day as antiquated and intolerable as it does to the people of the United States. Hence, amongst Americans of British stock there may be the historical feeling of resentment, as well as the sense of kinship." 1

Hence, the pro-British sentiment had little effect on public opinion, however it may have influenced our statesmen as the Wilson administration showed pro-Ally leanings with the exception of the Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, who was considered by his colleagues as pro-German. Wilson himself was of British ancestry, and a strong admirer of British culture. He made a genuine effort to pursue a strictly neutral course, but as the war progressed he found his sympathies gravitating more and more to the side of the Allies, and occasionally in private he would betray himself. Once he burst out, "England is fighting our fight." 2

Robert Lansing, who replaced Bryan as Secretary of State, in his memorandum, "Consideration and Outline of Politics," written

1 Grey, Sir Edward: Twenty-five Years, Vol. 2, p. 86.

2 Bailey, op. cit., p. 614.

July 11, 1915, said:

"American public opinion must be prepared for the time, which may come, when we will have to cast aside our neutrality and become one of the champions of democracy." ¹

Lansing also admits that he intentionally held up and prolonged the disputes to see if something could happen to change public opinion before an answer had to be sent. ²

The President's most trusted advisor, Col. Edward M. House, was strongly pro-Ally. Ambassador Page in England was so pro-British that instead of representing the United States in England, Page represented the British cause to the government in Washington. ³

But these members of the administration were not the nation, although holding positions which might influence the nation. The East was pro-British, the middle West neutral and the far West did not seem to care. Sensing the policy of the nation, Wilson on August 4, when five nations had entered the struggle, issued a formal declaration of neutrality, which was repeated as successive states entered the contest; and two weeks later he made a special appeal to his fellow citizens to be "neutral in fact as well as in name.... We must be impartial in thought as well as in action." ⁴

¹ War Memories of Robert Lansing, p. 21.

² Ibid., p. 112.

³ Bailey, op. cit., p. 620.

⁴ Ogg, op. cit., Vol. 27, p. 329.

With our neutrality proclaimed we started out with the idea that there must be certain inherent rights of trade, a thesis which we consistently maintained throughout our history. Like his predecessors-- Washington, Adams, Jefferson and Madison-- President Wilson was soon engaged in the effort to keep out of war, maintain neutrality, and at the same time make good the illusive and indefinite doctrine known as the Freedom of the Seas. But now there was no serious question of embargoes or non-intercourse as in the days of Jefferson; trade was too important. When Congress met in December 1914, bills were introduced to embargo the export of arms and ammunition, one of them sponsored by an influential Democrat, Senator Hitchcock of Nebraska. The influences which prevented its adoption were not primarily commercial. The bill suffered from being presented as a humanitarian measure rather than as a move to keep us out of the war, and it was attacked and defeated as preparing an "unneutral" change in our laws after a foreign conflict had begun. Nevertheless, the fact that our people had never doubted their right and ability to continue trade with belligerents and still remain neutral, and the fact that the relinquishment of that trade would have played havoc with many fundamental American occupations, were root causes of our whole attitude.

As a legal basis for the position we assumed we first tried to make use of the Declaration of London of 1909, which defined contraband and etc., but we felt deprived of its real value

¹ Dulles and Armstrong, op. cit., p. 24.

due to the knowledge that Great Britain had never ratified the declaration and refused to apply it without modifications. With this in mind we fell back upon what we claimed to be the recognized rules of international law. But in doing so we had to recognize that international law failed to give us a definite code and that this failure would "undoubtedly be the source of numerous controversies."¹ Further, particularly in our dealings with the British, the doctrines we had maintained in the Civil War came in to plague us. We had ourselves broadened the idea of "continuous voyage", the doctrine under which we seized goods which were enroute to a neutral port but which we asserted had an ultimate enemy destination; and we had extended the list of contraband.

Our most serious admission was the cable from Secretary Bryan to Ambassador Page, December 26, 1914. ".... that the commerce between countries which are not belligerents should not be interfered with by those at war unless such interference is manifestly an imperative necessity to protect their national safety, and then only to the extent that it is a necessity."²

Three important problems faced President Wilson and his foreign policy during 1915; the English attempt to block indirect importation to Germany which he "violently opposed" in a series of notes, the German war zone around England when he informed the German government he would hold them to "strict accountability", and the sinking of the Lusitania.

¹ Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 218.

² Dulles and Armstrong, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

It did not take the British long to reach the conclusion that the suppression of our trade with Germany, was an imperative necessity. As Lord Grey stated: "The object of British diplomacy, therefore, was to secure the maximum of blockade that could be enforced without a rupture with the United States."¹ Even if the law had been different or our previous policy a reversal of this action, it is doubtful if the British would have relaxed their hold upon neutral commerce. They were fighting for their very lives; and to them American profits were a minor consideration.² British restrictions hurt both American pockets and American pride. Britain countered our notes by playing a delaying game, and the strategy was perfect and, what is more, the United States played the British game. The longer the State Department deferred pushing matters to a showdown, the more perfect the British strangulation of Germany became and more closely the United States was bound by economic ties to the Allies, and the greater the chance that the German submarines³ would drive the country to war.

It has frequently been alleged that the United States could have forced the Allies to respect its rights by instituting an embargo on war materials. Such a course was repeatedly proposed, but it met with considerable apathy. As the weeks passed by, the

¹ Grey, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 213.

² Bailey, op. cit., p. 617.

³ Ibid., p. 619
War Memories of Robert Lansing, p. 112.

American economic structure gradually became so inextricably interlaced with the cause of the Allies that public opinion would not have tolerated an embargo. A Literary Digest poll, even at this¹ early period, showed the industrial centers against such a move. The United States took a position which was logical and which fitted both the sentimental and the national interests of the country, namely, that we were under no duty arbitrarily to rectify the consequences of British control of the sea. We would trade where we could, and thus fill the gaps caused by the loss of trade with Germany, whose ports, as well as the ports of neighboring countries, were largely closed to us as a result of the extension of the contraband list and the doctrine of continuous voyage. Further we considered it objectionable as a matter of principle to change what we conceived to be the rules of neutrality during the course of the war. Thus Secretary Bryan wrote to Count von Bernstorff on April 21, 1915:

".... any change in its own laws of neutrality during the progress of a war, which would affect unequally the relations of the United States with the nations at war would be an unjustifiable departure from the principles of strict neutrality." 2

The United States had no objection to selling arms and ammunition to Germany; but if she could not import them because of

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Lit. Dig., L, 6 (Feb. 6, 1915) p. 225.

2

"Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States," 1915, Supplement, The World War, p. 162.

the British navy, that was one of the misfortunes of war. In short, an embargo on munitions would favor Germany; the absence of one would favor the Allies. So the United States followed the profitable path of least resistance.¹

The government therefore continued to pursue a policy that violated the true spirit though not the strict letter of neutrality; bound the nation even tighter to the wheels of the Allied economic chariot; and so inflamed the German mind as to provide a partial justification-- to the Germans at least-- for unrestricted submarine warfare. Therefore, when, Germany in February 1915 proclaimed that the waters surrounding Great Britain were to be considered within the seat of war our answer was Wilson's "strict accountability" note. We stated in that note that:

".... the Government of the United States would be constrained to hold the Imperial German Government to a strict accountability for such acts of their naval authorities and to take any steps it might be necessary to take to safeguard American lives and property and to secure to American citizens the full enjoyment of their acknowledged rights on the high seas."²

There in a few words, is the thesis which, logically³ pursued, led to war. It was stated before the blossoming of the

¹ Bailey, op. cit., p. 623.

² "Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States," Supplement, The World War, p. 99.

³ Dulles and Armstrong, op. cit., p. 31.

"war boom" based on trade with the Allies, and seven months before the first Allied public loan in this country. We were insisting on what we claimed to be full enjoyment of acknowledged rights. In a note to Germany a few months later the same idea appears:

"The rights of neutrals in time of war are based upon principle, not upon expediency, and the principles are immutable. It is the duty and obligation of belligerents to find a way to adapt the new circumstances to them."¹

The sinking of the Lusitania had consequences from which German diplomacy never recovered. It brought the war home to a mass of Americans for whom until then it had been little more than a moving picture. It made impossible any sort of understanding between the United States and Germany as against Allied interference with neutral trade. It raised definitely and for the first time the question of American participation in the war, and it pointed unequivocally to Germany as the enemy of the future. Wilson could have broken relations with Germany on the following day; he would have received a tumult of applause from the Eastern states² and at least acquiescence from the rest of the country. His hesitancy was revealed in his "too proud to fight" speech, delivered at Philadelphia, three days after the sinking. Wilson immediately reiterated his statement of "strict accountability" and asked the German government's disavowal and the reply to Wilson, September,

¹ "Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States," 1915, supplement, The World War, p. 481.

² Seymour, Am. Dip., pp. 89-90.

1915, promised no more sinkings without warnings, although negotiations dragged on into 1916. The severity of the second note caused the resignation of Secretary of State Bryan.

Wilson's firm stand in his second note was proof that he was slowly rejecting the pacifist attitude and that his patience was wearing thin. With the exception of the West, the newspapers¹ were loud in praise of his action.

The loss of the British liner Arabic, August 19, 1915, found Secretary Lansing seriously considering the severance of diplomatic relations, but Wilson, seemingly determined to bring² about a peace conference, either by persuasion or threats, would not approve the action, fearing the country would not sustain the government. The outcome of the incident was a Wilson victory. "The country is undoubtedly back of me in the whole matter, and I feel myself under bonds to it to show patience to the utmost. My chief³ puzzle is to determine where patience ceases to be a virtue."

During the seven months after the sinking of the Arabic, the German submarines refrained from killing American citizens. But a vast amount of suspicion and ill feelings was created in the United States by the alleged machinations of German secret agents,

¹ Lit. Dig., L, 25 (June 19, 1915) pp. 1449-1450.

² Seymour, Am. Dip., p. 130.

³ Bailey, op. cit., p. 630.

particularly by their attempts to sabotage the munitions trade. Other incidents included the exposure of the Albert papers, the recalling, by request of Dr. Constantin Dumba, the Austrian ambassador, charged with fermenting strikes, and the recall by request, of Captains von Papen and Boy-Ed, December 1, 1915, for overstepping diplomatic boundaries in regard to the war effort. Although many of the alleged German plots were figments of fevered imaginations, the witch hunting hysteria that swept the country deepened distrust of Germany, and further prejudiced the American mind¹ against the Central Powers.

As a result of the prolonged Lusitania negotiations and internal disturbances it became clear to Wilson that if the war did not come to an end, American participation was almost unavoidable. Wilson's call for mediation, through his personal diplomat, Col. House, in January, 1915, and again one year later, was not the meddling of an interfering busybody or the dream of an impractical visionary. It was based upon the need of escaping from the untenable position of a neutral. Ending the war by negotiation or entering the war were the only alternatives.² On his second trip to Europe, Col. House, in his attempt to get a conference meeting of the powers, virtually pledged the United States to become a member³ of the Allied coalition. He had been told to pledge MORAL force.

¹ Ibid., p. 632.

² Seymour, Am. Dipl., p. 128.

³ Bailey, op. cit., p. 635.

The attempt failed as neither side was desirous of peace at that time.

The rejection of the peace plan, especially by the Allied powers, and the action of Congress on such bills as the McLemore bill, which would have forbidden Americans to sail on contraband-laden British liners (the bill was sidetracked following a strong message from Wilson) brought a lull in American action during the period from February to May, 1916. It was a period of watchful waiting.

But the period of watchful waiting ended with the torpedoing of the channel steamer, the Sussex, March 24, 1916, with the loss of American lives. Wilson's note, asking Germany to disavow was sent April 18, and the German reply, pledging restriction of submarine warfare, arrived May 4, 1916. It was a victory for Wilson. He averted hostilities, maintained American prestige and forced the Germans to emasculate their most effective sea weapon. But he took such a position that it would be virtually impossible honorably to avoid war if the Germans should reopen their unre-¹stricted submarine warfare.

The same month (May, 1916) 135,000 people throughout the nation marched in "Preparedness Day Parades." Wilson carrying a flag led the Washington parade. This was Wilson's appeal to the general public, as he had already appealed to Congress (Dec. 8,

¹
Ibid., p. 636.

1914) stating that provision for voluntary military training would be extended, and that the organized militia of the states should be developed and strengthened. The war in Europe had proved the failure of a small army and Wilson wanted an improvement in our militia,¹ without conscription.

During the nine months following the so-called Sussex pledge, the German submarines were on their good behavior as far as the United States was concerned. American public opinion was therefore left free to concentrate on the accumulation of grievances, old and new, at the hands of Britain. Particularly galling was the British practice of opening the United States mail, in search of contraband being sent to Germany. The resentment of the American people was further increased when it was alleged that trade secrets were being filched from these letters and turned over to British commercial rivals. Then on July 18, 1916, came the British blacklist, composed of 85 persons or firms, with whom the British were not to trade. This act angered the nation; even Wilson and the cabinet. The protest of the Washington government against the blacklist was based on international morals rather than on international law, for Britain had an undeniable legal right to² forbid her subjects to trade with firms in the United States.

The Democratic Convention meeting in St. Louis, June 14,

¹ Lit. Dig., LII, 22 (May 27, 1916) p. 1518.

² Bailey, op. cit., p. 636.

1916, selected President Wilson to once again head the ticket. Back-
ed by the slogan, "He kept us out of war," the convention attempted
to make peace the theme of the campaign with diplomacy the weapon
instead of war. The election campaign submerged the war issues on
the sea. Wilson, of course, had promised nothing. The slogan referred
only to the past, and was historically true, but there were those
who felt that the slogan was a tacit pledge which Wilson was morally¹
bound to observe.

The Republicans, meeting in Chicago, selected a Justice
of the Supreme Court, Charles Evans Hughes, as his opponent, al-
though they failed to make a concrete stand on the war situation.

Obviously Wilson would head the ticket even if the pol-
iticians did not like him; apart from negligible elements alien-
ated by his foreign policy, the rank and file were for him. Indeed,
he was recognized to be stronger than his party, and it was assumed
by Democrats that he would draw heavily from the Progressives and
from the independent vote. Starting with a somewhat archaic Jeff-
ersonian equipment of political principles, and under the suspicion
of being a cloistered doctrinaire and amateur, he had proved him-
self a practical and adroit politician, and adept at divining the
trend of public opinion, and a statesman capable of infusing the
radical democratic impulses of Bryan into the idealistic program

¹
Ibid., p. 638.

1

of the moderate progressives. Hughes, the Republican candidate, hoped to bring back the Progressives who had split off in 1912, and most were ready to follow Teddy Roosevelt back into the fold. The elder Henry Morgenthau, writing in his book, All in a Life-Time, remarks concerning the pessimism of the Democrats:

"I spent the first few days after my return to the United States with my old political friends in Washington and I was shocked at the prevailing political atmosphere. Not one of the numerous men high in the administration with whom I talked had the slightest hope that President Wilson could be re-elected that fall." 2

Hughes made many criticisms of Wilson's conduct of foreign affairs, but his own policy was never clear. He was strong in the north-east, where pro-Ally sentiment was strong, but he failed to gain many German votes or to offset the Democrat's slogan; "He [Wilson] kept us out of war." The final outcome was close. New York went Republican, but the returns from the west finally swung the tide to Wilson.

1
Ogg, op. cit., Vol. 27, p. 374.

2
Baker, op. cit., Vol. 6, p. 34.

The Democratic victory was accomplished by inroads on Republican strength among the farming populations of the newer states. These inroads were easy to make, for the reason that these people regarded the President as a genuine progressive, and because they thoroughly approved his pacific foreign policy; Hughes, they considered to be the candidate of a party dominated by reactionaries and jingoes. The much feared "hyphen" vote failed to materialize. He had avoided war with Germany. Of seven states containing the largest numbers of German-Americans, the Democrats carried three.¹ Wilson was actually more favorable to Germany than the leading Republicans, especially Theodore Roosevelt.

Following his reelection, according to Mrs. Edith Reid, a close friend of Wilson's, the president again was determined to bring about peace in Europe, if possible. "Now the burden upon me is heavier than ever," he stated. "If we can escape entering the war and bring about a rational peace it is something worth living and dying for, and I believe the country feels that way or it would not have re-elected me."² But we must remember there might be times when the completion of a rational peace might require war.

Shortly following the election Germany made a move for a compromise peace, but the Allied answers showed peace impossible

¹ Ogg., op. cit., Vol. 27, p. 381.

² Millis, op. cit., p. 354.

without a decisive victory. Although Wilson had promised Germany to move for peace immediately following his re-election,¹ he waited until after the German move, in the middle of December, to begin the writing of his peace notes, at which time (December 18) he sent identical notes to all the belligerent nations.² The public reaction to Wilson's move followed the general pattern that had prevailed throughout the country following his previous attempts at mediation; a pro-Ally east, a neutral mid-west, a disinterested west and a drop on the stock exchange.³

The German answer was at first evasive and the Allies refused to bargain without the certainty of reparations, cleverly concealing their answer, and realizing their goal of inciting favorably⁴ public reaction in the United States.

On January 22, 1917, Wilson gave his reaction to the replies of his peace message, in his "peace without victory" speech to Congress and at the same time asking for a League of Nations to preserve peace in the future. It was a last desperate attempt to win peace for America. It was the final stage of American neutrality.

¹ Baker, op. cit., Vol. 6, p. 434.

² Bailey, op. cit., p. 640.

³ Lit. Dig., LIV, 1 (Jan. 6, 1917) p. 24.
Peterson, op. cit., p. 267.

⁴ Bailey, op. cit., p. 641.

But Wilson was too late, for on January 8, 1917, the Emperor of Germany had secretly promulgated an order ~~for~~ unrestricted submarine warfare.¹ When Josph P. Tumulty, Wilson's secretary, delivered the Associated Press bulletin announcing Germany's resumption of unrestricted warfare, January 31, 1917, Wilson stated, "This means war...."² The German note, announcing that a blockade was to be placed around the British Isles, showed that Germany realized peace was impossible. The British Ambassador, with his ear to the ground, reported; "War has drawn gradually nearer and nearer to the United States in spite of all their efforts."³

The announcement of the blockade around the British Isles brought forth a rupture in diplomatic relations and on February 3, 1917, Count von Bernstorff was handed his passport. In a statement issued to the press, Bernstorff said: "I am not surprised. My government will not be surprised either. The people in Berlin knew what was bound to happen if they took the action they have taken. There was nothing left for the United States to do."⁴ The Wall Street Digest noted that the "upward movement in the price of stocks dates from the day the German Ambassador was handed his passports."

¹ Baker, op. cit., Vol. 6, p. 434.

² Ibid., p. 445.

³ Seymour, Am. Dip., p. 191.

⁴ War Memories of Robert Lansing, p. 217.

Throughout 1916 the news of German victories or peace offers had a most depressing effect on the stock market. These facts, together with the rejoicing in financial circles over the break with Germany, indicate the closeness of the economic relationship between the United States and the Allies.¹

After the rupture of relations with Germany, war was virtually inevitable. Yet Wilson hoped against hope that the Germans might avoid an overt act against the United States. But if their submarines again destroyed American ships and lives he would come before Congress again and recommend extreme measures. This was a wise decision, for public opinion in the United States was far from unanimous on the desirability of war. "I could not move faster," Wilson remarked to his secretary, "than the mass of our people would permit."²

The exposure of the Zimmerman note, February 24, 1917, came as something of a shock to Americans to realize that Germany, if struck by the United States, would strike back in the New World. Immediately a tremendous wave of anti-German sentiment swept over the country, particularly in the hitherto apathetic south and southwest, where there was alarm over the threat of being conquered by Mexico. Nor was the immigration-conscious

¹ Peterson, op. cit., p. 267.

² Bailey, op. cit., p. 642.

Pacific coast pleased by the proposed overtures to Japan. A more¹ nearly united America was now one step nearer the brink.

On February 26, Wilson urged Congress to authorize the mounting of guns on American merchant ships bound for European waters, calling it "armed neutrality," and, realizing that further action by Congress was needed, called a special session for April 6, 1917. A filibuster halted the request in Congress, but the action was carried out March 4, through military powers of the executive office and expert gunners were to be supplied by the Navy.² The sinking of two unarmed merchant ships, March 12 and 19, only added to the call for war.

The Zimmerman note and the actual sinkings convinced Wilson that peace was hopeless. The pressure on Wilson to request Congress to declare a state of war came from many sides and especially from people prominent in everyday affairs. A state of war between Germany and the United States actually existed, said vice-president Marshall in a speech at Montgomery, Alabama, on the 24th. This opinion was echoed by Charles E. Hughes, Elihu Root and Theodore Roosevelt. "There is now a state of war, and the people of

¹
Ibid., p. 643.

Lit. Dig., LIV, 4 (March 17, 1917) p. 687.

²
Millis, op. cit., pp. 404-405.

the United States should recognize the fact," said Mr. Hughes. "Germany is making war on us and our reply must be either war or submission," affirmed Mr. Root. Colonel Roosevelt, after pointing out that Germany "had steaily waged war upon us" ever since her declaration of unrestricted submarine war on January 31, added: "Let us face the accomplished fact, admit that Germany is at war with us, and in turn wage war on Germany with all our energy and courage and regain the right to look the whole world in the eyes without flinching."^{1,2}

Wilson's message to Congress, April 6, 1917, was greeted with wild ovation. Of the 50 negative votes in the House (373 to 50), 32 came from Republicans-- mostly of the western progressive wing-- one was that of an independent and the remaining one that of Meyer London, the Socialist member. There were, altogether, 520 Senators and Representatives; only 56, or about one in ten, had³ dared to cast their votes against the tide.

But if one dares to trust Mr. Tumulty's memory, there was another scene in the White House that night, when the secretary talked alone with his chief in the Cabinet room. The applause

¹ Lit. Dig., LIV, 12 (March 24, 1917) p. 801.

² Roosevelt, Theodore: Fear God and Take Your Own Part, p. 203.

³ Cong. Rec., 65th Cong. Special Session, Vol. 55, pt. 1, p. 420.

from the sidewalk crowds as he had driven from the Capitol returned to the President's ears. "My message today," Tumulty remembers him say, "was a message of death for our young men. How strange it seems to applaud that." Afterward, in the secretary's account, the President broke down and wept, with his head¹ on the Cabinet table.

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It might have seemed logical for the United States to have declared war against both groups of belligerents, just as it had been proposed that she fight both England and France in 1812.

A logical answer was that Allied practices hurt only American property rights. The United States could lodge protests and perhaps collect damages when the war was over. The German submarine took American lives and there seemed to be no proper recompense for lives. So the United States fought Germany. As the Boston Globe remarked: "One was a gang of thieves; the other was a gang of murderers. On the whole we prefer the thieves but only as² the lesser of two evils."

Whether rightly or wrongly, Wilson followed the course of insisting upon the strict letter of the law-- at least as far as the Germans were concerned and when Germany felt impelled to act contrary to these "immutable principles" and "acknowledged

¹

Tumulty, Joseph P. : Woodrow Wilson as I know Him, p. 256.

²

Bailey, op. cit., p. 645.

rights" war became inevitable. We had admitted the law of necessity in our earlier notes to Great Britain where trade only was involved; but we did not recognize that the law of necessity could be invoked to justify putting the lives of our citizens in jeopardy.¹ Secretary of State Robert Lansing, said on June 9, 1915:

"But the sinking of passenger ships involves principles of humanity which throw into the background any special circumstances of detail that may be thought to affect the cases.... The government of the United States is contending for something much greater than mere rights of property or privileges of commerce. It is contending for nothing less high and sacred than the rights of humanity, which every government honors itself in respecting and which no Government is justified in resigning on behalf of those under its care and authority." ²

These grave words, and the acts to which they were the prelude, show us that in the last analysis it is the attack on human life, rather than the attack on property rights, which is most likely to start in motion the tides of resentment which can impel a country like the United States into war. But perhaps the decisive factor was sympathy-- gradually shifting to the Allied cause.

Nearly everyone, even Theodore Roosevelt in September, 1914, thought it "eminently desirable" to remain neutral. It was not until some months later that Roosevelt accused Wilson of "pol-

¹ Dulles and Armstrong, op. cit., p. 31.

² "Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States," 1915, Supplement, The World War, p. 481.

troonery" for not having protested the invasion of Belgium. His change of mind is not attributable mainly to political motives, though his love of political invective undoubtedly played a part. What happened to him, what happened to President Wilson, happened to many other Americans, some sooner, some later. They saw a battle royal in progress, and in their hearts they took sides. Then, as the position which our government had taken from the very outset produced the material and legal grounds for participation, feeling and fact coalesced; we participated.¹

"A government can be neutral," said Water Hines Page,²
"but no man can be."

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¹ Dulles and Armstrong, op. cit., p. 33.

² Hendrick, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 361.

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