

EFFECTS OF BRITISH PROPAGANDA IN THE AMERICAN MIDWEST
DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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Military History

by

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ABSTRACT

EFFECTS OF BRITISH PROPAGANDA IN THE AMERICAN MIDWEST DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR, by Patricia T. Schmaltz, 244 pages.

Examining the effects of Great Britain's propaganda operations in the American Midwest during the First World War, from the beginning of the war in August 1914 until the United States declared war in April 1917. The First World War was the first conflict with significant international propaganda operations, including neutral nations. The American Midwest around the southern tip of Lake Michigan had a significant ethnic German population, including immigrants, naturalized and first generation German-Americans. This paper used newspapers published the duration of the time period covered to assess the sentiment of the locals in the newspaper's area towards the war and how it changed, or not, as time progressed due to propaganda, concentrating on British efforts.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ILLUSTRATIONS	viii
CHAPTER 1 WORLD WAR AND PROPAGANDA	2
The United States before the War Started	8
Southern Lake Michigan Region of the Midwest	11
Methodology	13
Definitions	18
Propaganda: History and Psychology	20
Constraints of this Study.....	22
CHAPTER 2 GREAT BRITAIN’S PROPAGANDA ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION	24
Great Britain’s Propaganda Apparatus	24
Great Britain’s Propaganda Messages and Delivery	28
CHAPTER 3 1914: THE WAR BEGINS.....	35
1914 War Timeline	35
Assassination to War Propaganda Bureau Creation	36
Great Britain’s War Propaganda Bureau Starts Operations.....	51
It Was Not Over by Christmas.....	63
1914 Conclusions.....	70
CHAPTER 4 1915	73
1915 War Timeline	73
January to April	74
The <i>Lusitania</i> and the <i>Eastland</i>	91
Nurse Cavell and Western Hemisphere Problems	107
1915 Conclusions.....	112
CHAPTER 5 1916	114

1916 Timeline	114
Great Britain's Indicators of Deteriorating Situation	115
Concerns Closer to Home	121
Diplomatic Breaks, War, and Sabotage	128
Wilson Wins Again.....	138
1916 Conclusions.....	148
 CHAPTER 6 1917	 151
1917 Timeline	151
The Situation Deteriorates	152
Zimmermann's Telegram	164
It Is War	171
1917 Conclusions.....	175
 CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 178
Summations and Conclusions	178
Further Inquiry	192
 APPENDIX A CONSOLIDATED TIMELINE	 195
 APPENDIX B VECTORS OF BIAS.....	 199
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 203

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Ethnic German Population Dispersion from 1890 Census Data	9
Figure 2. 1914 Timeline	35
Figure 3. John McCutcheon Illustration, 8 December 1914	67
Figure 4. John McCutcheon Illustration, 4 December 1914	68
Figure 5. 1915 Timeline	73
Figure 6. McCutcheon Alternative to War	75
Figure 7. McCutcheon Illustration “Hardened to Horror”	89
Figure 8. McCutcheon Illustration “Rival Attractions”	90
Figure 9. 1916 Timeline	114
Figure 10. John T. McCutcheon Illustration, 20 September 1916	141
Figure 11. 1917 Timeline	151
Figure 12. 1914 Timeline	195
Figure 13. 1915 Timeline	196
Figure 14. 1916 Timeline	197
Figure 15. 1917 Timeline	198

CHAPTER 1

WORLD WAR AND PROPAGANDA

When the First World War began, civilians largely believed it would not last more than a few months. A few glorious battles, punctuated by valorous deeds and masterful tactics would swiftly end the conflict, bringing honor and acclaim to the victors or so the illusion went. Months passed and the war devolved into stalemate. The armies settled into their trenches and their governments searched for options to ensure their continued ability to wage war and eventually break the stalemate. One option the belligerents explored was neutral nations. Neutral nations were not obliged to any combatant, but could do business with both warring sides. This made neutrals attractive sources of raw resources and material production—such as artillery shells—for a combatant’s war effort. Resources and material were not the only shortages combatants were fighting through. Soldier losses in a single battle could be staggering: British losses in a single day at the Somme in 1916 totaled nearly 60,000 soldiers dead or wounded.¹ The belligerents could not sustain these losses and internally replace them indefinitely. They needed untapped reserves, preferably those who had not suffered the privations related to living in a nation at war. Neutral nations were viewed as that pool. Neutral nations were targeted by combatants to grow their coalitions or at least prevent the enemy from growing theirs. Barring that, combatants needed to ensure the neutrals did not become the opposition; but

¹ Peter Furtado, “The Somme Battlefield,” *History Today*, 56, no. 7 (July 2006): 10, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/202819217/fulltextPDF/BF87FB1BDC5467DPQ/13?accountid=28992>.

through all belligerent's efforts persisted the hope neutrals might be persuaded to join the war as allied combatants.

Countries in the First World War essentially fell into one of three groups: Entente (usually referred to as the Allies during the war), Triple Alliance (later called the Central Powers) or neutral. The members of the Entente—France, Great Britain, and Russia—had signed treaties obligating each other for defense, in addition to the treaty obliging the perpetuation of Belgian neutrality. The Triple Alliance was composed of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, but Italy did not agree it was bound by treaty or honor to aid the other two members in 1914. The Central Powers, as known to history, included Germany and Austria-Hungary, initially, with the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria joining later. The two alliances knew they were not equipped to fight a protracted war, but as the armies started to mobilize in August 1914, few thought it would last as long or cost as much as history recorded. As the battles progressed munition expenditures and personnel losses mounted; the combatants found their reserves insufficient. They needed more raw material for military industry and replacements for the growing numbers of casualties. Neutral nations were a desirable option, from the belligerent's view, but neutrals were not bound by treaty or honor to join the war. Softer means were required to persuade them to commit, since compulsion was not an option. The softer power used to influence uninterested nations to join a conflict in progress which they had no party to was propaganda.

Propaganda and persuasion in modern usage are often used interchangeably, but propaganda is a subset of persuasion. Propaganda is meant to appeal to the emotions of a target population exclusively, not to the rational mind. The desired result is to influence

the target's behavior and cognitions, eliciting a behavior or action favorable to the propagandist without consideration of the effect on the target of propaganda.² It is not a modern concept. Propaganda has been used to establish and maintain power throughout history. In antiquity governments used influence techniques to facilitate in-group feelings and elevate their profile to the citizens.³ Representative governments, historical or modern, need to persuade their populations to support government actions or they lose power. Some governmental actions or decisions may be contrary to the values or cultural norms of the society, making the initial support for them tenuous. A rational actor may question why he should leave his farm and family to fight and possibly die for the state. In this instance propaganda would be one element used to persuade that farmer to favor risking everything on behalf of the state. The government uses propaganda to convince their citizens of the *jus ad bellum*, or just cause for war and continues to use propaganda to maintain operational tempo. They bombard the population with messages reinforcing a particular narrative, generally the righteousness of the cause, the barbarity of the enemy, and the necessity of victory or a combination of them all. Print, illustration, photograph, lecture, and in the early 20th century new mediums like radio and moving pictures were all used as vehicles to push this narrative on the population during the First World War. Information was manipulated to present it in a favorable manner. Its origin was sometimes concealed to increase its credibility. The target population's resultant actions were observed—increased or decreased enlistments or contributions to relief funds—and

² Garth S. Jowett and Victoria J. O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015) 7, kindle edition.

³ Ibid., 58.

the messages were altered based on results and new information useful for propaganda purposes. Having practiced these persuasion methods on their own people, the combatants turned their attentions outward, in particular to the United States of America.

The United States was an ocean away from the battlefields and officially neutral.⁴ For most Americans, the war was a European problem. The disruption in maritime trade impacted the United States on a national level. The nation responded to new commodity demands and established new relationships with habitual and new trading partners. The need to resume trade and the profits generated by selling to the belligerents, who may seize the cargo as contraband anyway, largely balanced any conflicts of conscience regarding enabling the combatants to continue fighting. With no existential threat against the United States, the federal government had no reason to depart from the isolationism promoted in the Monroe Doctrine and reinforced by President Woodrow Wilson⁵ in his neutrality declaration in August 1914.

The national reticence was largely reflected on the individual level as well. The diversity of ethnicity and opinion in the population split American interest in involvement. The American population could not come to a consensus on anything. Most people of Irish ancestry could not fathom coming to the assistance of the British.⁶ The

⁴ “Washington,” *Day Book* (Chicago), 4 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/77857926>.

⁵ Stephen Ives, “Part 1,” *American Experience: The Great War*, PBS, 10 April 2017, https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B06Y44JMKF?autoplay=1&ref=dvm_us_api_cs_hud_pa_GWRD-singleCW&pf_rd_p=eade56b2-6521-4751-8262-e675f0a42c34&pf_rd_r=MPEJEMDSR435QAPTQ2H9.

⁶ Michael S. Neiberg, *The Path to War: How the First World War Created Modern America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016) 62, kindle edition.

majority of ethnic Germans supported their German homeland, but took extreme pains to maintain their neutrality.⁷ Many people were fervently against involvement and agreed with the Pianadosi and Bryan song “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier.”⁸ Others took the opposite approach. They departed to serve in foreign militaries, demonstrating their reverence for the old world.⁹ The multitude of opinions were overall satisfied with the governmental policy of isolationism¹⁰ and keeping the European war in Europe. Through this incredible cacophony, Great Britain tried to insert their own message: they were protecting the rights of small nations, a just and righteous cause, and would oppose the treacherous German, a threat to the entire world who would not be contained even by an ocean unless Great Britain and her Allies stood firm and emerged victorious. A pretty sentiment, but what impact did it have on American public opinion regarding involvement in the European War, known to history as the First World War?

The United States is a diverse culture. Residents in the major regions have different accents and vernacular. The Midwest refers to the fizzy, carbonated beverage as “pop” while other parts of the country call it “soda” and still others refer to it as “coke” even if it is a Pepsi. Boston uses “wicked” as a positive modifier. A nationwide survey may not demonstrate trends or themes because of these regional peculiarities. Focusing

⁷ Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 34.

⁸ Al Pianadosi and Alfred Bryan, “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier,” 1915, Recording: Edison Collection, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.100008457/>.

⁹ Ives, “Part 1,” *American Experience*.

¹⁰ Neiberg. *The Path to War*, 3.

on a single region, with a more homogenous population, a narrower cultural narrative, regional interdependencies, and shared history, may generate more information on the efficacy of Great Britain's propaganda. But some regional populations appear likely to have been more resistant to Great Britain's operations due to ethnic affiliation. The Midwest, an area consisting of several states including Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, was densely populated with ethnic Germans, many of whom identified themselves as German-Americans. Some of these people were recent immigrants who still spoke German as their only or primary language, and while they may have no desire to fight for the fatherland, neither did they wish to return to Europe and fight against Germany for their adopted country or support the government doing so. This German concentration made the Midwest more hostile to the emotional appeals of Great Britain's propaganda messages. Observing the effects of Great Britain's War Propaganda Bureau of Wellington House¹¹ and other propaganda departments in the Midwest, specifically around the southern shores of Lake Michigan indicates the degree of success messages prepared for an entire nation had on a subset of the population.

This paper will question the effectiveness of Great Britain's propaganda in the American Midwest, specifically south Lake Michigan area. First, providing background describing Great Britain's propaganda organizations focused on the United States, including contributing organizations and production. Subsequent chapters examine daily newspapers in the focus region from June 1914 when Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were assassinated in Sarajevo until April 1917 when President Woodrow

¹¹ Nicholas Rankin, *A Genius for Deception: How Cunning Helped the British Win Two World Wars* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009) 34, kindle edition.

Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. Newspapers from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Chicago, Illinois, South Bend, Indiana, and St. Joseph, Michigan which published the entire duration of the time period being examined. Using the same publications for the entire duration of the study provide more accuracy in attitude and behavior change over time by limiting the senior changes which may alter the biases of the newspaper and the articles selected for publishing.

The United States before the War Started

The United States of America prided itself on being a nation of immigrants. Balancing an American identity with an ethnic cultural identity is something citizens struggle with even today. Americans are rarely simply “American”.¹² in the same way someone from Japan identifies as “Japanese”. There is a cultural tradition and narrative for Japan that stretches millennia into the past as well as a homogenous population, whereas the United States has only been in existence as a country since the 18th Century and the waves of immigration which swelled the population were still very current events in 1914.¹³ The growth of insular communities in cities, such as a “Chinatown”, and the propensity to settle where others from their region or country of origin settled promoted ethnic homogeneity. The comfort and familiarity of seeing people who looked familiar and spoke the same language, particularly for the new immigrants and first generation Americans who may not understand English, aided in starting a new life in a new land,

¹² Neiberg. *The Path to War*, 31.

¹³ Charles Hirschman, “Immigration and the American Century,” *Demography* 42, no. 4 (November 2005): 599, <https://search-proquest-com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/docview/222943118/fulltextPDF/9EDC6B04C9B04966PQ/2?accountid=28992>.

but retarded integration into an American culture. They developed new versions of old cultures, holding on to aspects of the regions they left while incorporating parts of the culture of their new home. They kept their language, in some places perpetuating church services in second languages.¹⁴ well into the 20th Century. The below map was generated using 1890 census data and demonstrates the tendency of Germans to gravitate towards communities with similar people. The darker the brown, the higher the concentration of ethnic Germans per square mile.

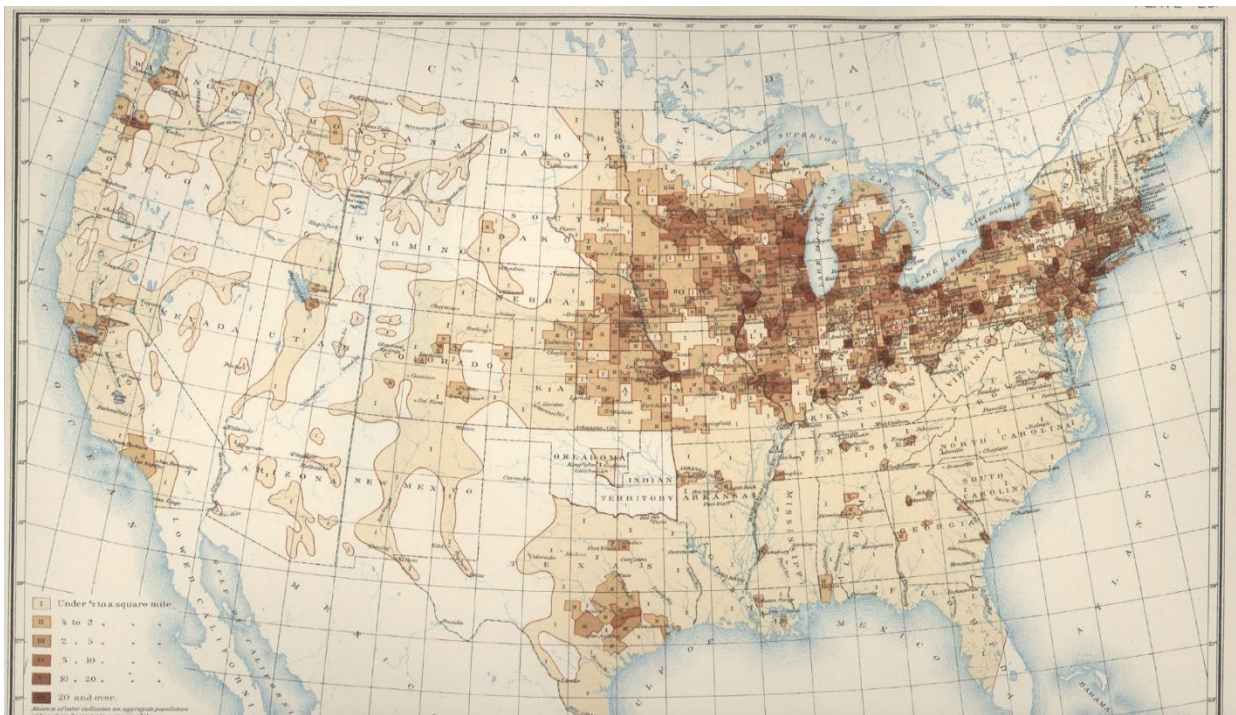


Figure 1. Ethnic German Population Dispersion from 1890 Census Data

Source: United States Census Bureau, “1890 Population Distribution,” last revised 19 October 2018, accessed 9 December 2018, https://www.census.gov/history/www/reference/maps/1890_population_distribution.html.

¹⁴ *South Bend News-Times*, 9 January 1915, 8, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464957233/>.

Externally, the United States had economic relationships with Europe, but no military obligations, and a small military more appropriate for self-defense than power projection.¹⁵ The tenets of the Monroe Doctrine, promoting American isolationism and preventing European interference in the Western Hemisphere, were referenced regularly¹⁶ and provided a basis for the neutrality espoused by President Wilson. After the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo in June 1914 President Woodrow Wilson affirmed the neutrality and impartiality of the United States of America.¹⁷ In August as European countries declared war, the United States declared neutrality. The United States depended on the barrier of the Atlantic Ocean to isolate the country from the land war in Europe. The war was a European war; something happening far away, with no direct or immediate effect on day to day life.

This distance is also reflected in the amount of time necessary for communicating from the United States to Europe. The fastest means of communication across the Atlantic Ocean was the network of trans-Atlantic cables owned by various nations. These cables were not free to use and could only transmit words, so photographs still traveled the long way, on a ship across the ocean. This voyage could take days or even weeks,¹⁸

¹⁵ Jim Garamone, "World War I: Building the American Military," U.S. Army, April 2017, accessed 9 December 2018, https://www.army.mil/article/185229/world_war_i_building_the_american_military

¹⁶ "Colonel on War, Says it Proves Treaties Futile," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355234455>.

¹⁷ Ives, "Part 1," *American Experience*.

¹⁸ James O'Donnell Bennett, "English Woman Lauds Kindness of the Germans," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355128374>.

depending on how far into the interior of the United States the message must travel. Cables were used for official business, commercial, and personal communication. Wireless networks were gaining ability and utility including trans-Atlantic transmitting. This connected Germany with the United States independent of the physical cable,¹⁹ making communications between the nations impossible to completely cut, but it was degraded due to restricted communication lanes.

Southern Lake Michigan Region of the Midwest

The Lake Michigan region was settled early in North America's colonization, thanks to the transportation lanes afforded by the lake and the rich natural resources. The southern end of Lake Michigan brings four states together: Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. When industrialization started in earnest, the ease of transport for finished products continued to make the lake a natural setting for progress, especially after the Erie Canal eased transportation east²⁰. Lake routes, rail, and road networks spread out to the rest of the country from Chicago, Illinois, strategically located on two major water networks, the Mississippi River and Lake Michigan. Lake Michigan has a central location for the United States, in particular the agricultural production in the Midwest and the Great Plains, access to numerous river networks to the west and to the east it accesses the rest of the Great Lakes system, through Lakes Huron, Erie, Ontario and the St. Lawrence Seaway to the Atlantic Ocean. The access to fresh water was

¹⁹ "Merely Comment," *Day Book* (Chicago), 6 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/77858231>.

²⁰ "The History of St. Joseph County, Michigan," *Southwest Michigan Directory*, http://www.swmidirectory.org/History_of_St_Joseph_County.html.

significant to factories for cooling, cleaning, and transporting finished products from the producer to the consumer.

In addition to industrial operations and agriculture, the societies were extremely interconnected. Citizens had family members spread through the area and traveled to Chicago, in particular, recreationally.²¹ Tudor Hall located in Indianapolis, Indiana, was a women's school and advertised in the *Chicago Tribune*, appealing to parents and young women for continuing education. It guaranteed admittance to schools like Vassar or Wellesley.²² The road and train networks facilitated the close links in the society. Even today Chicagoans have summer and weekend homes in Berrien County, Michigan.

As noted in the previous section, ethnic Germans densely settled in the surrounding environs of Lake Michigan. Some of the local churches still had services in German²³ or local newspapers published entirely in German. This author had paternal grandparents from Berrien County, Michigan who were, themselves, the children of immigrants from the German states. She has fond childhood memories of attempting to sing "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht" with Lutheran church carolers in the mid-1990s to her centenarian great-grandmother, Edith Ott, who learned both German and English as a girl so she could communicate with her parents who only spoke German. Years later, the author's father, Terry Schmaltz, related a story from his youth of that same woman

²¹ "Personals," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 29 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363533816/>.

²² "Tudor Hall," *Chicago Tribune*, 11 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355152047>.

²³ "Churches," *South Bend News-Times*, 9 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464957244/>.

stating her pride that none of her children fought in the Second World War. His decision to join the military caused a rift in his family.

This population concentration of ethnic Germans made the area a challenge for the propaganda efforts of Great Britain, who needed to change the opinions of a population with language, history, and cultural narrative more aligned with Germany. Some of the residents still had relatives in Germany and were possibly opposed to fighting men who could be their relatives. Effectively penetrating the bias without alienating the target population required a deft touch and developing new processes to do so in a cohesive manner.

Methodology

This research focuses on the effects of Great Britain's propaganda efforts in the Midwest centered on the southern tip of Lake Michigan and the degree it influenced the local population to favor or oppose joining the conflict as a combatant on the side of the Allies. There may still be a few centenarians alive who remember World War I, but a century after the Armistice ended the war, any memories they retain are likely hazy and may be overshadowed by World War II. Diaries concentrate too much on the individual diarist's views, not enough on the collective society. Newspapers provide a venue for individuals to reach a larger collective, whether they are the readers communicating to the editors through letters or purchase, the reporters who take direction from their editors, readers, and consciences, or the editors who make the ultimate decisions regarding content and layout, the newspaper provides a snapshot in time of the perceptions in their distribution area. Assessing the effects of British propaganda on a subset of the target population by review of the newspapers observes the changing attitudes through amount

of coverage, verbiage used by American correspondents, and personal sentiment communicated via letters to the editor. There are several questions used to interrogate the newspapers from the assassinations in 1914 to Congress declaring war in 1917, to indicate existing sentiment and suggest the propaganda's effectiveness.

First, how much of the front page is dedicated to the war. The cover page is often the decisive page a prospective reader uses to decide whether or not to purchase the newspaper. Newspapers were a business; they made money through advertising, but advertising is only effective if people buy the newspaper. Editors needed to ensure the content grabbed a reader and persuaded them to purchase or subscribe to the newspaper. If the war dominated the front page it was in the forefront of the locals' minds, their emotions were invested. This made them more receptive to influence. A dearth of coverage on the front page indicated the locality's attention was focused on other concerns. They were not emotionally invested, merely intellectually curious.

Second, what terminology was used to describe the belligerents and the war itself. Words may be neutral in meaning, but not in connotation. Ally has a positive connotation and enemy a negative. The words used to describe each side indicated the feelings of the author and the sentiment of the newspaper's subscribers. Consistent exposure to depictions of Great Britain and the allies as the just side while the Germans are barbarous aggressors subtly influenced cognitions by association. If the way Great Britain referred to the participants was incorporated by domestic Midwest authors, and the adversary turned from "Germany" to "the enemy," internal perception and cognition regarding that actor have been affected. Further, referring to the war as the "European war" indicated an intellectual and emotional distance from a war that has nothing to do with the situation at

home. If that changed, even dropping “European”, and referring to it as “the war” demonstrates a changed perception of the war from a foreign problem to one with direct local implications.

Third, how balanced was the coverage. Journalists have a responsibility to prevent bias in their coverage, but editors publish what they think their readers want to see. Newspapers not sensitive to the customers have small readership, little influence, and ultimately go out of business. Editors arrange content and select external articles to appeal to the greatest proportion of readers. Feedback that had bias and a preference for bias influenced the editor away from fairness and demonstrates propaganda effected cognition. Availability also plays a part. If the newspaper received more content from British sources than German sources they published what they had in order to prevent readers from abandoning their subscriptions in favor of another newspaper which published on a different time schedule.

Fourth, is there direct British propaganda content. Propaganda operations were continuous and varied. Some consisted of pamphlets, books, movies, visiting lecturers, and reports in addition to news articles. The normalization of propaganda led it to be interpreted differently, as information to be used instead of its true purpose, information to influence.

Fifth, are the editorials discussing the war, and if so, in what context. Editorials expound upon a specific issue and are not pure information: they have opinion. Focusing on topics other than the war demonstrated other concerns, such as a domestic crisis, was more important to readers than the war. Editorial content—the foolishness of the war or correctness of Wilson’s policy on neutrality—was war related but anti-involvement.

Disparaging the premise was counter to Great Britain's desired end state of the United States militarily involved in the war and aligned with the Allies.

Finally, what are the letters to the editor saying about the war or the newspaper coverage of the war. Letters to the editor, much like editorials, demonstrate the focus of the people. It is the feedback to the newspaper from their readers. Letters published were often representative of a greater number of letters received, and writing in to the newspaper indicated a level of investment because the individual took the time to write it and spent the money to send it.

Not every newspaper regularly published letters to the editor. Some were so small, like the *St. Joseph Evening Herald* from St. Joseph, Michigan, they did not have the resources for a staff large enough to write their own editorials, or the space in the paper to publish letters to the editor. The *St. Joseph Evening Herald* was only four pages long, but proudly proclaimed to be the "largest page daily in Berrien County". It did not provide its own editorials, but did publish one or two from other publications. Usually they were regional, from Chicago, South Bend, or Grand Rapids, Michigan, but with no set rotation; the editor was purposely picking the editorial to publish based on the subject and his judgement of its relevancy to the circulation. The *Evening Herald* purchased international articles from news bureaus, such as United Press, or the trans-Atlantic cables, so the paper had international articles, without the cost of maintaining a correspondent abroad. The newspaper recognized its small size limited its means, so it did not necessarily intend to stand as the only newspaper subscribers read. Advertisements for the Sunday *Chicago Tribune* or a companion subscription to *Detroit Times* at a special price provided wider access while maintaining the small town

newspaper to find out “R. A. Stanton of Chicago is spending a two weeks’ vacation with his family at his father’s farm, south of St. Joseph.”²⁴ or what is showing at the local movie theater, the Caldwell.²⁵ The *Evening Herald* did not publish on Sundays or holidays.

The *South Bend News-Times* and the *Milwaukee Sentinel* were very similar newspapers. They were both between ten and 16 pages, depending on the day of the week. They were large enough to have staff writers and their own editorials. They, like the *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, used press associations and trans-Atlantic cable news from Europe, but served larger areas with bigger cities. The *News-Times* proclaimed more than 75,000 local readers and published on Sundays and some holidays, like New Year’s Day, but did not on Christmas. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* was largely the same. Both newspapers were read in smaller cities proximate to their main home.

Chicago, on the other hand, was a large city. The newspapers there were considerably longer and reported circulations of over 300,000 for their weekday editions. The *Chicago Tribune* and *Day Book* were each around thirty pages, usually, and the Sunday edition of *Chicago Tribune* regularly published seventy pages or more. They had large enough budgets to employ correspondents and support their travel abroad. They also had their own photographers and illustrators, to provide original content and sell it to other newspapers; pictures from the *Chicago Tribune* were published in the *South Bend*

²⁴ “Personals,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 13 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363534375>.

²⁵ “Caldwell,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 13 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363534375>.

News-Times a few days later. They had sufficient staff to publish several original editorials and a dedicated “Voice of the People” section for letters to the editor. These letters demonstrated the breadth of the readership with letters from readers in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Edgeley, North Dakota, and other cities and states in the country. But the combination of answers generated by the interrogation of the newspapers informs the modern researcher of the opinions in the First World War and their shift, if any, from 1914 to 1917 as the war progressed and Great Britain’s propaganda operations continued.

Definitions

Several terms will be referenced repeatedly throughout this study which are not typically used in common vernacular. In order to provide for common understanding, they are defined in the following paragraphs. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria J. O’Donnell’s book *Propaganda & Persuasion*, (Sixth Edition) contributed materially to the definitions and examples.

Persuasion: a social interaction between two or more parties where one attempts to influence the other to voluntary change views or perceptions. Some postulate education is a form of persuasion, because the books or teachers are providing information to affect the thinking and perceptions of their students.

Propaganda: a subset of the modern concept of information operations and purposeful form of persuasion. It is a deliberate process using a variety of mediums such as printed word, audio, or imagery, amongst others, to make an emotional appeal to change the cognitions and behaviors of the target audience. The source of the information may be known or concealed. Likewise the accuracy of the information varies from factual—with bias—to disinformation. Propaganda serves the interests of the

propagandist, not the target. Conforming to the cognition and behaviors the propagandist desires may be to the detriment of the target. A significant consideration, particularly when attempting to affect the cognitions of another culture, is ensuring the propaganda is nested in the cultural values of the target and couched in language which will engage the desired emotions. North Korea produces a great volume of propaganda for both internal and external audiences, but most external targets are only amused by the releases, because it comes across as ridiculous. Not reaching the correct emotion in the target will be counter to the ultimate aim of the propaganda.

White Propaganda: emotional appeals to excite the target to a specific reaction involving no falsehoods in information or originator. Examples include rallies or celebrations where the positive aspects of the nation are highlighted and negative is ignored to promote in-group biases.

Gray Propaganda: deceptive information—generally through amplification or exaggeration of information which is mostly accurate in a communication—designed to excite the target to a specific reaction. Also could indicate concealment or deception regarding the sources of the information. Examples include a nation planting stories favorable to itself in another nation's newspaper. These stories may be largely factual, but the lack of attribution indicates they are not original to the publication and may be difficult to verify, lacking names of people or places to inhibit independent verification.

Black Propaganda: false information or misinformation appearing to be from a different source than its actual originator designed to excite the target to a specific reaction. Examples include false broadcasts purporting to be from a friendly or neutral nation that are based in an adversarial nation and broadcasting false information.

Deception: military operation involving false information to cause a target to believe something untrue and react in a way desired by the deceiver. This action could be to protect information, such as when the Entente were developing the new armor technology and protected it from compromise or a military deception to divide the adversary's forces or induce them to commit resources in areas away from the main attack. A deception operation is not propaganda and not a focus of this study.

Propaganda: History and Psychology

Propaganda is a concept as old as civilization. Greeks and Romans used it to further political ambitions, but were more apt to call it rhetoric, than propaganda.²⁶ Historical uses were primarily white propaganda, because the purpose was to attach glory and acclaim to the individual through victory parades and building projects, something concrete people could point to and credit to a single person. The propagandist wanted the target audience to know who was responsible for the military success or the awesome construction. The propaganda building projects could be statuary to prominently display power and status or architecture to further the propaganda by generating appreciation and positive associations when the people used the building.

Propaganda gained a negative connotation in the 17th Century, when the Roman Catholic church used it to describe a division developed to combat the Protestant movement and propagate the faith in the new world,²⁷ so while the word itself is neutral the associations turned negative and this is seen reverberating even to modern times,

²⁶ Jowett and O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*.

²⁷ Ibid.

where it is synonymous with lies, exaggeration, and misinformation. Arthur Ponsonby, a member of the British parliament during the First World War, wrote a book in 1928 titled *Falsehood in War Time: Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated Throughout the Nations During the Great War* where he used propaganda and lies interchangeably.²⁸ This was common of the attitude towards propaganda during World War I and the interwar period.

Propaganda is a deliberate process. It takes significant amounts of time and investment. The propagandist must understand the target audience: the values and motivations of the target in order to design messages to appeal to the emotions of the individual. Missing the mark is worse than not committing to the operation at all as demonstrated during the First World War and described by Jowett and O'Donnell in their book, *Propaganda & Persuasion*. The incident involved a billboard constructed by the Germans informing the French men of the North the English were sleeping with their wives. The French countered they were from the south.²⁹ After understanding the target, the propagandist must develop a comprehensive, deliberate process to affect the target's cognitions through emotional appeals. This can be visual, auditory, live, written, or any combination thereof. The vital concept is to arouse the desired emotion, appealing to the patriotism and national values with "Uncle Sam" or inciting horror and disgust toward

²⁸ Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in War Time: Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated Throughout the Nations During the Great War* (1928; repr. Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2010).

²⁹ Nicholas Reeves, "Film Propaganda and its Audience: the Example of Britain's Official Films During the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 18, no. 3, *Historians and Movies: The State of the Art: Part 1* (July 1983), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/260547>.

the “Hun”. Changing how the target audience thinks about the problem the propagandist is working to effect makes the target believe they came to their own conclusions based on facts and truth, instead of being manipulated into it.

Constraints of this Study

It is important to understand the constraints of this research in order to properly frame the problem. The topic being explored is the effect of Great Britain’s propaganda efforts on the United States of America in the First World War, but that topic is made up of several components: time, actors, and events.

The focus of this paper is World War I prior to the United States involvement as a combatant: from the declaration of war in 1914 until the United States of America declared war in early 1917. It was the first war in the modern era to execute such robust propaganda operations on populations other than combatants. The years dedicated to propaganda allowed operations to evolve both along themes and in sophistication. This war also took advantage of expanded communications networks, lessening the time required for information to travel from one side of the Atlantic Ocean to the other, advantaging control of communication networks. New mediums debuted as propaganda vehicles, as well, with films such as *Britain Prepared*.³⁰

This study is an examination of the effects of Great Britain’s propaganda efforts against a specific region of United States of America from the beginning of the First World War until the United States declared war in April 1917. While most neutral

³⁰ Emma Thom, “Charles Urban and Britain’s First War Propaganda Film,” Science and Media Museum, 11 November 2013, <https://blog.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk/britain-prepared-by-charles-urban-1915/>.

nations were targeted by belligerent propaganda over the course of the war, the belligerents' efforts will be included only as they influenced Great Britain's efforts. Select allied propaganda, particularly the French, was used to support Britain's operations or taken as a model for British concepts. Some of British propaganda was a response to the propaganda of the Central Powers, so the exclusion would prove confusing.

Finally, deception is not propaganda, but it may be used in propaganda. Deception is a military operation. It provides misleading information to a target, sometimes deliberately feeding it, other times enacting a scenario for the target to discover and come to erroneous conclusions about the intentions of the deceiver. Some deceptions are operations to cause a specific action in the target, like Operation Fortitude in the Second World War to convince the Nazis the invasion of continental Europe would land at Pa de Calais, diverting resources to support this belief in order to generate a specific action. Propaganda, however, is an information operation to provide information—sometimes with the origin concealed—to a target in order to change the target's way of thinking and their behavior. The aim of propaganda is not to deceive the target but to change the target; deception may be a component of the operation. Propaganda is attempting to change the target's behavior or way of thinking. There is overlap: each approach seeks to cause a specific response and may use false information or incorrect attribution. Propaganda, however, seeks to influence the target's thoughts and behavior: deception intends to cause the target to commit to a specific action or reaction which is to the advantage of the deceiver.

CHAPTER 2

GREAT BRITAIN'S PROPAGANDA ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

Great Britain's Propaganda Apparatus

The First World War was unprecedented. New technologies made it deadlier than previous conflicts. The interconnectedness of the world, through trade and faster communications by extensive road, rail, and canal networks cut mail time dramatically. Nevertheless, *Chicago Tribune* war correspondent James O'Donnell Bennett's mailed article took about twenty days to travel³¹ from London, across mine and submarine infested waters, through the eastern seaboard port, all the way to the *Tribune* offices in Chicago, Illinois in the American Midwest. The trans-Atlantic cable network reduced the transit time from days to hours, but was limited to words; photos were still forced to travel by mail. The day after the Sarajevo assassinations of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, it was front page news in virtually every newspaper in the United States, from the thirty page *Day Book* in Chicago, Illinois to the four page *St. Joseph Evening Herald* of St. Joseph, Michigan. This interconnectedness led to new challenges, informationally, for the belligerents in the war. Non-combatant, neutral nations were interested in the *jus ad bellum* for each side and their conduct in the war. But sometimes the truth was not the message the belligerent wanted known.

When war broke out in August 1914 Great Britain did not have any organizations dedicated to information control. As the army and navy mobilized and deployed, the bureaucrats organized to focus propaganda efforts on enemy nations, neutral nations, and

³¹ Bennet, "English Woman Lauds Kindness of the Germans."

the home-front. Yet, while the government recognized it needed to have organizations controlling the content and release of information, it did not have a firm idea what that would look like or even what department it would report to. The Foreign Office? The War Ministry? Directly to the Prime Minister? In late August 1914 the British cabinet selected Charles F. G. Masterman to head the new organization, which indicated it would report directly to the Prime Minister. Masterman, was a friend of then Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and he served as an under-secretary in the Home Office. He was an author and staff journalist of the *Daily News* before entering politics. Masterman's knowledge of newspaper operations was certainly an asset in establishing what this new department, the War Propaganda Bureau, would look like.³²

The War Propaganda Bureau was established in early September 1914. Masterman served as chairman of the National Health Insurance Joint Committee, whose offices were located in an office park called Wellington House in Buckingham Gate, so his new Bureau took offices there as well. Wellington House eventually became an alternate name for the War Propaganda Bureau. Masterman organized the Bureau's sub-sections by language of the country they targeted and set the staff to reading newspapers to establish an understanding of the public opinion in their target country. The man responsible for the United States sub-section was Sir Gilbert Parker. Parker was Canadian and traveled the United States extensively before settling in England and moving from a

³² Stewart Halsey Ross, *Propaganda for War: How the United States was Conditioned to Fight the Great War of 1914-1918* (1996; repr., Joshua Tree, CA: ProgressivePress.com, 2009), 29-30.

career as a prolific—if not terribly successful—author to politics.³³ In 1914 Parker was a long time Member of Parliament and rising politician. By the end of the war he would be a baronet and member of the Privy Council. His experience as an author aided his new commission as a propagandist, and his knowledge of the United States helped him understand the values and motivations of the target. But Parker's department was not the only one working propaganda operations in the United States.

The government established the Foreign Office News Department and Neutral Press Committee to assist in supplying information to newspapers in neutral nations in Europe and elsewhere.³⁴ These departments reported to different cabinet ministries and worked with slightly different vectors, but still considerable overlap. The Neutral Press Committee under G. H. Mair, a former editor of London's *Daily Chronicle*, worked extensively with the press, disseminating news articles via cable and wireless to friendly papers in particular those who could not afford to support correspondents abroad, such as the four-page *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, which likely benefitted.³⁵ The News Department of the Foreign Office served as an information conduit for correspondents as well as diplomatic and consular representatives to use, or not, in their specific

³³ Ross, *Propaganda for War*, 31.

³⁴ M. L. Sanders, "Wellington House and British Propaganda during the First World War," *The Historical Journal*, 18 no. 1 (March 1975): 121, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2638471>.

³⁵ Michael Sanders and Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War 1914-18* (1982 repr., Middletown: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019), 33.

locations.³⁶ Great Britain's control over information transmitted via the trans-Atlantic cables aided all the government's fledgling propaganda organizations.

The new departments had similar responsibilities which led to overlapping jurisdiction and created friction between Wellington House, the Foreign Office News Department, and Neutral Press Committee. This friction damaged the unity of the message and led to instances the government, at the request of the propaganda apparatus, restricted a well-meaning non-governmental organization from propaganda activities.³⁷ in order to maintain consistency and limit redundancy so the different bureaus were not publishing identical material.

Friction within the government led to numerous changes to Wellington House over the course of the war. A conference in January 1916 attended by several cabinet departments including Wellington House, the Foreign Office, War Office, and Press Bureau re-organized Wellington House to report to the Foreign Office, with Masterman still in charge. A year later the new Prime Minister, David Lloyd-George, commissioned Robert Donald to audit Wellington House. Donald was largely critical of propaganda operations and recommended several changes. Masterman did not have the same close connection with Lloyd-George that he enjoyed with Asquith, so he lost a powerful, well placed ally to preserve his independence. Lloyd-George determined, based largely on Donald's report, to consolidate propaganda operations under the new Department of

³⁶ Ibid., 36.

³⁷ Sanders, "Wellington House," 121.

Information led by John Buchan,³⁸ which Michael Sanders and Philip Taylor, in their 1982 book about British propaganda in the First World War, called the model other governments adopted for their own propaganda operations.³⁹ Buchan was a colonel and novelist who wrote a history of the war, published in 1921. He wrote a piece for Wellington House in 1916 on the battle of Jutland and another in 1917 on the Somme. The British propaganda apparatus morphed as the war progressed and governments changed but through all these changes, there was still consistency: Gilbert Parker maintained his position as head of propaganda efforts in the United States.⁴⁰

Great Britain's Propaganda Messages and Delivery

In March 1918 Sir Gilbert Parker, head of the British propaganda campaign focused on the United States, published an article in *Harper's Monthly* describing his department's efforts to push the British narrative on the United States and bring the United States into the war. In his own assertions, he said he did not envisage haranguing to be an effective method for bringing the American people into the war. The United States already fought two wars to prove they did not have to do what Great Britain said. Parker discouraged an excess of British lecturers traveling to the United States, believing the "American people could not be driven, preached to or chived into the war, and when

³⁸ James Duane Squires, *British Propaganda at Home and in The United States from 1914 to 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 35.

³⁹ Sanders and Philips, *British Propaganda during the First World War*, 1.

⁴⁰ Gilbert Parker, "The United States and the War," *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, March 1918, 522, <https://archive.harpers.org/1918/03/pdf/HarpersMagazine-1918-03-0031629.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJUM7PFZHQ4PMJ4LA&Expires=1549234599&Signature=1cvzyYQfOMKYmOGL9ZpfbUs4BtU%3D>.

they did enter it would be the result of their own judgement and not the result of exhortation, eloquence, or fanatical pressure of Britishers.”⁴¹ Parker’s restraint demonstrated an instinctive understanding of the propaganda consideration to know the target audience, its values and motivations in order to tailor the message and elicit the desired emotional response.

Samuel Harden Church’s 1914 pamphlet, “The American Verdict on the War,”⁴² is an example of Parker’s understanding. Church was president of the Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh when Dr. Fritz Schaper, a German sculptor and member of the Prussian Academy, sent him a copy of a German propaganda letter titled, “An Appeal to the Civilised[sic] World”. A summation of the letter precedes Church’s reply in the pamphlet. Per the summation, the German letter pressed the narrative that Germany did not start the war and was innocent of atrocities in Belgium. The letter was signed by 93 German academics of various fields and Church’s reply began with acknowledgement of the contributions of German academia. Church’s reply to Dr. Schaper then pointed out the holes in Germany’s argument, both in the letter and the *White Book*, Germany’s official propaganda case for the war.⁴³ Wellington House published Church’s letter “in nearly all the principal languages of the world and circulated broadcast throughout the

⁴¹ Parker, “The United States and the War,” 522.

⁴² Samuel Harden Church, *The American Verdict on the War* (1914; repr., Melbourne, Australia: Crichtley Parker, Australian Statesman and Mining Standard, 1915), 2, http://digital.slv.vic.gov.au/view/action/singleViewer.do?dvs=1549823024985~819&locale=en_US&metadata_object_ratio=10&show_metadata=true&VIEWER_URL=/view/action/singleViewer.do?&preferred_usage_type=VIEW_MAIN&DELIVERY_RULE_ID=10&frameId=1&usePid1=true&usePid2=true.

⁴³ Ibid., 7.

neutral countries of Europe, and among the allied nations.”⁴⁴ The American Desk of Wellington House published Church’s pamphlet to reinforce Britain’s assertions of Germany’s responsibility for war. Using Church, an American, was a shrewd tactic. Citizens could see themselves in Church’s experience; he was American, one of “us.” Wellington House capitalized on this identification, but were also active participants in propaganda conversations.

Other pamphlets were responses to allegations or feedback, such as the 1915 pamphlet, “The Treatment of Prisoners of War in England and Germany during the First Eight Months of the War,” which cited a Parliamentary Paper James Squires listed as another a Wellington House publication.⁴⁵ The pamphlet included citations from international treaties like The Hague Regulation, an annex to the Convention concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land from 1907, and compared the two nations’ practices, using first person experiences from British or French soldiers to illustrate the assertions the pamphlet made of German practices. The contributors were named, which increased the believability because the name could be cross-checked through other sources. This pamphlet was meant to highlight specific instances of Germany violating international treaty and law of conduct, such as British Major Vandeleur who detailed his capture and asserted the German commandant at the internment camp interfered with Vandeleur’s communications with the American ambassador to Germany, Gerard.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Church, *The American Verdict on the War*, 3.

⁴⁵ Squires, *British Propaganda at Home and in the United States*, 87.

⁴⁶ *The Treatment of Prisoners of War in England and Germany during the First Eight Months of the War* (London, UK: Harrison and Sons, 1915).

In addition to the books and pamphlets Wellington House engaged with directly Americans through newspapers. Parker's department, specifically, provided British newspapers to hundreds of small newspapers in the United States to allow them, at no cost, access to the British version of events.⁴⁷ Pamphlets promoting Great Britain's narrative; "Why Britain is at War" or some variation of that theme were published periodically over the course of the war and referenced in articles or editorials. The topic was discussed by Herbert H. Asquith when he was Prime Minister in official Parliamentary release, and Foreign Minister Sir Edward Grey.⁴⁸ The American desk of Wellington House also used newspapers to engage in dialogue with critics. This was a public dialogue, though, through newspapers in the state where the critic lived. Newspapers used each other's original material to save the expense of employing a larger staff. Parker understood the articles would be picked up by surrounding newspapers and therefore reach more people. Both the Church pamphlet and the Prisoner pamphlet listed price was one penny, approximately the price for a daily newspaper in the Midwest. The pamphlets were longer than the newspapers, generally, at about thirty or more pages and did not include advertisements. But pamphlets were small and portable enough to be shared and inexpensive enough to be competitive with newspapers, provided the content was compelling enough.

Articles and pamphlets were not the only means the War Propaganda Bureau used to reach people. They sponsored lectures, which were popular entertainments of the time,

⁴⁷ Parker, "The United States and the War," 522.

⁴⁸ Squires, *British Propaganda at Home and in the United States*, 86-103.

and arranged for American correspondents to interview prominent Englishmen, including politicians—like the prime minister—authors, and academics to increase the prestige of the information and make it more believable, as it came from an expert or at least a recognized name. Partnerships with publishing houses such as Oxford published books and facilitated their distribution to libraries and organizations such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA).⁴⁹ to embed the message in impressionable groups. Departments outside the War Propaganda Bureau contributed to propaganda. Viscount James Bryce was the lead for the British investigation into atrocities committed by the Germans in Belgium.⁵⁰ Bryce was the British ambassador to the United States until 1913. His time in the United States proximate to the war gave the investigation he was charged with increased prestige and credibility through his personal relationships with prominent American personalities, including those in the federal government in Washington D. C.

Further propaganda material was visual in nature. Visual media by photographers and cartoonists, including *Chicago Tribune* photographer/illustrator John T. McCutcheon and Dutchman Louis Raemaekers made striking visual commentaries on the war. Raemaekers visceral and direct images of the barbarity of German activity in Belgium in 1914.⁵¹ translated the words and statistics into a person, even if they were stylized. He drew prolifically throughout the war; his works from the war years fill multiple volumes.

⁴⁹ Squires, *British Propaganda at Home and in the United States*, 522.

⁵⁰ J. H. Morgan, *German Atrocities: An Official Investigation* (1916; repr., Anboco, 2016), 695, kindle edition.

⁵¹ J. Murray Allison, ed., *Raemaekers’ Cartoon History of the War, Volume One, The First Twelve Months of the War* (New York: The Century Co., 1918).

McCutcheon, on the other hand, was American. His initial cartoons were more general, often about the horrors of war, but he was hosted by periodically by Great Britain, who had great influence on what he saw.

The propaganda products promulgated by the British agencies working the propaganda mission were varied and tailored. Norwegians were not subjected to the same propaganda as Americans. Germans and Austrians were receiving different propaganda from products targeting neutrals or the British Empire. Wellington House largely used the same themes over the course of the war for respective targets. It focused on atrocities perpetrated on conquered nations, general German barbarity, and why Great Britain was fighting the war. Some publications were reprints or updates of previous editions, such as Samuel Church's letter, published initially in November 1914 but again in 1915. Other pamphlets were summations, such as the Hilaire Belloc pamphlet, "The Second Year of the War" published in 1916. Summaries of the war news and events for the year provided Great Britain an opportunity to re-emphasize the year's successes and reframe failures, like Gallipoli. The second full year of the war, 1916, was the most prolific for the War Propaganda Bureau. They published 109 items in 1916, 42 more than the 1915 total of 67. The 1916 total was also more than the 1917 total, 74.⁵² The principles understood and adhered to by Gilbert Parker demonstrated his understanding that propaganda was dependent on the target and involves a significant time investment. He started operations in 1914, studied the evolving opinions of his target population from their own points of

⁵² Squires, "Appendix, a Check List of British propaganda Sent to the United States Between 1914 and 1917," in *British Propaganda at Home and in the United States from 1914 to 1917*, 86-104.

view through newspapers, and tailored his propaganda messages to change Americans without them even realizing they were being changed.

CHAPTER 3

1914: THE WAR BEGINS

1914 War Timeline

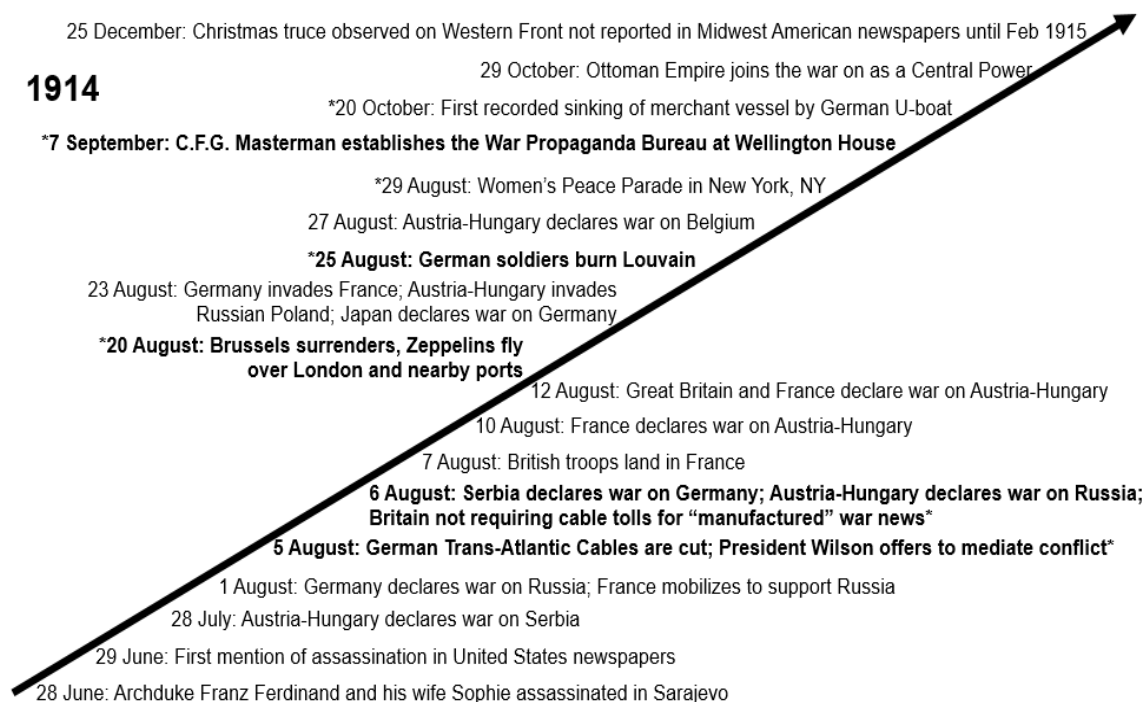


Figure 2. 1914 Timeline

Sources: "Interactive WWI Timeline," National WWI Museum and Memorial, 2019, <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/interactive-wwi-timeline>; "Royal Victims of Assassin," *South Bend News-Times*, 29 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464979974/>; Stewart Halsey Ross, *Propaganda for War: how the United States was Conditioned to Fight the Great War of 1914-1918* (1916; repr., Joshua Tree, CA: ProgressivePress.com, 2009), 27; "United States Offers Good Offices to End War," *South Bend News-Times*, 5 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464982706/>; "Merely Comment," *Day Book* (Chicago), 6 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/77858231>; John Buchan, *A History of the Great War* (1921; repr., London, UK: Endeavour Media Ltd., 2018), 15, kindle edition; Max Hastings, *Catastrophe 1914: Europe Goes to War* (New York, NY: Random House LLC, 2013), 267, kindle edition; "Host of Women in Peace Parade," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355239509>; M. L. Sanders, "Wellington House and British Propaganda during the First World War," *The Historical Journal*, 18 no. 1 (March 1975), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2638471>.

Note: This timeline provides a reference for the reader to significant events in 1914 pertaining to the war and events significant to propaganda operations. It is not exhaustive. It concentrates on the Western Front, British actions, United States of America actions domestically and abroad, and Central Powers actions useful for propaganda by Great Britain. Events outside those listed may be included in a case-by-case basis. The consolidated timeline with citations is available in an annex included with this paper.

Assassination to War Propaganda Bureau Creation

The 27 June 1914 edition of the *Chicago Tribune* did not have a main headline or any story dominating the front page. The illustration by Sidney Smith was a stylistic Woodrow Wilson with a mallet and a carnival strength test trying to get business up to the bell labeled “boom times.”⁵³ The only international articles on page one were from *Tribune* staff correspondent-artist John T. McCutcheon with the United States army in Vera Cruz, part of a series of letters on army operations to deal with sanitary conditions and related diseases.⁵⁴ and a small article from Batavia, Java describing an earthquake in Sumatra.⁵⁵ The editorials from the *Tribune* were all focused on domestic matters; city planning, building laws, and issues of law and order. There were no articles from Great Britain, Germany, or any other European country. Baseball season was in full swing and

⁵³ Sidney Smith, “Will He Ring the Bell?” *Chicago Tribune*, 27 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355175921/>.

⁵⁴ John T. McCutcheon, “Good Health goes in Wake of U. S. Army,” *Chicago Tribune*, 27 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355175921/>.

⁵⁵ “Many Killed or Injured by Earthquake in Sumatra,” *Chicago Tribune*, 27 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355175921/>.

no team was running away with the league lead; the Cubs were in the hunt⁵⁶ for a playoff berth. Life was continuing in the United States. Small newspapers did not have the budget for international correspondents, but news bureaus, the trans-Atlantic cables and other American newspapers provided foreign news articles in even the four-page *St. Joseph Evening Herald* published in St. Joseph, Michigan⁵⁷. The world was interconnected, even before globalization was a concept. Globalization was further demonstrated through small farmers in southwest Michigan who sold their produce to brokers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin or Chicago, themselves intermediaries for commercial consumers, both domestic and foreign⁵⁸. The world was a shrinking place. Small farmers paid attention to international news because it impacted the price of their produce abroad. Metropolitan Americans cared about their international travel plans as well as market prices, but no one cared about Sarajevo. The city was not mentioned in the *Chicago Tribune* until 29 June 1914.⁵⁹ The only interest in the Austro-Hungarian heir was the editorial page; an article that discussed aristocratic marriages.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ “Baseball Standings,” *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 28 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355176426>.

⁵⁷ “Britain to join Allies in Conflict,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 3 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363535055>.

⁵⁸ “Fruit Crop Largest in History of County,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 22 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363533472>.

⁵⁹ “Student Fires on Auto After Duke Blocks Bomb,” *Chicago Tribune*, 29 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355177454>.

⁶⁰ “La Marquise de Fontenoy,” *Chicago Tribune*, 18 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355173529>.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were assassinated on 28 June 1914, but the news did not reach a majority of Americans until the following day because of transmission delays pertaining to the trans-Atlantic cables and smaller newspapers did not always publish a Sunday edition. Newspapers did not even need to have reporters in Europe to get that news. The cables provided the stories for a toll, so even the six-page *News-Palladium* from Benton Harbor, Michigan was able to feature the assassinations' details on the front page of the 29 June 1914 issue.⁶¹ Articles discussed possible repercussions of the assassinations in an abstract way, wondering if war could result.⁶² Subsequent reporting did not feature the growing tension in Europe or the ultimatums exchanged between the courts. There was more interest in Henry Ford's plans for a new cancer hospital in Detroit, Michigan,⁶³ which featured on the front page and the page 22 article on Emperor Franz Joseph's purported great-grandson⁶⁴—the only article where Austria was mentioned in the 6 July 1914 edition—than the deteriorating situation in central Europe.

In July Europe was on the path to war, though it had not been declared. No foreign country was making a concerted effort to influence the United States, however

⁶¹ Associated Press, "Slaying of Future Emperor Well Planned," *News-Palladium* (Benton Harbor), 29 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363603965>.

⁶² "Martial Law in Hungary; War in Sight?" *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 26 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355139126/>.

⁶³ Henry Ford, "Henry Ford Describes Aims of his New Cancer Hospital," *Day Book* (Chicago), 6 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/77851640/>.

⁶⁴ H. P. Burton, "American Boy is Real heir to Throne of Austria—Grandson of Suicide Prince," *Day Book* (Chicago), 6 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/77851701>.

articles from Great Britain, Germany, France, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Serbia all appeared more frequently in the Midwest newspapers. Sympathy for Serbia was a common theme, with pictures of civilians calling them “picturesque peasants”⁶⁵ and complimenting the fighting spirit of their soldiers and citizens.⁶⁶ European countries focused more on their own populations: promoting their justification for military action if it proved necessary. Some countries started mobilizing their armies.⁶⁷ Issuing mobilizations to reservists in some circles was tantamount to a declaration of war. Mobilizations could be rescinded or retarded before active combat commenced, but with some difficulty.

The events of 28 July 1914 changed the situation substantially: Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia.⁶⁸ The following days saw war declarations from Germany, Austria-Hungary, Serbia, and others.⁶⁹ Coverage in the newspapers in the Midwest increased dramatically. Benton Harbor, Michigan’s *News-Palladium* did not publish an article pertaining to the situation in Europe between 2 July 1914 and 27 July 1914. After

⁶⁵ “Servians [sic] as They Are in Their Own Little Country—Picturesque Peasants,” *Day Book* (Chicago) 28 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/77856952>.

⁶⁶ “Plucky Soldiers, Fighting tooth and Nail When Necessary, Are the Servians [sic],” *South Bend News-Times*, 29 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464982568>.

⁶⁷ Associated Press, “Belgium is Arming; has 100,000 Men,” *News-Palladium* (Benton Harbor), 27 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363604560/>.

⁶⁸ “Franz Josef in Manifesto States Case,” *Chicago Tribune*, 29 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355140697/>.

⁶⁹ “How a World War Came in a Flash,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355144174>.

28 July the *News-Palladium* published at least a headline or bulletin every day they published an edition through the end of the year and into 1915. This newspaper was generally six to eight pages long, publishing local, national, and international news Monday through Saturday, excluding holidays. They used press bureaus and other newspapers from across the United States to provide coverage outside their immediate area, which negated the need to support correspondents abroad. Other regional newspapers increased European coverage as well. Most newspapers European war coverage dominated the front page with additional articles on subsequent pages originating from allies, neutrals, Austria-Hungary and Germany. Austro-Hungarian attempts to blame Serbia were published alongside articles describing the alliance structures pulling countries into the conflict. Political cartoons alternately portrayed Franz Josef as both bloodthirsty warlord⁷⁰ and brave, aged defender.⁷¹ This showed an effort by newspapers to be fair and publish articles from all involved countries. Bias was largely absent from the verbiage used to describe the countries involved in the war. Actions do not have modifiers to attach good or ill intentions. The 1 August edition of the *South Bend News-Times* included a map projecting how each country involved by either declaration of war or treaty linking a country to a declared combatant will probably maneuver. This speculation showed both Germany and France moving through Belgium,

⁷⁰ Berlin Kladderadatsch, "Integer Vitae," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 26 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355139282>.

⁷¹ Sidney Smith, "And He is All that Holds Together the Austro-Hungarian Empire," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 July 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355140992/>.

but merely stated, “French and German armies will clash in Belgium.”⁷² There was no comment on the violation of Belgian neutrality, if either France or Germany would ask permission of Belgium to cross their territory, or even what the Belgian military would be doing while foreign armies fought in their territory.

The newspapers displayed the balance in their coverage, but they were also a vector for Americans to make their anti-war sentiments known. The *Chicago Tribune* was one of the first: it published two full pages of illustrations under the title, “War and Its Horrors as Conceived and Depicted by Famous Artists” on 2 August 1914, the day after Germany declared war on Russia and hopes to keep the war small and regional diminished. The *Tribune* described the contributors as “Famous Foreign Artists” but did not list their names and the signatures are difficult to decipher.⁷³ The 18 images were mixed; some are completely metaphorical with skeletons interacting with living people while others were more literal depictions of soldiers. One image showed a long line of German soldiers, identifiable by their distinctive pickelhaube helmets, in a field under a dark sky and the oversized word, “war,” above a caption describing the field as, “the Harvest Fields-1914”. The bottom of the page showed another collection of soldiers wearing what appear to be kepis identifying the group as “cannon fodder”. There was no counter section showing valor, integrity, or otherwise glorifying the impending clash of armies.

⁷² “How Iron and Fire and Death will Flash Through Europe,” *South Bend News-Times*, 1 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464982639/>.

⁷³ “War and Its Horrors as Conceived and Depicted by Famous Artists,” *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 2 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355143206>.

National sentiment tended to be against the war. President Woodrow Wilson declared neutrality in August 1914. The *Chicago Tribune* published the text of the proclamation towards the middle of the paper on 5 August 1914. The proclamation included descriptions of prohibited activities such as joining the military of a belligerent nation, initiating a military expedition, or arming ships. It urged those under United States jurisdiction, citizen or not, to be impartial and neutral, though it did allow expressions of sympathy. Reaction in the Midwest largely favored neutrality and Wilson's handling of the crisis. On Sunday, 16 August 1914, Reverend A. J. Loeppert of the Second German Methodist church in Chicago, Illinois praised Wilson for being different from the German and Austrian leadership and keeping the United States out of war, both war with Mexico and the war in Europe.⁷⁴ Even a month later Chicagoans were writing letters to the *Tribune's* editor about peace and favorable views of the United States government's response to war in Europe. Jacob Manler⁷⁵ wrote about the United States role in promoting peace, using the American flag as a symbol or badge for peace. German sympathizer Hilton Sonneborn wrote to the *Chicago Tribune* later in September. Sonneborn did not completely agree with Wilson, but saw "the justice of the president's position" and urged his fellow citizens to follow the president's lead⁷⁶.

⁷⁴ "Pastors Assail Warring Kings," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355235143>.

⁷⁵ Jacob Manler, "Letter to the Editor: Flag as Badge of Peace," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355249547/>.

⁷⁶ Hilton Sonneborn, "Letter to the Editor: President Wilson and the Protest," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355132006/>.

The same day newspapers published Wilson's neutrality proclamation Great Britain executed a military operation which had significant secondary impact on propaganda operations: they cut German-owned trans-Atlantic cables.⁷⁷ Cutting the cables impeded Germany's ability to communicate around the world, isolating it from its possessions and operatives abroad, as well as its allies and neutral countries. This also improved Allied dominance of the narrative regarding the war. British censors were able to review and manipulate articles crossing the Atlantic via the cable, which, due to the timeliness, provided readers across the ocean with their first summaries of the events. Censors could also prevent articles from being transmitted at all, as they did with an article James O'Donnell Bennett, the *Chicago Tribune's* London correspondent, wrote, "English Woman Lauds Kindness of the Germans."⁷⁸ Bennett sent the article via cable on 7 September, but it was never received, apparently suppressed by the British censors due to the favorable depiction of the Germans. Out of fear the article would not be approved by censors and transmitted via cable, Bennett mailed a copy of the article, received by the *Tribune* on 19 September 1914. The article was published in the *Tribune's* 20 September 1914 edition and included a note at the beginning explaining the attempt at cable transmission. Cutting the German cables further ensured Great Britain knew and influenced the information readers in the United States received to formulate judgements on the action and belligerents in the war, even from American correspondents employed by American newspapers.

⁷⁷ Associated Press, "Cables Cut U.S. Side of Atlantic," *News-Palladium* (Benton Harbor), 5 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363604823/>.

⁷⁸ Bennett, "English Woman Lauds Kindness of the Germans."

While the various newspapers identified the disconnection of German cables and pointed out the bias this would introduce, they were still obliged to publish the news they were able to acquire. Newspapers were a business, after all, and readers needed more than the bevy of advertisements filling the pages. Some newspapers reminded their readers in the days after the cables were cut of the reduced availability of German articles.⁷⁹ Articles identified their city of origin if it was different from the home city of the newspaper, so the disparity was reinforced by the disproportionate number of bulletins and articles from the Great Britain and the other Allies as opposed to Germany or Austria-Hungary. At this point Midwest newspapers were making an effort to honor their journalistic integrity and President Wilson's neutrality declaration to try prevent overt bias and ensure balanced coverage, even if most of the available articles were from Great Britain. Cutting the cables facilitated the introduction of British propaganda into the American consciousness. Isolating Germany and its allies inhibited contradictory information and the opposing viewpoint. Americans at times were restricted to one side's version of an event, so exaggerations, such as a story of summary executions of Danish children for cheering for France,⁸⁰ and blatant falsehoods were more readily believed because it was the only version available. Dissenting or contrary evidence was available days or weeks later, after American cognitions prejudicial to the Germans were established.

⁷⁹ "War Bulletins, quote from Haniel Von Haimhausen," *Day Book* (Chicago), 8 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/77858451>.

⁸⁰ Albert de Mun, "Says Children were Shot for Their French Cheers," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355144710>.

The Germans were able to still use wireless. A German company owned a powerful wireless tower in Sayville, NY near Long Island. It could reach a tower in Nauen, Germany, located over 100 miles east of Berlin. The German owners of the wireless tower, Atlantic Communication Company, turned the station over to the German government, closing it to private communications.⁸¹ About the same time United States President Woodrow Wilson issued the neutrality declaration he authorized censors in all wireless stations to “enforce the neutrality of messages.”⁸² The censors were installed at all wireless stations, regardless of owner, on United States soil to enforce American neutrality. Instructions for military operations or communications to naval vessels were not permitted. The presence of American censors in the main wireless station communicating with Germany meant the Allies had secure communications across the Atlantic through the trans-Atlantic cables, but the Germans did not.

Regardless of the origin of the articles war coverage took up more and more space in American newspapers as August progressed. The front page was dominated by headlines proclaiming sensational stories like the 7 August *St. Joseph Evening Herald's* “Son of the Kaiser Struck Down by Assassin”⁸³ or informational like the 11 August

⁸¹ “Cables Severed to Cut Germany Off From World,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355144151>.

⁸² “U.S. Seizes All Wireless,” *News Palladium* (Benton Harbor), 6 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363604882>.

⁸³ “Son of the Kaiser Struck Down by Assassin,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 7 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363535157>.

Milwaukee Sentinel top headline, “Germans Advance in Two Columns to Meet Allies.”⁸⁴

Most of the articles on the cover page were related to the European war, as the 13 August edition of the *South Bend News-Times* with 19 of the 20 articles dedicated to the war.

Even the United States focused articles were related, either the United States representing Great Britain’s interests in Austria or raising funds for the Red Cross.⁸⁵ The war was integrated into advertisements, comics, and political cartoons. The 7 August 1914 edition of the *Chicago Tribune* had a cartoon titled “Intrusion” amongst the baseball scores. It depicted an oversized soldier wearing a helmet labeled “war news” sprawling on a bench next to an undersized baseball player. The athlete is shown clinging to the side of the bench, looking up at the bearded soldier and complaining, “Whaddya mean takin’ up all the space in the paper!? Have a heart!”⁸⁶ In July and August the western front of the war was still one of movement, so large movements of units and the clash of armies was new and dynamic. The Americans in the Midwest read about the activity, uncertain how this war would impact their lives or family still in Europe.

The tone and language of the articles, excluding those profiling individual or eyewitness accounts, had a growing but still small bias towards the Allies demonstrated by the amount of articles sourced from London or Paris. Even reports of German

⁸⁴ “Germans Advance in Two Columns to Meet Allies,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 11 August 1914, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=wZJMF1LD7PcC&dat=19140811&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

⁸⁵ *South Bend News-Times*, 13 August 1914, 1, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464982859>.

⁸⁶ Briggs, “Intrusion,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355144379/>.

successes were, at times, from London instead of Berlin.⁸⁷ Primarily, coverage for the European war was routed through the trans-Atlantic cables, even material by reporters employed by a specific newspaper such as the *Chicago Tribune*'s James O'Donnell Bennett.⁸⁸ The Allies exerted direct control over areas the reporters had access to and which refugees or soldiers they could interview. Between the access issues and the censors, newspapers found it difficult to acquire articles favorable to the Germans and even refuting atrocity allegations. Germany was using commercial cables via London⁸⁹ or Amsterdam as well as their wireless. Wireless transmissions were for government use and allowed Germany more latitude, so instead of the official releases, as passed by London cable and British censors, they released directly from German officials.⁹⁰ Some news articles were transmitted via the Sayville station as well. Midwest newspapers published these articles, which demonstrated newspapers were still making an effort ensure the opportunity for both sides to contribute to the war story. The German ambassador and the wireless tower in Sayville provided contrary narratives and justifications to refute claims of atrocities and further their pleas to the American people

⁸⁷ Associated Press, "Kaiser Tells People of Berlin of Victory in Belgium," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 9 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355144710>.

⁸⁸ Western British-American, "The News from London," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355143495>.

⁸⁹ "Liege Battle Costs Kaiser 25,000 Men," *Chicago Tribune*, 8 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355144481/>.

⁹⁰ Official German Dispatch, "Germans Claim Justification in Sacking Louvain," *South Bend News-Times*, 31 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464983496>.

to maintain American neutrality. The German Foreign Office in Berlin became involved in an effort to counteract British control of the narrative by pushing the German one.

In the early 20th century the most effective way to spread information was through a printed publication. A well written book or pamphlet was shared and discussed in literary societies. Belligerents in the First World War published books presenting a specific narrative about a subject. The series Germany published to promote their narrative was called the *White Book*,⁹¹ first published in August 1914. The *Chicago Tribune* Berlin correspondent, Frederic W. Wile, received a copy of the *White Book* directly from the German Foreign Office.⁹² This first edition focused on the German narrative explaining the causes of war, the assassination of the Hapsburg heir and relations between Germany and Austria-Hungary before Austria declared war on Serbia in late July 1914. This pamphlet sought to marginalize the British narrative of protecting Belgian neutrality and the rights of small nations and instead focused on the relationship between Germany and Austria as well as Serbia's responsibility for the war's precipitating action.

Information was pushed to private citizens from numerous avenues including newspapers, books, and pamphlets. The main avenue for the private citizen to offer feedback on events in the community, articles, or editorials published in Midwest newspapers was to write to the editor. Not every newspaper regularly had a letters to the editor segment in their editions. This did not mean people were not sending letters, but

⁹¹ Frederic W. Wile, "Germany Cites Causes of War in 'White Book'," *Chicago Tribune*, 24 August, 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355237345>.

⁹² Ibid.

the newspaper did not have the space to regularly include them. The four-page *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, for example, rarely published any letters to the editor while the *Chicago Tribune* had a dedicated corner of their editorials page in every edition which published one to six letters regularly, depending on the length of the submission. Some were multi-paragraph, almost editorials expounding on a topic or countering an article or editorial the letter's author read in the *Tribune*. Others were single paragraph feedback letters, complimenting or complaining about the newspaper's content.

Letters to the editor in August demonstrate a growing awareness and establishment of opinion regarding the war. H.O. Perlee of Chicago wrote a letter to the editor of the *Day Book* published 5 August 1914 in which he cynically opined the attitude towards a war is influenced by big business.⁹³ Business interests feared shipping disruption in the European war, but saw opportunity in a war to expand into Mexico. Primarily, opinion bent towards maintaining equanimity in judgements and neutrality in action. An 11 August 1914 letter signed "Native Citizen" derided Americans who left to join foreign militaries and asserted his view enlisting in foreign military was incompatible with American citizenship.⁹⁴ A consistent theme was praise for the *Chicago Tribune*'s impartiality in coverage. James Exord wrote in 19 August 1914 complimenting the "impartiality displayed, especially in dealing with political and international topics".⁹⁵

⁹³ H. O. Perlee, "Letter to Editor: A Comparison," *Day Book* (Chicago), 5 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/77858140>.

⁹⁴ Native Citizen, "Letter to the Editor: Enlistment in Foreign Armies," *Chicago Tribune*, 11 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355145577/>.

⁹⁵ James Exord, "Letter to the Editor: Opposes One German's View," *Chicago Tribune*, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355235486/>.

and Richard Bellace wrote in a few weeks later also complimenting the “impartial news that you are giving to your readers on the great European war.”⁹⁶ While there were letters to the editor showing a decided bias like Frederic Blount Warren with his sympathy to the German cause,⁹⁷ no letter to the editor advocated or favored United States involvement in the European war.

Great Britain, meanwhile, was actively working to engage the United States in the war. Authors such as H.G. Wells, already an established author in 1914, wrote on the British cause’s behalf for American publications, promulgating the British distinction the war was not against the German people but “Prussian poison”,⁹⁸ an alliterative term for militarism. Great Britain cut the German trans-Atlantic cables and assigned censors in the cable offices who ensured information favored the British narrative, but Great Britain felt they were behind the Germans in propaganda operations⁹⁹ and feared German propaganda in the United States. David Lloyd-George championed establishing an organization to coordinate propaganda efforts to Parliament in order to counter German propaganda in neutral nations and conduct their own propaganda operations. In late August the British cabinet discussed forming a new organization to coordinate

⁹⁶ Richard Bellace, “Letter to the Editor: ‘Tribune’s’ Unbiased News,” *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 6 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355250535/>.

⁹⁷ Frederic Warren, “Why Sympathy Should go to Germany,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355145396/>.

⁹⁸ H. G. Wells, “Would redraw Europe’s Map on Race Lines,” *Chicago Tribune*, 13 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355145942>.

⁹⁹ Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War*, 38.

propaganda in other nations.¹⁰⁰ One week into September the War Propaganda Bureau was established under C.F.G. Masterman.

Great Britain's War Propaganda Bureau Starts Operations

C. F. G. Masterman was chosen to head the new War Propaganda Bureau, partly because of his past experience in journalism and friendship with the Prime Minister.¹⁰¹ The Bureau sub-offices were divided into language and country focus areas in order to understand the psychology of the target area and tailor the propaganda produced, primarily print media such as books or pamphlets working with Oxford and other publication houses for publishing the materiel.¹⁰² The Bureau was one component of the British propaganda architecture.

The Foreign Office established a propaganda department, the News Department, as a response to increased attention from correspondents and news responsibility. The Department transmitted daily telegram to overseas diplomats and consuls for propaganda purposes, so it was a propaganda generator, as well as operator.¹⁰³ The News Department was meant to work with the Home Office's Neutral Press Committee, another component of British propaganda, in a complimentary if sometimes overlapping fashion.

¹⁰⁰ Sanders, "Wellington House and British Propaganda During the First World War," 119.

¹⁰¹ Ross, *Propaganda for War*, 30.

¹⁰² Sanders, "Wellington House and British Propaganda During the First World War," 120.

¹⁰³ Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-1918*, 34-37.

The Home Office hosted their own propaganda contributor, the Neutral Press Committee, which interacted with foreign correspondents. The Neutral Press Committee was the primary office feeding news outlets of neutral nations,¹⁰⁴ amongst other initiatives. Initially, there was an advisory committee providing oversight, with Masterman as a member, but the committee could not establish a working relationship with the Neutral Press Committee head, H. G. Mair, a former editor of the *Daily Chronicle*. The advisory committee disbanded and by 1916 there was no advisory committee coordinating directly with other propaganda agencies and the Neutral Press Committee reported directly to the Home Office.¹⁰⁵ Crossing government office boundaries presented a challenge, but Great Britain was trying to catch up to the perceived German advantage in propaganda operations. Sanders and Taylor quoted the British ambassador in Rome, Rennell Rodd, who said, “German preparedness for the eventuality of war was revealed by the amount of literature with which the offices and agencies in Italy were immediately inundated.”¹⁰⁶ Great Britain did not have anything prepared and was one month into the war before government organizations dedicated to propaganda began operations.

Great Britain elected for quantity of articles over length of them to catch up with the perceived German head start. The 16 September 1914 edition of the *Chicago Tribune* front page included seven articles from London, nearly half of the articles on the front

¹⁰⁴ Sanders, “Wellington House and British Propaganda During the First World War,” 121.

¹⁰⁵ Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War*, 33-34.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

page. Only one article contained content from Berlin, but it was a composite article with contributions from Petrograd, Paris, Rome, and London. This article compiled the official statements of the belligerents, concentrating on the most recent activity such as Hindenburg telling Kaiser Wilhelm the German army defeated the Russian army at Lyck in east Prussia, Elk in modern Poland. Petrograd's and Paris's official statement later in the article refuted Berlin's claim, denying any fighting occurred in Eastern Prussia.¹⁰⁷

Great Britain also promoted first person accounts of death and destruction when they could find them. Belgium sent a mission to the United States in protest of "alleged German atrocities in the war zone,"¹⁰⁸ and they stopped in London before continuing across the Atlantic to thank Great Britain for the support to the Belgian mission and people. The British king, George V, hosted a reception for the Belgian Mission, and one member addressed the gathering, highlighting destruction and horrors blamed on Germany. Louvain was called "a second Pompeii,"¹⁰⁹ and the Belgian Minister of State claimed, "I personally saw the bodies of a father and son, non-combatants, cut all to pieces by German bayonet thrusts." Later in September Mary Boyle O'Reilly, an American correspondent for the Newspaper Enterprise Association,¹¹⁰ wrote about her

¹⁰⁷ "German Army Striving to Oust Russia," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355127164/>.

¹⁰⁸ "Belgian Envoys to U. S. Stop to Thank England," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355249046>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Lynn Moulton, "Mary Boyle O'Reilly Papers," John J. Burns Library, Boston College, February 2016, <https://library.bc.edu/finding-aids/MS2003-045-finding-aid.pdf>.

travel in Belgium after the German invasion, which she referred to as a pilgrimage.¹¹¹

O'Reilly reported traveling with Belgian refugees walking to Holland and that she witnessed the results of the German destruction of Louvain and dead civilians left where and how they died.¹¹² First person accounts humanized the victims and personalized the stories to better appeal to the emotions of the reader. Years later Joseph Stalin reportedly said, "The death of one person is a tragedy; the death of one million is a statistic,"¹¹³ and subsequent psychological studies have shown a direct correlation between the number of victims and "the motivation to squelch our feelings of sympathy. In other words, when people see multiple victims, they turn the volume down on their emotions for fear of being overwhelmed."¹¹⁴ Personal stories with direct, first person accounts and distinct victims had greater emotional impact than listing a large number of victims. Heightened emotions were a goal of propaganda: a causal component of altered cognitions. At this early stage, American anger at Germany was a positive result for British propaganda.

The emotional excitement was tempered by United States policy, though. Official policy was neutrality in both government and person, and largely that appeared to be the case despite limited British and French grey propaganda. Newspapers in the Midwest

¹¹¹ Mary Boyle O'Reilly, "One Woman's Pilgrimage of Horror through War Ridden Belgium, World's Battleground," *South Bend News-Times*, 24 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464985278>.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Keith Payne, "Why is the Death of One Million a Statistic?" *Psychology Today*, 14 March 2010, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/life-autopilot/201003/why-is-the-death-one-million-statistic>.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

made an effort to print stories about from the German perspective and have their correspondents independently verify or observe locations in the reports. The *Chicago Tribune*'s James O'Donnell Bennett reported on his travels in Belgium searching for evidence of German atrocities but not finding any.¹¹⁵ Five reporters, including James O'Donnell Bennett and John T. McCutcheon of the *Chicago Tribune*, staked their names and reputations that Germans had not perpetrated the atrocities they were accused of.¹¹⁶ The *Chicago Tribune* had the resources to support foreign correspondents and acquire news from Germany or Austria independent from the cable or news bureaus, which they also used.

Smaller newspapers did not have the luxury of foreign correspondents providing original work. They were more dependent on either cabled articles or other newspapers, but the allies controlled more transmission vectors for articles and reports to traverse the Atlantic. War event articles were from allied nations more often than from Germany or Austria-Hungary. The 11 September 1914 edition of the *St. Joseph Evening Herald* page one European war coverage was limited to several "bulletins," a sentence or short paragraph focusing on a single event, consolidated in an article. The bulletin article consisted of six bulletins, four from London and zero from either Germany or Austria-

¹¹⁵ James O'Donnell Bennett, "Bennett Travels 100 Miles through 20 Towns; Calls Barbarity Stories False," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355127379/>.

¹¹⁶ Associated Press, "Alleged Cruelty of Germans Untrue, Statement of Tribune War Correspondents," *Chicago Tribune*, 7 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355251276/>.

Hungary.¹¹⁷ Even news from Berlin was sometimes transmitted via London or neutral nations such as Holland. The articles generally cited official German statements or newspapers, but the article published in the United States newspaper was from Germany's adversary.

The *Chicago Tribune* published three Letters to the Editor from local readers protesting an editorial published 3 September¹¹⁸. The editorial, "A King in 'Buckram,'" was an inflammatory piece, which mocked English soldiers fighting on behalf of "the gentleman of German extraction [King George V]," and the British people for tolerating it. It closed with a wish the war, "this foolish outburst," would show the British a monarch was superfluous.¹¹⁹ Charles Pope accused the editorial of flagrantly violating "the president's request to the American people to avoid expressions which may be construed as taking one side or another."¹²⁰ Henry French Goodwin's letter was shorter, but also objected to the editorial's tone, in particular finding it "wholly unworthy of so dignified a journal as the *Tribune* has heretofore been considered both at home and abroad."¹²¹ The last author, who only signed his letter, "A Reader," was practically

¹¹⁷ "German Aeroplane Drops 2 Bombs on Railway Near Chalons," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 11 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363535721/>.

¹¹⁸ "Letter to the Editor: A King in 'Buckram'," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355249547/>.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ "Letter to the Editor: The King in Buckram," *Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355251709/>.

¹²¹ Ibid.

stunned speechless, with nothing flattering to say about the editorial.¹²² Americans likely agreed monarchs were unnecessary encumbrances, and subjects risked their lives at the whims of a tyrant. The United States fought the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 to shed obligations to the British king, but Pope, Goodwin, and the “Reader” were more concerned with preserving neutrality than whether they agreed with the overall sentiment. The Chicagoans who responded to the editorial objected to how the editorial phrased its mockery of the British for going to war. Midwest Americans were more concerned with adhering to neutrality and suppressing heightened emotional expressions, particularly from the press.

Despite the efforts to include German or Austro-Hungarian content and protestations of neutrality violations, there was increasing evidence of favoritism toward the allies. The term ‘ally’ has a positive connotation, despite its neutral definition. Specific word choice is part of the cognition manipulation.¹²³ Referring to the collection of countries opposing Germany on the western front in France and Belgium as the allies could be for brevity’s sake. It takes significantly less time and space in an article to print the six letters of the word “allies” than it does to list out the nations and their colonial peoples. It saves time and money while transmitted via cable, which charged by the word. Not capitalizing the first letter in the word indicates it is being used for brevity and not as a proper appellation of the collective, as in later usage. Repetition is a common

¹²² “Letter to the Editor: The King in Buckram.”

¹²³ Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (1995; repr., New York, NY: Open Road Integrated Media, Inc., 2014), 161, kindle edition.

educational technique. By use of a positive word, repeatedly, to identify one side news consumers led to internalization. Domestic news using the term demonstrated that repetition from British and French sources had an effect.¹²⁴ James Maddock wrote to the *Chicago Tribune* appreciating *Tribune* correspondents James O'Donnell Bennet and John McCutcheon defense of Germans, but used "allies" to describe Germany's opposition.¹²⁵ Though the author is sympathetic to Germany, his use suggested an acceptance of the term.

The opposition for the allies is virtually always singularly named as Germany, but some articles referred to them as "the enemy." Typically articles referring to the Germans as "the enemy" were produced by Great Britain or France, but the newspapers in the Midwest around the southern tip of Lake Michigan rarely changed the verbiage¹²⁶ to be more neutral in context or published articles from the German point of view alongside the British or French which would balance the inflammatory articles. Meanwhile, articles from Berlin identify the allies as the "foe"¹²⁷ instead of "enemy" like British articles. German articles may have been transmitted in that language and needed translating on the United States side for the English-language newspapers, or the authors perhaps tried to

¹²⁴ "Peace in the Air," *South Bend News-Times*, 14 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464984531>.

¹²⁵ James E. Maddock, "The Whole Truth," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 October 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354998660>.

¹²⁶ "Germans' Right Still Retreating as Fight Rages," *South Bend News-Times*, 10 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464984279>.

¹²⁷ "Kaiser in Plea to U.S. Says Foe Uses 'Dumdums'," *Chicago Tribune*, 10 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355252264>.

moderate the language, using a less inflammatory word for the Germans' opposition. Editors separated articles portraying the allies in a favorable light from those portraying the Germans favorably. The *Chicago Tribune* 8 September 1914 edition started coverage of the European war on the front page, but articles from the German point of view are not printed until page three¹²⁸. This could be a question of volume, since Germany had to rely on either cables outside their control or their wireless station for their transmissions to make it across the Atlantic, but that was all trans-Atlantic communication, government and commercial. The restrictions Germany dealt with naturally reduced the amount of stories favorable to their side. The allies had access to wireless and trans-Atlantic cables and posted government censors in cable offices to alter transmissions meant for publication to introduce a favorable bias.

Some private citizens displayed similar bias, but there were diverging opinions. Some began to buy into Great Britain's narrative of Germany as the instigator. An example was an 8 September 1914 letter to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* by a local resident who only signed his initials, J. F. H. The writer called the Germans "barbarous" for their blatant violation of Belgian neutrality.¹²⁹ Sympathizing with the British interpretations made the reader more receptive to British propaganda through lowering the evidentiary requirements; the propaganda can make gradually more outlandish claims

¹²⁸ *Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 1914, 1, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355251652>; *Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 1914, 2, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355251666>; *Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 1914, 3, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355251679>.

¹²⁹ J.F.H., "Letter to the Editor: Perfidious Germany, Too," *Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355251709>.

while retaining the believability for someone sympathetic. Conversely, German-Americans in particular were clinging to fairness and Wilson's neutrality principles. James O'Donnell Bennett, a staff reporter for the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, wrote several pieces defending Germans and refuting atrocity claims for lack of evidence. Following his 17 September 1914 piece, published in both English and German,¹³⁰ the Sunday edition published more than two dozen letters to the editor from Iowa to New York as well as Illinois thanking him for defending the Germans. Dr. Edward Durand wrote on behalf of the German-American Citizens' League of Iowa claiming membership over 73,000 and he praised the *Tribune* as well as Bennett for "getting the full truth."¹³¹ A.B. Korb, a school principal in Lincoln, Illinois, called Bennett's article a "service to the public" and congratulated the *Tribune* for "manifest faith in the truth."¹³² Not every letter was favorable to the Bennett article. Clay C. Cooper, a local Chicagoan, criticized Bennett for not addressing Louvain's destruction.¹³³ Regardless of where the individual's sympathies lie, there were a few similarities: non-involvement in the European war and full support for neutrality.

¹³⁰ James O'Donnell Bennett, "Bennett Says German Soldiers are Kind to Civilian and Captured Foes," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355127393>.

¹³¹ Edward L. Durand, "Letter to the Editor: Laud Fair Play Spirit," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355128410/>.

¹³² A. B. Korb, "Letter to the Editor: Service to the Public," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355128410/>.

¹³³ Clay C. Cooper, "Letter to the Editor: The Bennett and Powell Stories," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355128410/>.

While the people in the Midwest remained neutral, the belligerents, particularly Great Britain, kept working on the residents to change their minds. The *Chicago Tribune* published an article on 4 October 1914 quoting Viscount James Bryce, a British peer and former ambassador to the United States from 1907 until 1913. He was a trusted and familiar figure to the United States political set and other prominent Americans. The piece was an example of Great Britain's grey propaganda, because it did not seek to conceal the origin of the information, using Bryce's experience and connections to the United States, the target region. However, it perpetuated exaggerated claims of German brutality in Belgium "unprecedented in the history of modern European warfare."¹³⁴ Other sections of Bryce's article were designed specifically to appeal to Americans. Respect for German citizens and their academia appealed to the pride German-Americans felt in their heritage. The timing of the release further indicated the propaganda intent. President Woodrow Wilson declared a day of prayer for peace be observed in the United States on 4 October 1914.¹³⁵ Wilson announced the date in early September,¹³⁶ plenty of time for the British to prepare a release to coincide. The original publication in London in the *Pall Mall Gazette* was 3 October 1914, just in time to be cabled across the ocean and published in the Sunday editions for readers to encounter after attending services with

¹³⁴ "Germany's Breach of Faith Forced Britain into War, James Bryce Says," *Chicago Tribune*, 4 October 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354998848>.

¹³⁵ W. B. Norton, "Peace Prayer Goes Up Today All Over Land," *Chicago Tribune*, 4 October 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/354998794/>.

¹³⁶ "Wilson Calls on Citizens of United States to Pray for Peace in Europe October 4," *South Bend News-Times*, 8 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464984124>.

clergy who likely followed the president's plea. The size and date the piece arrived restricted the piece because smaller regional papers do not publish Sunday editions nor did they have the space for such an extended editorial. Subsequent editions of the *Chicago Tribune* published a few letters to the editor regarding the day of prayer for peace, but none mentioned Bryce's article. It failed to demonstrate an immediate propaganda impact.

The smaller municipalities had limited space for war and domestic coverage. This forced the editors to make some difficult choices about what made it into the paper and what did not. As the months advanced, the European war received less and less front page space. In the middle of October the baseball World Series supplanted the war and in November by an outbreak of Hoof and Mouth disease in Michigan and its spread to Indiana, Illinois, and other Midwest states displaced the war. By the end of November the four-page *St. Joseph Evening Herald* had a headline and one or two paragraphs buried on the cover page with informational articles describing the battles or actions of the belligerents on the second page. Relegating coverage later in the edition indicated the domestic news was deemed more important to the paper's subscribers and there was insufficient feedback—typically letters to the editor, published or not—causing the editorial staff to alter the content or layout. Even the *Chicago Tribune* reduced its front page war coverage. The 26 November 1914 front page included two columns and a political cartoon of war coverage.¹³⁷ The war was largely pushed from the front page

¹³⁷ *Chicago Tribune*, 26 November 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/371410363/>.

throughout the region; the situation normalized. More immediate concerns, baseball and a livestock plague, captured regional attention.

The diminished coverage could also be a sign of news fatigue. Smaller communities had more immediate concerns, such as the reduced market for their manufacturing resulting from war loss or financial trauma created by losing cattle to Hoof and Mouth disease. If the residents did not feel an emotional investment or obligation, if the war remained the “European war,” propaganda operations had not altered Midwest American sentiment.

It Was Not Over by Christmas

As the year drew to a close prospects for peace in Europe did not look favorable. War bulletins and informational articles which typically graced the cover pages of newspapers seesawed daily between Allied successes and German successes. The losses suffered by each side in some areas exceeded the ability to replace the men, animals, and equipment destroyed. Allied countries, primarily, were coming to the United States in larger numbers for resources to support their population and to continue fighting. Horse brokers in Chicago were being approached by European agents on behalf of the cavalry and artillery.¹³⁸ The conflict between the domestic need for the draft animals and the commercial needs for income to offset the diminished trade because of the war was primarily felt at higher levels; private citizens were more concerned with today’s bills than tomorrow’s shortages.

¹³⁸ “British Army Seeks Horses in Michigan,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 24 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363517368/>.

The impacts to commerce as a result of the war sometimes had direct causes. The British mined and closed the North Sea and were zealous in their searches and seizures of Atlantic merchant ships for contraband. By the end of December Wilson's administration forwarded a protest to the British government protesting the delays, seizures, and lack of compensations for shipments that are not contraband or foodstuffs.¹³⁹ Merchant ships and seizures prevented timely payments. The message was amicably received, not seen as a threat or ultimatum, but a formal response did not arrive before the new year. This impacted the greater Chicago area directly, as a main exchange for purchase and shipping whose cargoes were likely to be interdicted prior to reaching their customers. The region around the southern end of Lake Michigan was an agricultural center. The concerns for shipping were significantly more in the forefront of local concerns than the fighting. Great Britain's delays and seizures of merchant ships crossing the Atlantic interfered with timely cargo delivery, negatively affecting American commercial interests in the Midwest specifically, as well as the larger nation.

Midwest Americans were worried about how Great Britain's contraband interdictions would affect pocketbooks at home, but the Christmas holiday approached and seasonal generosity led Americans to increased charity to the belligerent nations, specifically for those negatively affected by the war. The local newspapers published a message from the Austro-Hungarian emperor thanking all citizens of the United States

¹³⁹ "Back Up Wilson in Demand for Shipping Rights," *South Bend News-Times*, 30 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464992500/>.

for the Christmas relief provided to the war orphans of Vienna.¹⁴⁰ Belgians displaced by the war also benefitted from American charity.¹⁴¹ Combined, Americans practiced charity for each side, though the contributions may have resulted from charities or fundraisers dedicated to single nation beneficiaries. The Century Theater in South Bend, Indiana showed *Belgian War Pictures* with half the proceeds provided to the Red Cross Society of Belgium¹⁴² and an earlier effort from the German-Austria Red Cross Society chapter in South Bend raised money for German casualties in the war.¹⁴³ Neutrality did not prevent relief support or charity, and the Midwest contributed generously for each side and private citizens protested perceived violations of neutrality.¹⁴⁴

The efforts of newspaper editors and appreciation of the populace for balanced and unbiased coverage of the war suggested British propaganda had not yet made an observable effect. The editor of the *Chicago Tribune* published a letter from M. Drew of Chicago, a self-described Irishwoman from the “old country” thanked the *Tribune* for the “just reports.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ “Thanks U.S. for Presents,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 29 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363517544>.

¹⁴¹ “Buy Wheat for Belgians,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 2 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363536630>.

¹⁴² “Advertisement: Century Theater,” *South Bend New- Times*, 9 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464990905>.

¹⁴³ “Will Raise Funds to Aid Germans,” *South Bend News-Times*, 14 October 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464868807>.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ M. Drew, “Letter to the Editor: Fairness in the War,” *Chicago Tribune*, 26 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355054798>.

Besides having the size and space for publishing feedback on the newspaper and sentiment of the readers, the *Chicago Tribune* was able to employ artists. John McCutcheon, a *Tribune* photographer and cartoonist, was sent to Europe to report, photograph, and draw about his experiences. He returned to Chicago in December and his photos and drawings were published in the subsequent days.¹⁴⁶ The photographs captured McCutcheon's view of the European war as wanton waste and destruction; the destruction of the cities in Belgium but also the daily lives of the soldiers, both Allied and German. McCutcheon's drawings were more political in nature and ranged from farcical to metaphorical. Both the photographs and the drawings are indicative of the photographer's perspective against war and favoritism for the United States policy of neutrality. The stark truth in the ruins depicted by the photographs shock: the aggressor in the cartoon tormenting Uncle Sam is not always German.

¹⁴⁶ John T. McCutcheon, "Press Agents Color the News of the Great War," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 20 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355053179/>.



Figure 3. John McCutcheon Illustration, 8 December 1914

Source: John McCutcheon, "Inadequate Defense, Adequate Defense, or Militarism," *Chicago Tribune*, 8 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354959125>.
 Note: This illustration was published on the first page of the 8 December 1914 edition of the *Chicago Tribune* and depicts the great weight of cumbersome militarism and the United States, personified in Uncle Sam, choosing a more moderated defense.

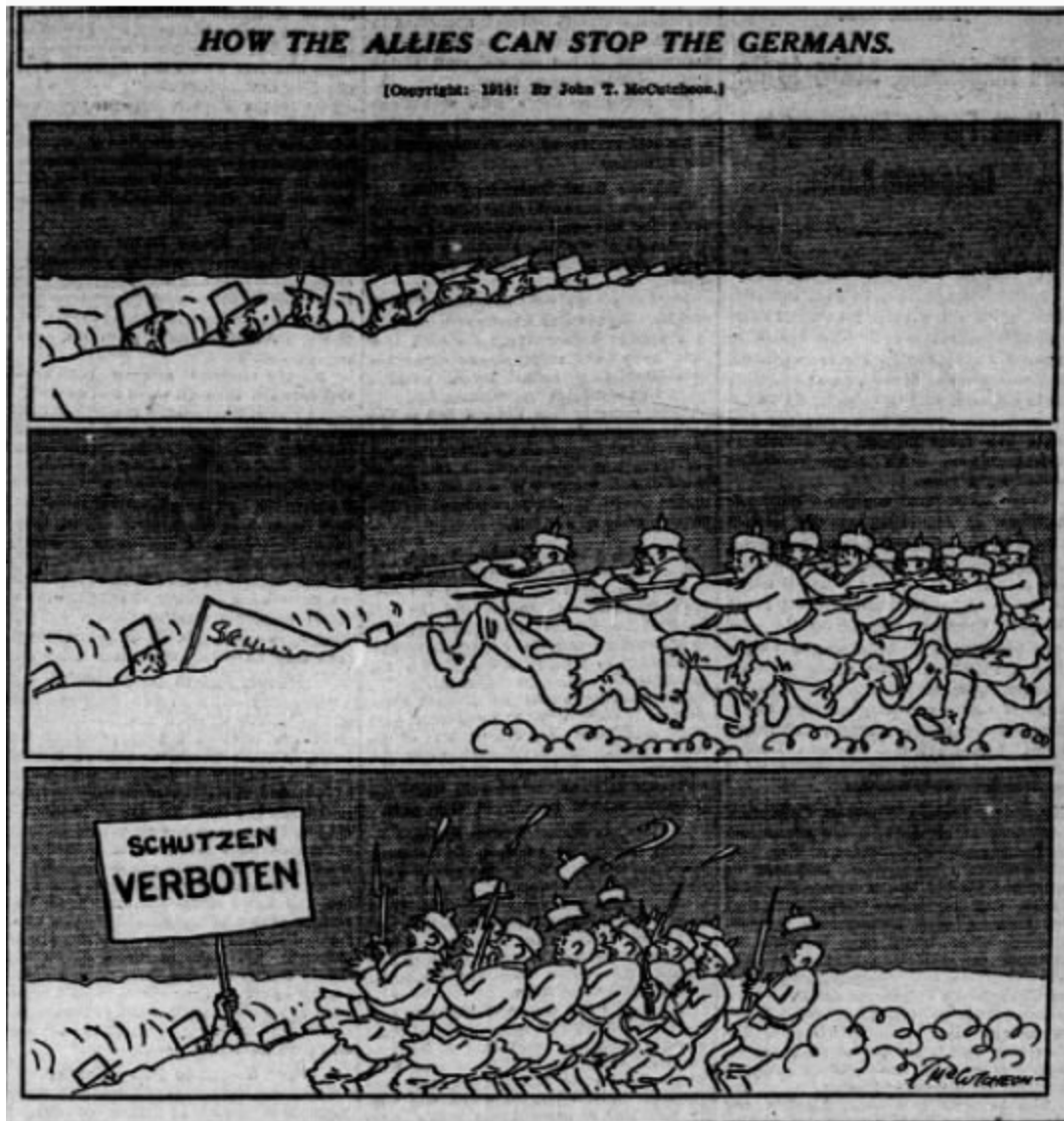


Figure 4. John McCutcheon Illustration, 4 December 1914

Source: John McCutcheon, "How the Allies Can Stop the Germans," *Chicago Tribune*, 4 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354957881/>.

Note: This McCutcheon illustration was published in the 4 December 1914 edition of the *Chicago Tribune* to facetiously suggest how to thwart a German attack on allied trenches.

Smaller, regional newspapers had to be selective with content. They did not always have the space for images, whether they were illustrations or photographs, and did not have a regular, dedicated space in the newspaper for letters to the editor like the

Chicago Tribune did. The *South Bend News-Times* did not regularly publish letters to the editor or support their own war correspondent, but sometimes a reader provided a letter from a relative in one of the belligerent countries. The presence of Notre Dame University provided increased opportunities for international ties through both students and professors. John Margrave, a student at the university, forwarded a letter from his sister, a school teacher in Tavern Tier[sic], Germany. Based on further descriptions in the letter, such as references to Luxemburg and troop movements for both Germany and France, the location is likely Trier, Germany just east of Luxemburg. Margrave's sister is not named, but the text of her letter is quoted verbatim. In it she forwarded the German narrative of France breaking neutrality and though she called the war "the awful conflict," she expressed confidence in eventual German victory.¹⁴⁷

The *St. Joseph Evening Herald* was even smaller than the *South Bend News-Times*. The *Evening Herald* did not publish letters to the editor or write their own, original editorials. Generally the newspaper used editorials published in previous days' editions of larger newspapers, sometimes even the *South Bend News-Times* or *Chicago Tribune*, benefiting from their resources to provide balance. The *Evening Herald's* editor did not have a pattern he followed, so the editorials were chosen for their topic and content instead. More than half the editorials chosen in December did not relate to the war directly, but rather the United States in general or the Midwest specifically. The first

¹⁴⁷ "France Violated Neutrality, Says German Teacher,, *South Bend News-Times*, 25 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464992208>.

editorial in December focused on war as a vector for medical advancements.¹⁴⁸ This editorial focused on American wars more than foreign ones. It specifically mentioned the Spanish-American war, so the European war may have led the author to choose the topic, but the editorial did not address the contemporary war. There were editorials which directly discussed the European war. One of these discussed food supply questions in Germany, with prices already rising and the war continuing.¹⁴⁹ The *Evening Herald's* editor largely avoided editorials directly addressing the war itself: instead he seemed to prefer editorials which had a greater context and possible connections to the United States and in particular Berrien County, such as food. Berrien County was an agricultural area so those second and third order effects of the war were significant concerns of the region served by the newspaper. The editorials largely avoided emotional appeals; they focused on concrete issues important to the readers such as medical progress, agricultural trade, or the superiority of the American governmental system over a monarchy which empowers one person to drag a nation into war.¹⁵⁰

1914 Conclusions

Great Britain's propaganda operations in 1914 were undeveloped, which is understandable. There was nothing approaching the scale of propaganda operations

¹⁴⁸ "Patients Under Discipline," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 1 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363536626/>.

¹⁴⁹ "Germany's Food Supply," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 7 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363516619/>.

¹⁵⁰ "Kingly Power—People Suffer," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 11 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363516855/>.

which spanned half the globe and used technology to communicate to the furthest reaches in hours instead of days before the war started. New communication mediums were incorporated and new offices were established to publish propaganda. Perceptions about the war, especially its duration, influenced what the propagandists felt was important or relevant. Cutting the trans-Atlantic cables to Germany isolated the country from the rest of the world. Great Britain had the best control of the war narrative through cable control and censors, but Germany had options that allowed them to bypass Great Britain such as the wireless network or actual reporters who wrote their own stories and mailed them back to the United States for publication. Great Britain tried to address this by close control of the movements of reporters, but this backfired; they protested the control and censors, sometimes bypassing them as *Chicago Tribune* reporter James O'Donnell Bennett who sent a story favorable to the Germans by both trans-Atlantic cable in London and mail to his offices. The cabled story did not pass the censors, but almost three weeks later the mailed version arrived at *Tribune* offices and was published the following day.

Newspapers tried to print both sides of the story, so the German *White Book* was printed just as the French version, the *Yellow Book*, and the words of Viscount James Bryce, who also addressed culpability, honor, and responsibility. As the year waned, though, the American people seemed unmoved by the efforts of any belligerent to abandon neutrality. Interest and attention paid to the war diminished. On 31 December 1914 the *St. Joseph Evening Herald* published one article dedicated to the war on the first

page.¹⁵¹ It did not even take a full column. The majority of the war news was relegated to page two, and had been for most of the month. Even the *Chicago Tribune's* 31 December edition reduced front page war news to a political cartoon, two columns, and the main headline.¹⁵² Attention turned from what happened in the war to how the war affected Americans at home.¹⁵³ In the Midwest around the southern end of Lake Michigan the war mostly manifested itself in American lives through the pocketbook. Anger was shared among Great Britain, Germany and other countries who detained ships and seized cargoes as contraband. But anger directed at Great Britain was not useful for Great Britain's propaganda. Wellington House and the rest of the British propaganda organizations needed to work around the military operations interfering with commerce which were responsible for American discontent and focus the anger at Germany and Austria-Hungary.

¹⁵¹ "15 Die; 32 Hurt; German Flyers Shell Dunkirk," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 31 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363517615>.

¹⁵² *Chicago Tribune*, 31 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355056058/>.

¹⁵³ "U.S. Demands Fair Treatment of her Commerce", *South Bend News-Times*, 29 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464992446>.

CHAPTER 4

1915

1915 War Timeline

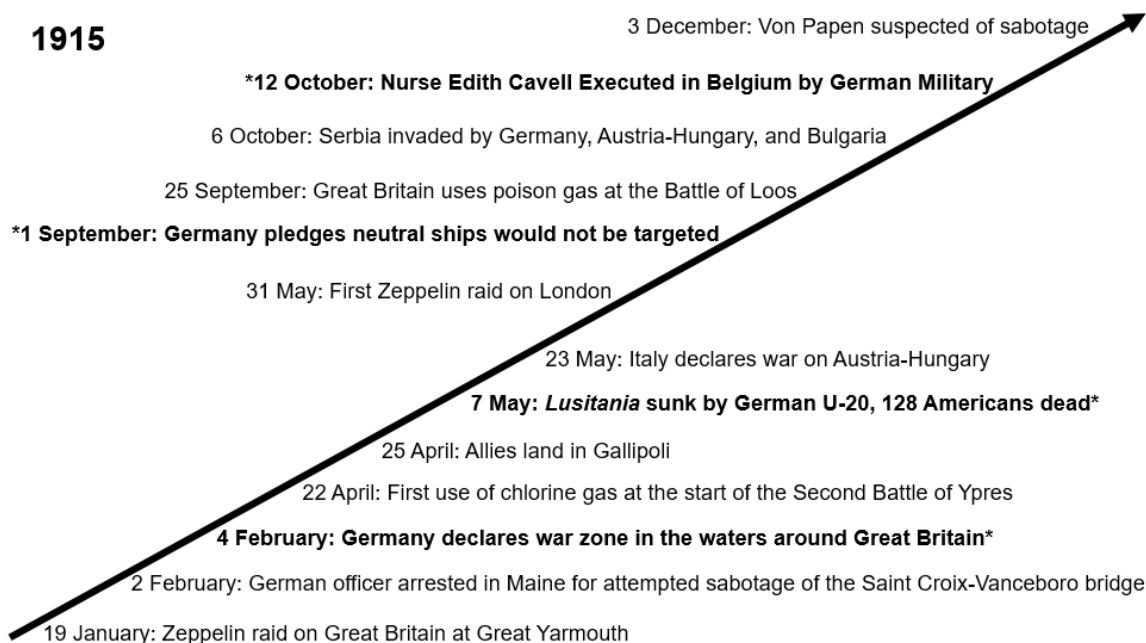


Figure 5. 1915 Timeline

Source: “Interactive WWI Timeline,” National WWI Museum and Memorial, 2019, <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/interactive-wwi-timeline>; “Cities Damaged by German Airships,” *Chicago Tribune*, 20 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355059302>; G. J. Meyer, *A World Undone* (New York, NY: Random House Inc., 2006), 243, kindle edition; “Zeppelins of Giant Type Shell City,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 June 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355002969/>; Arthur Sears Henning, “Berlin Moves to Heal Breach with America,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 September 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355124725>; Michael S. Neiberg, *The Path to War: How the First World War Created Modern America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 78, kindle edition.

Note: This timeline is not exhaustive. It concentrates on the Western Front, British actions, United States of America actions domestically and abroad, and Central Powers actions useful for propaganda by Great Britain. Events outside those may be included in a case-by-case basis. Items in bold with an asterisk are of either propagandistic value to Great Britain or importance to the United States. The consolidated timeline with citations is available in an annex included at the end of this paper.

January to April

The new year started much like the old year ended. The eastern and western fronts were largely stabilized with back and forth battles for small gains shortly returned to the opposition. The navies were active and sinking each other's ships through torpedoes or mines. The Christmas Truce did make the newspapers in the American Midwest a few weeks after Christmas when a John T. McCutcheon illustration alluded to it on the cover of the *Chicago Tribune* showing British and German troops playing what appears to be American football more than soccer,¹⁵⁴ and an editorial later in January describing the game itself, including the outcome, consistent with modern reports of the German victory, 3-2.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ John T. McCutcheon, "Noon Hour in the Trenches," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355141697/>.

¹⁵⁵ "Fraternity in War," *Chicago Tribune*, 18 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355058880/>; Mike Dash, "World War I: 100 Years Later, the Story of the WWI Christmas Truce," *Smithsonian*, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-story-of-the-wwi-christmas-truce-11972213/>.

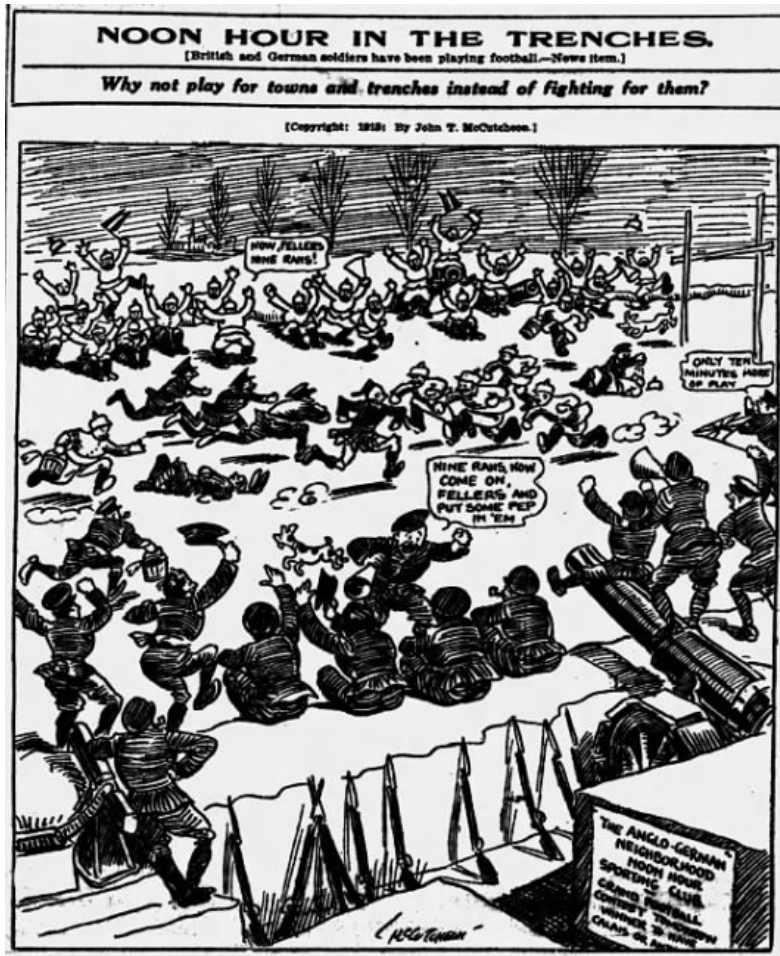


Figure 6. McCutcheon Alternative to War

Source: John T. McCutcheon, "Noon Hour in the Trenches," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355141697/>.

Note: John T. McCutcheon illustration for the *Chicago Tribune* on 9 January 1915 may be an allusion to the game played between the British and Germans in no man's land during the 1914 Christmas Truce.

Articles and editorials about the Christmas Truce continued sporadically through January in the Midwest. Even in February the story of the Truce was used as

entertainment at a benefit held at the Caldwell Theater in St. Joseph, Michigan.¹⁵⁶ The story of enemy soldiers putting down their weapons and observing the Christmas holiday together was reminiscent of the American Civil War, Fredericksburg 1862. The *St. Joseph Evening Herald* published an editorial in late January which discussed the British and German soldiers' camaraderie at Christmas 1914 and the damage that story wrought on the belligerent nations' official narratives of popular support for the war.¹⁵⁷ This editorial was originally published in the *Chicago Herald*, but the editor of the *Evening Herald*, across Lake Michigan from Chicago, agreed with the sentiment enough, and perceived enough interest and relevance to his subscribers, that he picked it for his newspaper. The editorial sympathized with the common soldier who followed orders but held no personal animosity for the soldier in the opposing trenches. The Christmas Truce on the western front was a story of the common soldiers on the front, but drew attention to relatable humanity of Britons and Germans. Many beloved Christmas carols were German, such as "Silent Night" or "Stille Nacht," were sung by people in the Midwest, sometimes in German. Britain had to move the United States past stories of the Truce, because if Americans viewed the Germans as similar to their ethnic-German neighbors in Berrien County, Michigan or Milwaukee, Wisconsin negative emotions would not be excited. The Truce was bad for British propaganda and it was a single event, replaced in the news by subsequent activity.

¹⁵⁶ "Benefit at the Caldwell," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 24 February 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363519934>.

¹⁵⁷ "A People's War?" *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 23 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363518656>.

The European war was not dominating the front page of the local Midwest newspapers in the first third of 1915. The cover page of a newspaper in 1915 had a larger number of articles with a broad range of topics to draw the interest of a potential purchaser to persuade them to purchase the paper and turn the page, where the longer articles and advertisements followed. It is similar to the modern day concept of a news website. The broad range and high number are like “clickbait,” displaying just enough information, about diverse topics, to draw the prospective customer into clicking on something, or in the case of a newspaper in 1915, turn the page. For instance, the 23 January 1915 edition of the *St. Joseph Evening Herald* had 21 separate articles ranging from a full column describing the outcome of local school sports games to a small paragraph of a single sentence describing local circuit court news.¹⁵⁸ To increase the number of articles printed on the front page most articles tended to be short, two to four paragraphs. Of the 21 articles, only two pertained to the European war. One was a component of theatrical announcements at the Caldwell Theatre, a relatively new theater in St. Joseph, Michigan,¹⁵⁹ showing *Animated Weekly War Special* for one day only, while the other is a fantastical proposition by Nathan Straus, reportedly a philosopher and philanthropist, proposing women walk between the trenches in Europe to end the war. Michigan governor Woodbridge Ferris’s proclamation prohibiting movements of hoofed

¹⁵⁸ *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 23 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363518632/>.

¹⁵⁹ Ken McIntyre, “Caldwell Theatre,” *Cinema Treasures*, <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/20235>, accessed 28 March 2019.

mammals from Illinois into Michigan to contain Hoof and Mouth Disease was longer and in better placement at the top and center of the page.

The *South Bend News-Times* for the same day had fewer articles with just ten,¹⁶⁰ and more news of the European war including “Latest Bulletins from War Zone,” a recurring segment publishing brief notes or releases from the belligerent nations. The 23 January 1915 edition included five bulletins: three from allied or neutral nations, one from Germany—via wireless so it did not have to pass through a censor at transmission—and one from Turkey. The other articles related to the war were all from allied capitals; London, Petrograd, and Paris. The diversity of origin for the bulletins and articles on the cover of the *News-Times* demonstrated the paper’s efforts to present balanced information pertaining to the European war, but the newspapers introduced bias towards the allies with the articles they acquired and published, both through number and content. Some articles were most likely white propaganda meant to highlight successes for the allies, such as the London article describing two German aviators downed in France. The headline, “Two German Aviators Killed in France,” makes no mention of the rest of the raid including the four to eight aircraft that escaped or the eight total fatalities due to the air raid.¹⁶¹ Other articles were expanding on events of the war, such as the article describing a French gain in Flanders. This article is from Paris and expounds on an

¹⁶⁰ *South Bend News-Times*, 23 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464960883/>.

¹⁶¹ “Two German Aviators Killed in France,” *South Bend News-Times*, 23 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464960883/>.

official statement from the French War Office.¹⁶² It does acknowledge German attacks and advances, but this article does not include perspective from the Germans. The first significant report was an allied perspective, so the Germans would be forced to not only publish a counter perspective but overcome biases established by first information.

The consequence of publishing news articles available through cable or press agency was the plethora of allied information compared to the dearth of German, Austrian, or Turkish. British efforts to isolate Germany informationally seemed to be having an effect. Great Britain and the rest of the allies were flooding the news even in the American Midwest with its large German-American population. While these articles are not strictly pro-allied or anti-German, getting more information from one side bred familiarity. Familiarity is a form of emotional investment, which is also a goal of propaganda. This tendency is demonstrated in the modern American obsession with celebrities; reading about the minutia of celebrities' lives and opinions until the regular Americans develop a perception the celebrities are their friends and entitled to vehement defense.¹⁶³ Perceptions developed based on familiarity. But modern day is not like 1915. In 1915 information moved slower. Instead of minute by minute updates of the minutia on a conveniently handheld device, people in 1915 had a variety of newspapers and subsequent editions publishing some new information accompanied by books, pamphlets and film.

¹⁶² "Gain of Yards is Called Vital in Flanders Battle," *South Bend News-Times*, 23 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464960883/>.

¹⁶³ David Mack, "Poor Rachael Ray is getting Dragged by Confused Beyonce Fans," *BuzzFeed News*, 24 April 2016, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/davidmack/she-just-wants-to-cook-brunch>.

In a further effort to foster the familiarity and enhance the emotional bond, Great Britain increased the articles relating to individual experiences of the war and their own domestic issues and quirks. Recounting battles were more dramatic when told by a soldier or sailor who was there. A sailor on the *HMS Glasgow* wrote a letter describing a sea battle off Coronel Chile between British and German ships and the author described his ship's gunners' bravery in the battle, asking for water to clean and cool the gun, instead of for themselves after being injured.¹⁶⁴ There is considerable identifying detail absent from the article, increasing the likelihood this is a grey propaganda article. The author of the letter is not named, nor is his position on the ship. The type of guns are not described, which could be the result of assumptions contemporary readers would be familiar with the type of gun on the *Glasgow*. This article may have been an attempt to recover some advantage after the Battle of Coronel off Chili in November 1914, a defeat for the British Navy which suffered two ships sunk without killing a single German.¹⁶⁵

The humor on the front line also found its way across the Atlantic to Midwest American newspapers: a group of French soldiers told of a comrade, Francois, who snored so loudly they were obliged to dig him a personal dugout to get a decent night sleep.¹⁶⁶ Though there is cross over between Great Britain and France, French stories of

¹⁶⁴ "Gunners Joked as Shells Flew Thick Over Sea," *South Bend News-Times*, 22 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464960740>.

¹⁶⁵ Gideon Long, "WW1 Coronel: an Unlikely Naval Battle Remembered," *BBC News*, 1 November 1914, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-29857302>.

¹⁶⁶ "Snore so Loud He is Sent to Dug-Out," *South Bend News-Times*, 22 February 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464967329>.

the same ilk served Britain's purpose of personalizing the war with individuals and relatable anecdotes.

Government stories were not usually as diverting as Francois. Prohibition's "wet" versus "dry" debate in Great Britain included Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd-George who favored temperance and, according to the headline, called "Drink a worse foe than armed enemy."¹⁶⁷ A later article in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* had the British War Minister, Lord Kitchener and even King George V openly supporting prohibition in the name of the war.¹⁶⁸ The United States had a prohibition movement at the same time, which may account for some discussion of temperance movement in Great Britain, but no other countries' movement received substantive coverage.¹⁶⁹ Ultimately the editors decided what was published in the newspaper, but they were guided by feedback from their subscribers and constrained somewhat by availability. Great Britain provided articles to promote their military not as a collection of nameless individuals but as people doing their duty and with individual foibles. How many jokes were told about a brother or partner snored so loudly they needed their own dugout after the February story from the *South Bend News-Times*? How many men commented if anyone deserved a drink it was soldiers on the front? It is impossible to say. But stories of individuals have a larger

¹⁶⁷ "Lloyd-George Calls Drink a Worse Foe Than Armed Enemy," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 March 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354969768/>.

¹⁶⁸ "Kitchener Joins Fight on Liquor," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 2 April 1915, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=wZJMF1LD7PcC&dat=19150402&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

¹⁶⁹ "'Drys' Issue Newspaper," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 2 April 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363521642/>.

personal appeal and greater emotional approachability. The government articles provided common ground between the United States and Great Britain. The articles ingratiated Britain and the allies to American citizens because it provided a more holistic picture and events less directly related to the war for them to discuss and compare to domestic versions of similar events. Events which kept Britain in conversation in Midwest America served the propaganda purpose this early in the campaign.

But that is not to say all Americans were in agreement regarding the direct contributions of Great Britain to the local newspapers. Herman Deutsch of Milwaukee, Wisconsin protested Britain's strong presence in American journalism through a letter to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*. He wrote, "As a citizen of the United States, I regret very deeply that our press is so totally controlled by England and corrupted by that commercial nation. If no other benefit comes to us by this war I hope it will be the liberation of the press from English influence."¹⁷⁰ Deutsch's opinion likely placed more emphasis on the origin of the articles published in the *Tribune*—more of the foreign articles were from London or another allied capital than Berlin—but discounts the paper's own correspondents, including James O'Donnell Bennett who wrote from a German army camp in Russia the previous month.¹⁷¹ A few weeks later a Chicagoan only identifying as "A Reader" criticized the treatment Germans received in English newspapers and protested local newspapers publishing what the reader considered slander

¹⁷⁰ Herman Deutsch, "Letter to the Editor: Unable to Grasp American Journalism," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 April 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355030080/>.

¹⁷¹ James O'Donnell Bennett, "Road Building Progresses as Army Advances," *Chicago Tribune*, 23 March 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354967055>.

and abuse.¹⁷² Deutsch and the unidentified reader were in stark contrast with Charles M. Freeman of Arlington Heights, Michigan who complimented the *Tribune*'s patriotism¹⁷³ and N. M. Sicklele of Evanston Illinois who exclaimed "No; England has not influenced the American mind!"¹⁷⁴ Great Britain's propaganda apparatus had been operational since September 1914, as referenced earlier. Americans recognized they were being targeted, but believed they were not being influenced.

The *Chicago Tribune*, at least, was actively trying to provide direct reporting from each side, sending their own correspondents to the respective belligerents and for a time James O'Donnell Bennett was with the Germans. In January Bennett responded to a letter by Arthur Conan Doyle where Doyle accused Germany of such things as a "murder policy" and "wanton destruction."¹⁷⁵ Bennett broke down Doyle's arguments; pointing out Doyle cited no names, which was indicative Doyle's article may have been grey propaganda, purporting to be from direct observation and authority but without naming sources it is impossible to independently verify. The *Tribune* correspondent also refuted Doyle's claims of German mistreatment of Belgian civilians with personal, direct observations from Bennett's time on the western front of Belgium's civilian population

¹⁷² A Reader, "Letter to the Editor: Thinks Press Unjust Towards Germans," *Chicago Tribune*, 8 March 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355156507/>.

¹⁷³ Charles M. Freeman, "Letter to the Editor: 'This is a Nation,'" *Chicago Tribune*, 14 February 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354886336/>.

¹⁷⁴ N. M. Sicklele, "Letter to the Editor: Alien Influence and Public Opinion," *Chicago Tribune*, 25 April 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355031695/>.

¹⁷⁵ James O'Donnell Bennett, "An Open Letter to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355058005/>.

putting themselves in direct opposition to the German army. James O'Donnell further asserted Germans were honest and fair in their treatment of the Belgians and inflicted no wanton or even significant destruction on land or people. He finished with an establishment of impartiality stating, "My [Bennett's] testimony is the testimony of an American who loves England and who has not a drop of German blood in his veins."¹⁷⁶ as though stating an affiliation for Great Britain and lack of connection to Germany increased the legitimacy of his argument and impartiality.

The article was dated 28 December 1914 from Metz, Germany, so given its publication date and location it likely traveled by post or hand carry as opposed to cable. The favorable observations and opinions expressed in Bennett's letter would likely have not passed a British censor, as his September 1914 article discussing an Englishwoman's observations of the kindness of Germans described in the previous chapter was not cabled. Great Britain could not do much to inhibit correspondents who worked directly for an American newspaper. If correspondents traveled with the German army the British had no impact on what the reporter viewed or who they spoke to. Bennett demonstrated there were ways around the cable censor, and the *Chicago Tribune*, at least, had no qualms pointing out the British censor interfered in American news.

Americans were more unified in their views of the European war than their views of the belligerents or the newspaper reporting. The peace movement remained strong, with several groups from across the country pressing President Wilson to organize a

¹⁷⁶ Bennett, "An Open Letter to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle."

council of neutrals to obtain peace.¹⁷⁷ The Chicago Peace Advocates met 18 January 1915 and planned a larger, national mass meeting to protest war for February.¹⁷⁸ Right next to that article was another that proposed a “permanent international court to settle disputes that now lead to war” by the International Peace Forum.¹⁷⁹ The La Salle, a movie theater in South Bend, Indiana showed an anti-war film *In the Name of the Prince of Peace* described as showing “The horrors of the European war and the lessons taught, brought forth in a vivid, vital film production.”¹⁸⁰

The following months were also highlighted by the Women’s Peace Congress in the Hague. The leader of the American delegation was Jane Addams, a Chicagoan.¹⁸¹ When the congress convened in April it hosted delegations from neutral and belligerent nations of each side.¹⁸² Addams met with President Wilson in March prior to the delegation sailing for Europe. She appealed to the president to “call a conference of plenipotentiaries of all the neutral nations of Europe or of all the neutral nations of the

¹⁷⁷ Staff Correspondent, “Women Demand President Act to Obtain Peace,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355141946>.

¹⁷⁸ “Pacifists Call Big Rally Here to Protest War,” *Chicago Tribune*, 18 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355058855/>.

¹⁷⁹ Staff Correspondent, “Plan Tribunal to Prevent War,” *Chicago Tribune*, 18 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355058855/>.

¹⁸⁰ “La Salle,” *South Bend News-Times*, 20 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464959942/>.

¹⁸¹ “Women Called to Peace Meet,” *Chicago Tribune*, 21 March 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354966054/>.

¹⁸² Louis P. Lochner, “The International Peace Congress of Women,” *The Advocate of Peace* (July 1915), https://www.jstor.org/stable/20667269?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

world . . . to take such steps as may seem expedient for ending the conflict.”¹⁸³ While the Women’s Peace Congress did not have political or diplomatic power, they did have symbolic importance and some of the delegations met with their national governments as the American delegation did prior to departing for the Hague, and they traveled to the capitals of the belligerent nations to promote the peace agenda after the conclusion of the Congress. The United States delegation was delayed slightly in Great Britain¹⁸⁴ but it does arrive in time and Addams was even elected president of the Congress.¹⁸⁵ Having a Chicagoan leading not only the United States delegation but also as president of the congress kept the activity in the newspapers of Chicago and the surrounding region.

In the United States Jane Addams pacifist views were seen as too extreme. In May 1915 a quote from Addams was mocked on the editorial page of the *Chicago Tribune*. Her quote, “I hold the view that nothing can be settled by force; it will have to be settled by reason.”¹⁸⁶ with complete disagreement; “Unfortunately, nothing in this world is settled by reason—not even a cloud of dust or a pot of coffee.”¹⁸⁷ Addams and the Women’s Peace Congress and following events to belligerent capitals were discussed

¹⁸³ “Jane Addams and Wilson to Talk Peace in Europe,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 March 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355157142/>.

¹⁸⁴ “Delegates Detained,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 26 April 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363522741>.

¹⁸⁵ “Miss Addams Heads Meet,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 29 April 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363522921/>.

¹⁸⁶ W.G.N., “A Line-O’Type or Two,” *Chicago Tribune*, 13 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355112432>.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

in the *Tribune* at least three times a week, but largely not in editorials or letters to the editor. Towards the end of May 1915 an author who only signed, “W. W.” wrote to the editor to express dissension with Addams’s views. The author asserted it was necessary to defend national honor. He did agree there was no reason to think the United States would imminently be involved in a war, but also calling peace at any price cowardice.¹⁸⁸

Above all, the United States wanted to stay out of the European war. It was still Europe’s problem and becoming less interesting as the time progressed. This was demonstrated by John T. McCutcheon’s *Chicago Tribune* illustrations. The 1 March 1915 *Tribune* cover cartoon titled, “Getting Hardened to Horror” showed a man in a chair with newspaper displaying outrageous headlines such as “40,000 Germans Killed in Poland” slumping further back into the chair as the months roll from the start of the war the previous August through February until he appears asleep with a newspaper dangling from his fingers.¹⁸⁹ McCutcheon’s illustration for the 22 April 1915 *Tribune* front page compared the world events to acts in a carnival or sideshow and depicted people leaving the exhibit, “Theater of War,” for the “Syracuse Circus,” which symbolized the trial for the libel suit brought by William Barnes against former president Theodore Roosevelt from a year prior where Roosevelt reportedly called Barnes, “a political boss of the most

¹⁸⁸ W. W., “Letter to the Editor: Miss Addams on War and Peace,” *Chicago Tribune*, 28 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355268854>.

¹⁸⁹ John T. McCutcheon, “Getting Hardened to Horror,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 March 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355153182/>.

obnoxious type.”¹⁹⁰ In the background a stall for the Mexican unrest was ignored, though it does foreshadow future United States attention and involvement dedicated to the southern border.¹⁹¹ These distractions were not good for Great Britain’s propaganda efforts. Lack of dedicated attention and persistent attention for peace efforts and neutrality did not generate a useful emotional response in the United States or in particular the heavily German-American Midwest.

¹⁹⁰ Krystal Thomas, “A Trial in Syracuse,” *Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University*, 19 April 2011, <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Blog/Item/A%20Trial%20in%20Syracuse>.

¹⁹¹ John T. McCutcheon, “The Rival Attractions,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 April 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355031208/>.

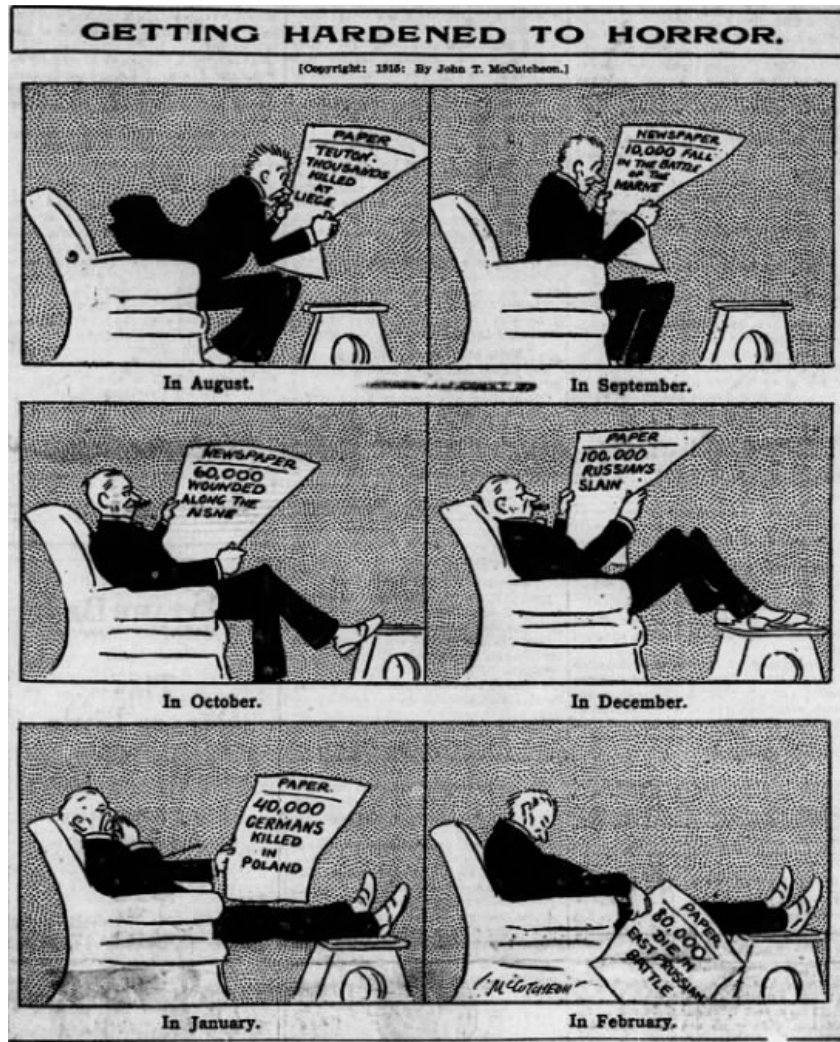


Figure 7. McCutcheon Illustration "Hardened to Horror"

Source: John T. McCutcheon, "Getting Hardened to Horror," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 March 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355153182/>.



Figure 8. McCutcheon Illustration “Rival Attractions”

Source: John T. McCutcheon, “The Rival Attractions,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 April 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355031208/>.

Americans in the Midwest viewed the European war as a foreign issue. Peace was preferred, but neutrality was acceptable so long as commercial interests were protected. Commerce, whether the domestic issue of the Hoof and Mouth Disease in Berrien

County, Michigan¹⁹² or complaints about British searches of trans-Atlantic shipping,¹⁹³ was more important than the European problem. The war impacted commerce, affecting demand and transportation. The Midwest was a production and transportation hub, so commercial issues affected by the war were important to the locals.

The *Lusitania* and the *Eastland*

The European war was not always a boon for American commerce. Manufacturing and exports were up but commerce was certainly being hindered.¹⁹⁴ Great Britain still stopped and searched ships for contraband, in particular ships destined for enemy ports. Germany responded by declaring a “war zone” around the British Isles and the northern French coast in early February.¹⁹⁵ The German war zone was more serious than the British interdictions: the Germans sank vessels they encountered through unrestricted submarine warfare.¹⁹⁶ Typically, the submarine would surface and allow the ship’s crew and any passengers to evacuate before sinking the targeted steamer or liner,

¹⁹² “State Once More Under Quarantine,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 23 February 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363519869>.

¹⁹³ “British Note Lays Trickery to Exporters,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355140234/>.

¹⁹⁴ “Record for Foreign Trade,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 3 February 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363519122/>; “Britain’s Fleet to Seize Foods on U.S. Ships,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 3 February 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363519143>.

¹⁹⁵ “Germany’s War Zone Decree up for Discussion by Cabinet,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 February 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464963356>.

¹⁹⁶ Diana Preston, *Lusitania: An Epic Tragedy* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2015), 68, kindle edition.

thus the loss was kept to material instead of lives. Flying a neutral flag was insufficient to save a ship caught by a German submarine in the war zone because British liners and steamships were recorded as switching their proper flag for a neutral one to prevent being targeted. Even the *Lusitania* flew the American flag on a February crossing. An unidentified American passenger on that voyage related the ship's captain "claimed the right to fly the American flag because he had neutral mails and neutral passengers aboard."¹⁹⁷ The same article later quoted an 1894 British Act regarding merchant shipping allowing the use of the Union Jack to aid efforts to avoid capture. This was used to defend the flag changes, but was posited to actually be increasing the danger to ships because it was impossible to discern belligerent from neutral. Germany had already sunk United States ships including the *William P. Frye* in January.¹⁹⁸ even before the war zone went into effect, but this was nothing compared to the 7 May sinking of the Cunard liner *Lusitania*.

The *Lusitania* departed New York for her final voyage on 1 May, bound for Liverpool with passengers and cargo. Cunard advertised her as the "Largest, Fastest and Finest Steamship now in Atlantic Service"¹⁹⁹ and it was her speed the crew depended on to avoid German submarines and torpedo ships. On 7 May the German U-boat, *U-20*,

¹⁹⁷ "*Lusitania* Flies American Flag," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 February 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354883933/>.

¹⁹⁸ "List of Ships Sunk by Prinz Eitel Friedrich," *Chicago Tribune*, 11 March 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355157392/>.

¹⁹⁹ "Cunard Line," *Chicago Tribune*, 29 April 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355032878/>.

caught up to *Lusitania* and fired a torpedo hitting her starboard side.²⁰⁰ Diana Preston, in her book, *Lusitania: an Epic Tragedy* asserts the U-20 captain, Walther Schwieger, knew his target was a passenger liner and was not dissuaded by crewmen protesting an attack on a ship carrying women and children.²⁰¹ One torpedo hit *Lusitania*, but there was a second explosion which has not been completely explained. The Germans asserted it was a secondary explosion caused by munitions the ship was carrying.²⁰² Modern investigators posit the torpedo hit the coal storage, near empty as the ship was nearing its destination, and kicked up coal dust dangerously mixing it with oxygen and a spark causing an explosion. This determination was based on the dispersion of coal observed in her debris field, but it is unlikely the cause of the secondary explosion will ever be known.²⁰³ Regardless of the cause of the second explosion, it is agreed the ship was sunk without warning or evacuation, leading to the deaths of more than 1,100 people including 128 Americans.²⁰⁴

The sinking of *Lusitania* was significant enough the *South Bend News-Times* did something they rarely did: they included a main headline, “*Lusitania* Torpedoed; Rush

²⁰⁰ “Cunard Line,” 191.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 189.

²⁰² “Germany Says the *Lusitania* Flew No Flag,” *Chicago Tribune*, 15 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355112969/>.

²⁰³ Bob Ballard, “*Lusitania*,” *Lost Liners*, excerpt published by PBS accessed 31 March 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/lostliners/lusitania.html>.

²⁰⁴ Editors, “*Lusitania*,” *A&E Television Networks*, last updated 21 August 2018, accessed 31 March 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/lusitania>.

Aid.”²⁰⁵ The larger *Chicago Tribune* regularly included a main headline but smaller newspapers like the *South Bend News-Times* or *St. Joseph Evening Herald* almost never did. Significant events such as the declarations of war in August 1914 or the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915 compelled the editor to change the layout of the cover page for a single edition. Such a significant loss of lives, including over 120 Americans, due to the war was a significant event and took prominent placement in all the region’s newspapers. The *St. Joseph Evening Herald* kept their front page formatting which omitted a main headline, but the article describing the disaster was top and center on the cover.²⁰⁶ There were a number of Chicagoans traveling on *Lusitania* so the *Chicago Tribune* published lists of the rescued and confirmed dead over the course of the next several days,²⁰⁷ making special mention of Chicagoans traveling on the ship and their status.²⁰⁸ Even South Bend, Indiana had a local resident lose a brother.²⁰⁹ The *Tribune* re-published an image of the warning German Ambassador Count Von Bernstorff wired to 40 major

²⁰⁵ “*Lusitania* Torpedoed; Rush Aid,” *South Bend News-Times*, 7 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464981050/>.

²⁰⁶ “*Lusitania* Struck by Torpedo,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 7 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363523275/>.

²⁰⁷ “Partial List of the Saved; Chicagoans Among Rescued,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355110465/>.

²⁰⁸ “List of Chicago Passengers on Board the *Lusitania*,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355110473/>.

²⁰⁹ “Brother of Local Man is *Lusitania* Victim,” *South Bend News-Times*, 11 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464981409/>.

American newspapers including the *Chicago Tribune*, itself.²¹⁰ The warning had been duly published the previous Saturday, the day *Lusitania* departed on her final voyage,²¹¹ but despite the numerous ships already sunk by submarine in the war zone, no one took the threat to the passenger liner that seriously. It was believed she was too fast for a submarine to catch, and carried passengers from neutral nations, including Americans, which made her an unattractive target.

The *Chicago Tribune* published an article comprised of excerpts from British newspapers to provide the perceptions of the incident on the east side of the Atlantic Ocean. The British government and citizens alike wondered at the possibilities generated by the American deaths at German hands. Some equated the act to “. . . a murder conspiracy planned and carried out in breach of all international law.” because the German ambassador directed the notice in the newspapers.²¹² London’s *Times* took it further, “. . . but the destruction of the *Lusitania* must assuredly hasten the day when every civilized power will feel constrained to join us.”²¹³ The British worked to exploit the sensationalism of the event, describing victims in detail, focusing on children and

²¹⁰ “Germany’s Official Paid Advertisement Forewarning Americans Against Disaster; Map Showing Where it Took Place,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355110482/>.

²¹¹ “Notice!” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355108040/>.

²¹² “What will U.S. do? First Thing Britishers[sic] Ask,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355110482/>.

²¹³ “United States Must Act, Says London Paper,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355110479/>.

mothers with infants,²¹⁴ but the German ambassador to the United States, Count von Bernstorff avoided discussing the *Lusitania*.²¹⁵ The local Midwest newspapers paid less attention to the German press than the British. Instead the *Chicago Tribune* opted to publish quotes from local Chicago German-American newspapers including *Abendpost* or *Chicagoer Presse*,²¹⁶ which in general blamed Great Britain for the disaster, reasoning *Lusitania* was a British ship and citing the British blockade of Germany. Modern popular historians agree with the *Times* sentiment: the *Smithsonian Magazine* in conjunction with their television channel state it was “the shot that eventually led the U.S. into WWI.”²¹⁷ But editors for *A&E Television Networks* said the sinking “played a significant role in turning public opinion against Germany, both in the United States and abroad.”²¹⁸ More comprehensive research views the sinking differently. Neiberg’s research organized in his book, *The Path to War*, was more measured than a magazine or television documentary. He identified recognition by Americans that war was an increased possibility, but stiff resistance to commit the United States to “a Europe grown sick and

²¹⁴ Wilbur S. Forrest, “Wreck Horror is Described by Survivors,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355110675/>.

²¹⁵ “Von Bernstorff Refuses to Talk on Sea Disaster,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355110675/>.

²¹⁶ “Local German Press Comment on Sea Disaster,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355110707/>.

²¹⁷ Smithsonian Channel, “Why the Germans Torpedoed the Lusitania,” 7 May 2015, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/videos/category/history/why-the-germans-torpedoed-the-lusitania/>.

²¹⁸ A&E Network Editors, “*Lusitania*.”

murderous,” remained.²¹⁹ Diane Preston in her book about the ship and its demise agreed with Neiberg, calling the *Lusitania*’s sinking “a propaganda victory that eclipsed her [Great Britain’s] loss in lives and war materiel.”²²⁰

Americans sentiment with regard to the *Lusitania* sinking did not quite live up to the expectations of the *Times* in 1915; instead it aligned more closely with Neiberg and Preston. The *Chicago Tribune* took to the streets after it learned the ship’s fate to get the reactions of local citizens of greater or lesser prominence including former Chicago mayor Carter H. Harrison. Harrison condemned the sinking as barbarous, but also stated “I am against all of the belligerents, for every last one of them are using barbarous methods.”²²¹ The editors themselves also roundly condemned the German attack on *Lusitania* in an editorial named for the ship compared the deaths from the sinking to the civilian losses, the “slaughter of the innocents” to the civilian losses in Belgium and Poland.²²²

Americans feared being drawn into the war because of the sinking. An editorial published in the *St. Joseph Evening Herald* they lifted from the *Chicago News* illustrated the concern, but still called it a “possibility of entanglement”²²³ in the war. Days after

²¹⁹ Neigberg, *The Path to War*, 70.

²²⁰ Preston, *Lusitania: An Epic Tragedy*, 421.

²²¹ “Chicagoans in Neutral Stand,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355110497>.

²²² “*Lusitania*,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355110522>.

²²³ “America’s ‘Preparedness’,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 12 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363523503/>.

Lusitania sank Americans were writing in to the *Tribune* to express their anger, as Rudolph R. Bendix did. Bendix claimed the sinking had turned him decidedly against Germany, projecting onto the war and calling it “. . . a conflict of freedom and civilization against tyranny and savagery. I am against tyranny and savagery—I am against Germany.”²²⁴ Americans were clearly incensed at the loss of the passenger liner and sympathy or at least neutral feelings towards Germany diminished. This anger directed squarely at Germany from a German act was useful to Great Britain, but there was a national impediment.

President Wilson was not ruled by the emotion tied to the loss. He acknowledged the emotion of the moment, but advised patience to prevent precipitous action.²²⁵ Editorials from the *Tribune* and letters to the editor in the ensuing days stated support for Wilson’s process. The emotion of the sinking and crisis was acknowledged, but consistently restraint and cool judgement were stressed as necessary for both Wilson’s response and American action.²²⁶ R. F. Hausen from Chicago wrote to the *Tribune* and cautioned “We must carefully weigh all the facts and not give vent to our feelings through hasty judgements, but stand by our president’s dictum.”²²⁷ Propaganda seeks to

²²⁴ Rudolph R. Bendix, “Letter to the Editor: His Blood is Up,” *Chicago Tribune*, 11 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355111953/>.

²²⁵ Arthur Sears Henning, “What will U.S. Do? Problem up to Nation,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355110675/>.

²²⁶ “The People and the President,” *Chicago Tribune*, 11 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355111953/>.

²²⁷ R. F. Hausen, “Letter to the Editor: Should Sail on American Ships,” *Chicago Tribune*, 12 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355112143/>.

excite and capitalize on emotional not rational thought, so the tactical pause Wilson took to gather facts in the face of rumor and competing narratives complimented continued opposition for war and diffused the anger before it transformed into action.

Great Britain, in an effort to promulgate more anger, released the “Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages,” also known to history as the Bryce Report. The report was the product of a commission led by Viscount James Bryce, former British ambassador to the United States, to examine reports and depositions of Belgians who were the victims of German brutality.²²⁸ The final report was simultaneously published in Great Britain and the United States on 13 May 1915 by Wellington House, one of the official British propaganda organizations.²²⁹ The Bryce Report was printed in pamphlet form²³⁰ as well as the newspapers of the time. The Bryce Report had subheadings for different story arcs such as the treatment of women and children and the use of civilians as human shields. With the losses of *Lusitania* still fresh, the reinforcement of the stories from Germany’s invasion of Belgium in 1914 was calculated to heighten the anger of the United States and force Wilson’s hand.

²²⁸ Ross, *Propaganda for War*, 52-53.

²²⁹ Squires, *British Propaganda at Home and in The United States from 1914 to 1917*, 31.

²³⁰ James Bryce, *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages*, (London: Hayman, Christy & Lilly Ltd., 1915), 1, eBook, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/bryce-report-committee-alleged-german-outrages>.

The *Chicago Tribune* printed a large article including several excerpts from the Bryce Report the day it was released, a week after the *Lusitania* sank.²³¹ The *South Bend News-Times* and *St. Joseph Evening Herald* dedicated significantly less space than the *Tribune*, but still included virtually identical London articles, with a few quotes and the overall judgement, which found “the German army guilty of a series of the most shocking crimes against men, women and children that human brutality could receive.”²³² But the newspapers did not settle for the assertions in the Bryce Report and the *News-Times* published portions of an article first published in the *Yale News* which quoted a student recently returned from relief work in Belgium who refuted atrocity claims.²³³ The student’s name is provided, Scott H. Paradise, and specific locations such as Hotel De Ville in Louvain are provided, so an interested party could independently investigate the report. The article likely was not propaganda, and could be cited as refuting the Bryce Report, along with previous *Chicago Tribune* reporting, in particular by James O’Donnell Bennett during his travels in Belgium and Germany the previous September.²³⁴

²³¹ “Reports on German Atrocities in Many Places in Belgium; Civilians, Women and Children are Among the Victims,” *Chicago Tribune*, 13 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355112417>.

²³² “Commission Reports on German Atrocities,” *South Bend News-Times*, 12 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464981477>.

²³³ “Asserts German Soldiers are not Barbarians as Declared by Enemies; Praises U. S. Work,” *South Bend News-Times*, 3 June 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466760472>.

²³⁴ James O’Donnell Bennett, “German Atrocities Fiction, so far as Tribune Men in Belgium can Find,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355127379/>.

Americans were well aware they were the targets of European propaganda, though, as James S. Moffatt of Wausau, Wisconsin's letter to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* demonstrated. His letter called out the American press for favoring the allies from the beginning of the war, but acknowledges the many papers and pamphlets, both German and allied, were being countries plied in the United States.²³⁵ In the Midwest, close to the southern end of Lake Michigan, these propaganda efforts seemed to do little to further arouse any emotion. There were very few letters to the editor or editorials published after the Bryce Report which referenced it. The United States was focused on the exchange of diplomatic notes between Washington D.C. and Berlin regarding the sinking of *Lusitania* and the further threat to neutral commerce on the Atlantic. It is possible the report would have had greater impact if it had been released later, but *Lusitania* victims were still being identified two months after the ship sank.²³⁶ The deaths of Americans and the continued threat on the Atlantic took precedent in Midwest attention over old reports presented in a new pamphlet.

President Wilson needed to respond to Germany's attack on the *Lusitania* and the deaths of 128 Americans. Initially, Wilson and his cabinet prepared a note for Kaiser Wilhelm II on the *Lusitania* and the conduct of submarine warfare.²³⁷ The same *South Bend News-Times* article that outlined the initial United States response attempted to

²³⁵ James S. Moffatt, "Letter to the Editor: German and Ally Propaganda," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354900375/>.

²³⁶ "Body of *Lusitania* Victim is Located," *South Bend News-Times*, 21 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466793978/>.

²³⁷ "Wilson Prepares Note to Kaiser Defining Stand," *South Bend News-Times*, 12 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464981477/>.

increase the gravitas of Wilson's note with the sub-headline, "Issue of 'Peace or War' Likely to Be Settled in Cable Which President Will Send to Berlin Within 24 Hours"²³⁸ but this was not merely sensationalism. A 12 May editorial in the *Chicago Tribune* titled, "War Talk" discussed the possibility of being drawn in to the war and advocated complete dedication of the country's resources to the effort. The same editorial, though, still called the European war horrible, cruel, and a waste, so it was not patriotic fervor which stirred the author, but a pragmatic recognition of the unknown future.²³⁹ The author does not use the word, "preparedness," the name for a movement to increase the size and readiness of the military in response to a threat to the United States heightened by the *Lusitania* sinking and the ongoing European war. The following day the *Tribune* published a letter to the editor only signed "J. C." which discussed possible war with Germany, but also with England, both to protect American rights under international law.²⁴⁰ The local population was reluctant to commit to war, while acknowledging the possibility of a diplomatic break with Germany. Locals were still very angry with Germany, but not so much they clamored for war with the nation. A *Tribune* editorial titled, "In the Hands of the President" denied the inevitability of war after the *Lusitania*

²³⁸ "Wilson Prepares Note to Kaiser Defining Stand."

²³⁹ "War Talk," *Chicago Tribune*, 12 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355112143/>.

²⁴⁰ J. C. "Letter to the Editor: On Being Neutral," *Chicago Tribune*, 13 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/3551122432/>.

disaster, specifically stating, “We also dismiss the possibility that war will be declared in the name of the American dead on the *Lusitania*.”²⁴¹

The people may not have believed war was on the horizon, but the tense situation with Germany over *Lusitania* caused Wilson and his government to discuss the size of and investment in the army and navy of the United States. Secretary of the Navy Daniels met with famous inventors like Thomas Edison to organize a board to prepare the navy for the next war, which the secretary thought would “. . . be fought by machinery and by men of brains behind that machinery.”²⁴² The army also received emphasis from Wilson, who directed the Secretary of the Army, as well as the Navy, to confer with experts and develop plans “for strengthening the national defense” for Wilson to put to Congress.²⁴³ The Public Broadcasting Service special, *American Experience: The Great War* called Wilson “pragmatic,” which certainly showed in his recognition that modern war decreased the efficacy of the Atlantic as a barrier, even though this went against his natural inclinations as discussed in the same program by Dr. Margaret MacMillan when she said, “Woodrow Wilson doesn’t like war. He believes in democratic values, liberal values. He believes in peace.”²⁴⁴ Wilson favored peace, but he bore a responsibility to his country to prepare for possibilities, including war, and to preserve American lives.

²⁴¹ “In the Hands of the President,” *Chicago Tribune*, 12 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355112143/>.

²⁴² “Daniels Meets Edison; Plan Invention Body,” *Chicago Tribune*, 16 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354900091/>.

²⁴³ “Requests Data to Aid Defenses,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 3 September 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363529934/>.

²⁴⁴ Ives, “Part 1,” *American Experience*.

Ship movements were front page news after *U-20* torpedoed and sunk *Lusitania*. Another Cunard liner, *Transylvania*, was in the Atlantic bound for Liverpool, the same port *Lusitania* was sailing for when she sank, and the Cunard offices were besieged by telephone calls of concerned family members.²⁴⁵ The *Transylvania*'s safe arrival was one of several main headlines in the *Chicago Tribune* on 17 May²⁴⁶ even as speculation regarding Germany's reply to Wilson's note continued.²⁴⁷ Once Germany responded, at the end of May, their note's content was not satisfactory to Wilson and further rounds ensued. Germany was also under increased international pressure as the Netherlands protested *Lusitania*'s destruction and the loss of life.²⁴⁸ So long as the United States was engaging in the diplomatic process with Germany and the citizens supported Wilson's engagement the goal of Great Britain's propaganda was not achieved. Tempers cooled as time passed and engaging with Germany to modify the behavior alleviated the threat to Americans posed by submarine warfare, which was not seen as an existential threat to the United States as a country. Events of the war were still being reported, but the diplomatic exchanges between the United States and Germany occupied space on the front page previously dedicated to activity on the different fronts. Concentrating on domestic affairs

²⁴⁵ "Grave Fears are Felt for the Safety of Those Aboard Cunard Liner Bound for Liverpool Since Lusitania Loss," *South Bend News-Times*, 15 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464981815/>.

²⁴⁶ "Transylvania Safe," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355265312/>.

²⁴⁷ "Germany's Reply will Insist on Submarine War?" *Chicago Tribune*, 17 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355265312/>.

²⁴⁸ "Sends Note to Germany," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 25 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363524195/>.

did keep the war in the forefront even in the Midwest, but domestic issues were rational, not emotional and not particularly relevant to propaganda.

The war had largely been pushed off the front page of the local newspapers around the southern end of Lake Michigan by the 7 May 1915 sinking, but another ship disaster closer to home would overtake even *Lusitania*. On 24 July 1915 the *Eastland* was commissioned by the Western Electric Company for a pleasure cruise to Michigan City, Indiana. The day was meant to be for employees and their families to enjoy an excursion on the lake with music and picnicking at the destination, but the ship was improperly ballasted and rolled before it even left the Chicago River for Lake Michigan.²⁴⁹ The *Eastland* disaster caused the editor of *St. Joseph Evening Herald* to have a main headline and it released three editions in a single day.²⁵⁰ No event related to the European war caused the *Herald's* editor to do either of those things. The disaster even pushed war and diplomatic note exchange reporting from the first section of the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* to the second section, dedicated to "General News, Editorial, Markets."²⁵¹ The *Eastland* caused more American loss of life, naturally, since the preponderance of passengers were American or at least permanent residents, but the actual number of victims is not known. The day after the ship rolled *Tribune* reported 919

²⁴⁹ "Eastland Disaster," *Chicago Maritime Museum*, 2019, accessed 1 April 2019, www.chicagomaritimemuseum.org/archives/eastland-disaster/.

²⁵⁰ "Edition 1," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 24 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363527610/>; "Extra," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 24 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363527498/>; "Second Extra," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 24 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363527557/>.

²⁵¹ "Part 2," *Chicago Tribune*, 25 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354902442/>.

bodies were recovered and estimated the death toll may reach 1,200.²⁵² The Eastland Disaster Historical Society states 844 people.²⁵³ The Chicago Maritime Museum article reports officials put the loss at more than 800 but without further specificity.²⁵⁴ After the tragedy Chicagoans trudged through makeshift morgues looking for friends and relatives,²⁵⁵ and having witnessed so much death, maybe felt renewed resistance to inviting more by opening hostilities with Germany.

Eventually the furor over *Eastland* died down and attention returned to unresolved issues with Germany and Great Britain regarding the freedom of the United States commerce to sail the Atlantic. A significant victory was achieved with Germany in early September when the German ambassador informed the United States Secretary of State of Germany's assurance "submarines henceforth will attack no ocean liners without warning sufficient to insure the safety of passengers."²⁵⁶ The crisis created when *U-20* torpedoed *Lusitania* was adequately resolved and the United States focused on domestic concerns including unrest on the Mexican border and the harvest, periodically interrupted

²⁵² "919 Bodies Recovered," *Chicago Tribune*, 25 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354902273/>.

²⁵³ "The History: What Happened," *Eastland Disaster Historical Society*, 2017, <http://www.eastlanddisaster.org/history/what-happened>.

²⁵⁴ "Eastland Disaster," *Chicago Maritime Museum*, 2019, accessed 1 April 2019, www.chicagomaritimemuseum.org/archives/eastland-disaster/.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Arthur Sears Henning, "Berlin Moves to Heal Breach with America," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 September 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355124725/>.

by significant events from abroad. Some were inflated by the British propaganda apparatus for advantage to allies and neutrals and to the detriment of Germany.

Nurse Cavell and Western Hemisphere Problems

Edith Cavell was a woman no one had heard of, outside her small circle of friends, family, and co-workers. She was a British nurse operating a training school for nurses in Belgium when the war started.²⁵⁷ After Belgium fell, she continued on as a nurse and began assisting allied men coming through her care in escaping to neutral countries such as the Netherlands.²⁵⁸ Her activities were betrayed to the Germans, she was arrested, tried in a mass show trial, found guilty of treason, and shot the day after the verdict.²⁵⁹ American officials in Belgium were unable to prevent Cavell's execution. Afterwards they informed the British government of the execution of the British nurse.²⁶⁰ Cavell's death was reported in British and American newspapers on 16 October 1915,²⁶¹ four days after her execution. The outrage sparked by Cavell's execution was seized upon by Britain's propaganda apparatus to use in both the British Commonwealth and neutral

²⁵⁷ Christine E. Hallett, *Edith Cavell and her Legend* (London: Springer Nature Limited, 2019), 16.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 23-25.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 30, 40.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

nations, particularly the United States. Cavell was given a state funeral in London and featured prominently in recruitment drives in Britain.²⁶²

The American Midwest did join the frenzy of news related to her death and the fate of those condemned with her.²⁶³ The coverage of her execution and the resultant investigation generated more articles, editorials, and letters to the editor as time passed. Chicago sentiment was sympathetic for the executed nurse. John M. Zane wrote to the *Chicago Tribune's* editor reacting to a German-American and former judge's justification of Cavell's execution. Zane just calls the judge "German" instead of "German-American," pushing him further into the "other" and Zane further dismisses German justification that Cavell was executed because she was, in fact, guilty of aiding the enemy—from the German point of view she was—but rather because she was British. Americans were disposed to dislike Germany after *Lusitania*, and though Germany suspended unrestricted submarine warfare and defused that situation, the animosity already took root. This new example of German inhumanity was used by a *Tribune* editorial author alongside the *Lusitania* as demonstrating the destructiveness of the militaristic caste and the departure from the old German genius which gave generously to the world.²⁶⁴ Nurse Cavell's impact was disproportionate to her life, even at the end of

²⁶² "Death of Nurse Wins Many Men to British Army," *Chicago Tribune*, 24 October 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355265481/>.

²⁶³ "Wilhelm Spares from Death Group Condemned in Belgium," *Chicago Tribune*, 22 October 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355264969/>.

²⁶⁴ "The Two Germanies[sic]," *Chicago Tribune*, 25 October 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355266421/>.

December, she was still making periodic appearances in the press to interfere with American sentiment of Germany softening.²⁶⁵

But the United States had international concerns closer to home. The unrest in Mexico spilled over the United States southern border, resulting in the grisly death of an American soldier, Private Patrick J. Sullivan, in October 1915 and Wilson dedicating soldiers to secure the southern border.²⁶⁶ In November General Funston was ordered to Douglas, Arizona to take command of United States forces assembled there and “protect American property and resist aggression.”²⁶⁷ The United States maintained forces to protect the southern border into 1917.²⁶⁸ So long as the United States army was focused on domestic issues, it was not available for use by the allies. It did not matter if the United States was incensed at Germany, it was still not willing, and at this point was unable, to commit forces elsewhere. This also demonstrated continued preference for staying out of European affairs while exerting influence on other nations with a direct effect on the United States, such as the southern neighbor. The activity on the southern border increased in through the end of 1915 and into 1916, but with several different

²⁶⁵ “Kaiser pardoned Nurse?” *Chicago Tribune*, 28 December 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355131455/>.

²⁶⁶ “U.S. Soldier is Murdered,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363531474>.

²⁶⁷ “Funston Fears Attack from Villa Army,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 2 November 1915

²⁶⁸ Mitchell Yockelson, “The United States Armed Forces and the Mexican Punitive Expedition: Part 1,” *Prologue Magazine*, 14 December 2017, <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1997/fall/mexican-punitive-expedition-1.html>.

actors who necessarily were differentiated to properly identify neutral, adversary, and the scope of involvement for the United States.

Over the course of 1915 the terminology used to describe the European belligerents changed, again. As Germany and Austria gained new allies, Turkey and Bulgaria, several new terms entered the lexicon to collectivize the group and provide brevity. Initially, “Teuton” was used, primarily to indicate a force comprised of both German and Austrian soldiers, but sometimes as a more general term. When the forces included Turkey, the sides were often still broken into “Teutons” and “Turks” or some version of Muslim.²⁶⁹ But after Bulgaria entered the war in October “Teuton” did not fit as well, so the seldom used “Central Powers” became more common.²⁷⁰ Much like with the allies, these terms may have entered the lexicon in order to save time and space instead of typing out the numerous nations the author meant. Based on the geographical location of the countries, central Europe, “Central Powers” seemed appropriate. Unlike the term “ally,” there is no significant connotation associated with “Central Powers.” The regional appellation was neutral, more than prejudicial. Its use would not significantly alienate German-Americans who made up a significant percentage of United States citizens; too great to be discounted by the allies in their efforts to recruit the United States to their cause.

²⁶⁹ “Allies Advance at Hellespont; Many Turks Fall,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355077962>.

²⁷⁰ “Diplomatic Relations are Broken Off,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 7 October 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363531571>.

The front page of the *St. Joseph Evening Herald* for the final day of 1915 was very similar to the day in January referenced early in this chapter. Again, there were 21 different topics and articles. Coverage for the European war again is two articles, but this time they are definitely larger.²⁷¹ One discussed Austria accepting United States demands and punished the captain of a submarine that destroyed a United States vessel, the *Ancona* and indemnity payment for the lives lost. The other article described a British cruiser which suffered an explosion while in port and sunk, with fatalities. Neither article is directly about events of the war. The Austrian article was commercially related and the British cruiser that sunk does not claim sabotage. The British cruiser, *Natal*, may only be mentioned because in 1912 it returned the body of an American ambassador who died while on assignment to Great Britain. Both articles, therefore, were directly relating to American interests, instead of British or allied interests.

The *Chicago Tribune* for New Year's Eve had fewer articles, 13.²⁷² They included an article directly on war events, cabled from their usual cartoonist, John T. McCutcheon, and discussed allied actions in Greece. It did include two war bulletins, short summaries of significance regarding the war, but these were not necessarily about events: the two on 31 December 1915 reported on British issues with conscription instead of actions on any front. The *Tribune* also had an article on the Austrian reply to the United States regarding the sinking of the *Ancona*. This required two columns, while the

²⁷¹ *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 31 December 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363122282/>.

²⁷² *Chicago Tribune*, 31 December 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355132045/>.

rest of the war coverage comprised just over one column. The amount of the *Tribune's* cover dedicated to the war is consistent across 1915, which varied from approximately two to three on average. Significant events such as the *Eastland* did push the war from the front page entirely, but aside from spectacular events, no significant change from how the year started.

The amount of cover page dedicated to the European war did not change significantly over the course of 1915. There was no steady increase or change in tone or verbiage used to describe the war. The consistency and topics included demonstrate diplomatic stress with Germany and Austria as a result of German and Austrian actions targeting United States commerce in the Atlantic. Great Britain's domestic coverage demonstrated greater ability to influence American press and an effort to increase the emotional investment through familiarity. Sympathy for the British and allied cause was certainly greater than for the German, demonstrated by the various loans made to Great Britain and the other allies,²⁷³ but loaning money is hardly equivalent to sending an army, which was the ultimate goal of British propaganda.

1915 Conclusions

In 1915 Great Britain focused on establishing an emotional relationship with the United States, increasing American feelings of familiarity and relatability with Britain and the allies while capitalizing on the anger generated by German actions. Germany justified establishing the "war zone" around Great Britain and the northern coast of

²⁷³ "Accepts U.S. Loan Terms," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 13 October 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363531861/>.

France by citing the blockade Britain maintained against Germany. But Britain interdicted ships and escorted them to port: Germany sank ships, sometimes without warning. Sinking the *Lusitania* turned formerly sympathetic Americans against Germany, but the American issues with the German war zone were resolved without forcing the United States into the war. The execution of the British nurse, Edith Cavell, was denounced in the United States; even the heavily German Chicago and southwest Michigan, despite the British acknowledging Cavell was guilty of aiding the escape of allied prisoners. Britain successfully degraded the relationship between Germany and the United States, but increased anger did not translate into direct commitment.

The war did embed itself into the American consciousness as normal. Children played at European war in the park instead of Cowboys and Indians.²⁷⁴ But sentiment in the American Midwest towards the war was still negative: the war was a horrible European issue the United States was fortunate to be neutral. The brush with diplomatic break between the United States and Germany after *Lusitania* sank forwarded the American preparedness movement and heightened concern war was a possibility. Editorials and letters to the editor demonstrated continued opposition to the war, both against the war in general and American direct involvement. Sentiment had somewhat turned against the Germans, but it had not turned in favor of war.

²⁷⁴ “Two Armies Run; Police Pursue,” *Chicago Tribune*, 30 June 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354905817>.

CHAPTER 5

1916

1916 Timeline

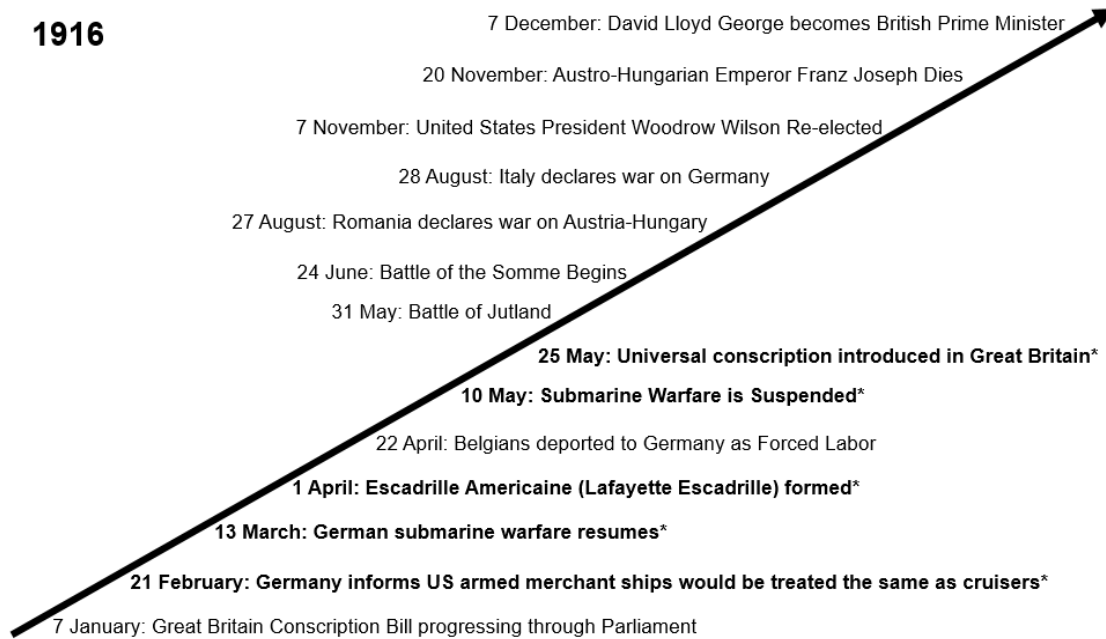


Figure 9. 1916 Timeline

Sources: “Interactive WWI Timeline,” National WWI Museum and Memorial, 2019, <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/interactive-wwi-timeline>; Associated Press, “Draft Wins; then a Split in Cabinet,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355224668>; International News Service, “Sub Question is Likely to Cause Break,” *South Bend News-Times*, 21 February 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464977926/>; “King George Signs Conscription Bill; Lauds Volunteers,” *Chicago Tribune*, 26 May 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354883147/>; “Roumanians[sic] Enter War for Allies,” *South Bend News-Times*, 28 August 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466803291/>; “Italy Declares War on Kaiser; Smashes Pact,” *Chicago Tribune*, 28 August 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355197627/>; “Franz Josef Expires in his Capital,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355038306/>; G. J. Meyer, *A World Undone* (New York, NY: Random House Inc., 2006), 304, kindle edition.

Note: This timeline is not exhaustive. It concentrates on the Western Front, British actions, United States of America actions domestically and abroad, and Central Powers actions useful for propaganda by Great Britain. Events outside those may be included in a case-by-case basis. Items in bold with an asterisk are of either propagandistic value to Great Britain or importance to the United States. The consolidated timeline with citations is available in an annex included at the end of this paper.

Great Britain's Indicators of Deteriorating Situation

By 1916 Great Britain had been at war for one year and five months. The drain of maintaining expeditionary forces on the European continent was displayed in the Midwest newspapers throughout the year. It started in January with articles which described proposed legislation for conscription. The British military was a volunteer force, making it smaller than many contemporary conscription-based militaries. When the war started, Lord Horatio Kitchener, the minister for war, made very personal calls for recruits in the hundreds of thousands, and was quite successful in increasing enlistments.²⁷⁵ However, the British were suffering huge losses: the *St. Joseph Evening Herald* published a small London article claiming British losses at the Battle of Loos in September 1915 were nearly 60,000 killed, wounded, or taken prisoner.²⁷⁶ To raise additional forces conscription was proposed in 1915, and in the beginning of January 1916 a draft bill was debated in the House of Commons, causing much division.²⁷⁷ John

²⁷⁵ G. J. Meyer, *A World Undone: the Story of the Great War, 1914-1918* (New York: Bantam Dell, 2006), 214, kindle edition.

²⁷⁶ "Says British Lost 60,000" *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 6 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363122347/>.

²⁷⁷ "Bitter Fight Over Draft in Commons," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355224417>.

Redmond, prominent Irish part member, said, “The bill is unnecessary to win the war. . . . Nearly 6,000,000 men have enlisted voluntarily.”²⁷⁸ The British were able to raise huge volunteer numbers, but even calling on their colonial possessions would eventually exhaust the available manpower, obliging them to turn to other options to press advantage against the Central Powers through not just increased manpower but targeted employment of the military the allies did have.

Great Britain and the rest of the allies looked at the European neutral nations as resources for men and strategic location. Greece was determinedly targeted later in the year for exactly those reasons. The varied reporting of Greece’s willingness to join the allies or remain neutral peppered large and small newspapers. The Greek King, Constantine I, resisted abandoning neutrality in the face of allied pressure for control over ports.²⁷⁹ or local pressure from a politician who claimed he could not form a cabinet without a policy for “immediate Greek participation in the war.”²⁸⁰ The confusion of reports from London claiming, “Greece On Brink of War; May Join Within 48 Hours”²⁸¹ according to one article’s headline contrasted with the reports of continued unrest and

²⁷⁸ “Irish to Fight draft Measure,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 6 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363122350>.

²⁷⁹ “Allies Make Big Gain in West; Menace Combles,” *South Bend News-Times*, 4 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466803969>.

²⁸⁰ “Says Greece can do Nothing but Join the Allies,” *South Bend News-Times*, 15 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466084918>.

²⁸¹ “Greece on Brink of War; may Join Within 48 Hours,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354954416>.

even riots against the Greek government and allies in Athens.²⁸² The unclear situation caused some cynicism in the United States, with an editorial published in the *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, attributed to the *South Bend Tribune*, saying, “The allies have been trying by fair means and foul to swing Greece into line and hitherto they have failed.”²⁸³ Greece’s alignment with the allies demonstrated the allies’ increased willingness to exert pressure on nations in the name of prosecuting the war, but the coverage in the United States competed against pressing domestic concerns.

The timing of the Greek unrest pushed it further from Americans’ foremost thoughts, as it competed with the upcoming presidential election in November²⁸⁴ and the ongoing operations on the southern border and in Mexico against Francisco “Pancho” Villa and his men.²⁸⁵ The letters to the editor were support for a presidential candidate, as S. L. Dakey of Chicago wrote in pledging his vote in the presidential election for the incumbent²⁸⁶ or responding to *Tribune* coverage of a threatened rail strike as George T.

²⁸² “Reservist Mob Riots in Athens,” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 21 October 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/365266124/>.

²⁸³ “Greece Near War,” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 15 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/365265097/>.

²⁸⁴ “Peace Dove Expected at G. O. P. Meet,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 19 September 1916, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=wZJMF1LD7PcC&dat=19160919&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

²⁸⁵ International News Service, “Villa Hunt may End Conferences,” *South Bend News-Times*, 12 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466804692>.

²⁸⁶ S. L. Dakey, “Letter to the Editor: Pleads for Wilson,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355013842/>.

Ashley of Griswold, Iowa did.²⁸⁷ The competing events of the other fronts in the war, the presidential election, and the United States situation with Mexico minimized space available for Greece.

Great Britain was experiencing more issues than just replacements for their expeditionary force and navy. In December 1916 Midwest newspapers published articles claiming the daily cost of the war for Great Britain exceeded \$28,000,000, on average.²⁸⁸ To cover the costs Great Britain and France negotiated a loan in late 1915 in the United States. Well known financier J. P. Morgan had already been assisting the allies with loans in the United States, and was key to negotiating the \$500,000,000 loan—over 12.5 billion in 2019 dollars.²⁸⁹—in September 1915.²⁹⁰ Despite this influx of foreign currency, in February 1916 the British House of Commons passed a 2.1 billion dollar credit, only estimated “to carry the war to the end of May.”²⁹¹ Another note of credit for two billion dollars was adopted in December 1916 and it was estimated the total credit amount

²⁸⁷ George T. Ashley, “Letter to the Editor: Arbitration,” *Chicago Tribune*, 26 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355014235>.

²⁸⁸ “Britain’s Daily War Outlay \$28,150,000,” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 15 December 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/365269660>.

²⁸⁹ Official Data Foundation, “Inflation Calculator: 1915,” 2019, <http://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1915?amount=5000000000>.

²⁹⁰ “Terms of Plan for \$500,000,000 Loan on joint British-French Notes,” *Chicago Tribune*, 29 September 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355059967>.

²⁹¹ “Cost of War Grows,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 22 February 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123031/>.

exceeded 19.2 billion dollars,²⁹² the modern equivalent of 447.7 billion.²⁹³ The enormous costs could not be sustained forever. While the loans invested the United States directly into the success of the allies, the continued neutrality allowed the Central Powers to also apply for a loan from the United States, though they did not.

One major recurring expenditure was food. A hungry army does not fight well and a hungry populace does not support the government. Neither cares whether the production is internal or imported. The new British government formed under the premiership of David Lloyd-George in December 1916 set up agricultural committees in the nations of the Commonwealth to increase food production. These committees received instruction on what they were expected to grow and how much. They were empowered to compel owners to give up their land, if necessary.²⁹⁴ The United States was already exporting vast amounts to Europe, with a late December estimate published in the *Chicago Tribune* estimating 670 million dollars' worth for the year, before the December exports were calculated.²⁹⁵ The article does not specify the destinations—most likely allied countries—nor does it discuss losses to ships sunk in the crossing or seized for prize court, which lessened the amount actually arriving at the destination. This also

²⁹² “Britain’s Daily War Outlay \$28,150,000,” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 15 December 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/365269660>.

²⁹³ Official Data Foundation, “Inflation Calculator: 1916,” 2019, <http://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1916?amount=19200000000>.

²⁹⁴ Herald-Press Special Service, “British Take Radical Step,” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 26 December 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/365271110/>.

²⁹⁵ “Food Exports Run High,” *Chicago Tribune*, 28 December 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355272611>.

indicates the United States was adhering to its neutrality principle to sell to whomever came to purchase: an undesired characteristic from the British point of view, as they continued with a blockade of Germany.

Though not reflected in the newspapers, Great Britain's propaganda apparatus accelerated its output in 1916. James Squires's compilation of Wellington House publications lists 109 items published in 1916, significantly higher than the next highest year output, 1917 which published 74 new items. Even extrapolating the 1914 total, 23 items, to cover the entire year as opposed to the four months Wellington House was active does not equal the 1916 output.²⁹⁶ Likewise Michael Sanders and Philip M. Taylor make the assertion in their book, *British Propaganda During the First World War 1914-1918*, that Great Britain published seven million copies of books, pamphlets and other literary propaganda in 1916, significantly more than the 2.5 million in 1915.²⁹⁷ The British escalated their effort to have the United States to join the allies, even calling, again, on former British ambassador to the United States, Viscount James Bryce, who asserted during an address to an America organization in London, "What we desire is to exorcise an evil spirit and discredit the military caste which delights in war and threatens not only Europe but all countries—America included."²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ Squires, *British Propaganda at Home and in The United States from 1914 to 1917*, 86-104.

²⁹⁷ Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda During the First World War 1914-1918*, 108.

²⁹⁸ "Says Allies must Win War," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 6 July 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363125366>.

Concerns Closer to Home

The *St. Joseph Evening Herald* did not publish on major holidays or Sundays, so its first issue of 1916 was 3 January 1916. Given the increased time between editions, the front page concentrated on domestic and local news exclusively, with no mention of any international issues. The focus on domestic and local issues was largely consistent with the front page in 1915: war news was the exception rather than the expectation. The first editorial published by the *Evening Herald* is indicative of the investment Americans have in the European war. It is taken from the previous day's *Chicago Tribune*, and titled, "In Darkest America." In this case, "dark" is used to mean "lack of knowledge" and described a university instructor, it did not specify the institution or professor, who asked his students questions about the European war. He is dismayed by their answers, as no one knew where Gallipoli was, and many students could not answer simple questions such as the current rulers of the belligerents or army commanders. When asked why they did not know, the responses included, "War was too horrible to read about; there was not time to read the newspapers; press dispatches are too inaccurate to be trusted; they are a waste of time."²⁹⁹ This is an interesting contrast to the story from 30 June 1915 in the *Chicago Tribune* which described children playing at the European war.³⁰⁰ Some of the terminology the children used was consistent with the belligerents, such as the "Uhlans" and "Cossacks," and demonstrates the war was talked about in the home and around the

²⁹⁹ "In Darkest America," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 3 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363122299>.

³⁰⁰ "Two Armies Run; Police Pursue," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 June 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354905817/>.

children if it penetrated enough to integrate their imaginative play, displacing the stereotypical “Cowboys and Indians.” The college students were deliberately avoiding information about the war, and justified the ignorance to their professor by calling it traumatic. It may have been trauma, it may have been laziness or some other excuse they did not want to tell their instructor. But the cavalier attitude to an ongoing world event did not reflect success for Great Britain’s propaganda campaign.

The *Chicago Tribune* was a true daily newspaper and it did publish on major holidays, so their first issue of 1916 was on New Year’s Day. The *Tribune* was a much larger newspaper with a circulation over 300,000, as their front page proclaimed. Of the eight columns, approximately two were related to the war, though one quarter of that space was dedicated to an American who became a British citizen and was made a baron, William Waldorf Astor.³⁰¹ The remaining articles were four short descriptions of events—two from London, one from Berlin, and one from New York—and a column by the *Tribune*’s Washington D.C. correspondent, Arthur Sears Henning, discussing the activities in Washington about several war-related topics, primarily Austria’s response to a recent United States diplomatic note and the president’s hope for final resolution to the *Lusitania* issue.³⁰² The amount of coverage is consistent with 1915 cover pages which usually contained between 1.5 and three columns, when the space articles took on the

³⁰¹ “W. W. Astor Given Title of Baron,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355222484/>.

³⁰² *Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355222484/>.

page were combined. The continued minimal coverage indicated lack of significant focus or attention for the war by the people in the Midwest.

The editorials in the first edition of the *Chicago Tribune* also largely ignored the war. Preparedness was a key concern. The Editorial of the Day from the *Boston Post* was debating army size and discussing British preparedness before the war. Letters to the Editor skewed more for preparedness than war events, like W. Katz of Chicago who wrote as a response to polls conducted by the *Tribune* regarding military service, national honor, and the importance of defense.³⁰³ Two other letters directly discussed preparedness, so half of the letters to the editor were about preparedness, specifically, not the war. The remaining letters focused on domestic concerns completely unrelated to war or preparedness.

The Preparedness Movement was linked to the events of the war. It started after the United States determined a vulnerability to the warring nations in Europe, fearing, as W. F. McCombs, the Democratic National Committee Chairman stated the European nations “. . . may be led to make incursions against the peace and good will of the United States. We must be prepared to resist that.”³⁰⁴ While McCombs was more concerned about after the war, the sentiment was supported across the nation. President Wilson joined the discussion in favor of strengthening the military with a speaking tour including

³⁰³ W. Katz, “Letter to the Editor: Basis of an Army,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355222558/>.

³⁰⁴ “McCombs Fears Invasion,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 8 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363122378>.

several stops in the Midwest, such as Chicago.³⁰⁵ As Richard Rubin noted about Wilson in the Public Broadcast System documentary, *American Experience: The Great War*, “. . . and in an age of oratory, he was a very fine speaker.”³⁰⁶ Wilson spoke in Chicago at the end of January, but focused on preparedness for the western hemisphere, especially American interests. He is quoted as saying, “What America is bound to fight for when the time comes to fight is her self respect[sic].”³⁰⁷ The warm greeting Wilson received not only for his visit but his remarks showed British propaganda in early 1916 had not changed sentiment enough to contemplate joining the war, even if there was fear of being dragged in.

But the European war was not the immediate concern. Francisco “Pancho” Villa and his supporters were attacking ranchers and miners on the southern border even in January.³⁰⁸ In March a group of “Villaists” crossed into New Mexico and attacked the town of Columbus, about three miles north of the Mexican border.³⁰⁹ The attack resulted in almost twenty Americans, soldiers and civilians, killed. At the time, it was supposed

³⁰⁵ “Wilson in Defense Tour,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 19 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363122494>.

³⁰⁶ Ives, “Part 1,” *American Experience: The Great War*.

³⁰⁷ “We Mean Business; Navy Fit, President Tells Chicagoans,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 February 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354869113>.

³⁰⁸ “2 Chicagoans in Party of 16 Dead in Mexico,” *Chicago Tribune*, 12 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355226426/>.

³⁰⁹ “Bandit Gang is Routed by Cavalry Men,” *South Bend News-Times*, 9 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464979852/>.

Villa was trying to force the United States to intervene in Mexico,³¹⁰ Julie Prieto and Roger Miller in their book, *US Army Operations in Mexico 1916-1917*, agreed; identifying Villa's motive as ". . . something that would destabilize [Mexican President Venustiano] Carranza's regime."³¹¹ Immediately after the Columbus attack, editorials started discussing the event and what the United States' response should be, such as the *Chicago Tribune* editorial, "Intervention is Inevitable." This editorial is critical of the entire handling of the Mexico situation, even saying, "It is a notorious fact that American life is cheaper than any in Mexico."³¹² Letters to the Editor later in the month reflected local endorsement for intervention, according to H. M. White of Oak Park, Illinois. The president responded by placing all regular army soldiers under General Frederick Funston, bypassing the War Department.³¹³ This number of soldiers, though, was less than 25,000 because of the combination of army's small size and soldiers already committed to Panama, Hawaii, and the Philippines.³¹⁴

The situation greatly distracted from the European war, as the majority of military might and civilian attention, even in the rural southwest Michigan, turned south. The 24 March 1916 edition of the *St. Joseph Evening Herald* front page was primarily local, but

³¹⁰ "Bandit Gang is Routed by Cavalry Men."

³¹¹ Julie Irene Prieto and Roger G. Miller, *US Army Operations in Mexico 1916-1917* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 2016), 17, kindle edition.

³¹² "Intervention is Inevitable," *Chicago Tribune*, 10 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355043233/>.

³¹³ "Has All the Troops," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 24 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123708/>.

³¹⁴ Prieto and Miller, *US Army Operations*, 20.

did have a picture of Colonel William C. Brown, the commander of the 10th Cavalry, which was involved in the Punitive Expedition with General John Pershing³¹⁵. The *Evening Herald's* second page was where most of the international or war news could be found, but in this edition two of the three news columns were related to the southern border.³¹⁶ War news on page two consisted of a small article of two paragraphs from Berlin, which claimed success for the Germans on the western front.³¹⁷ The *South Bend News-Times* from the same day did have European war news on the front page including the usual bulletins under the heading "Progress of the War,"³¹⁸ and another article which combined short articles and official statements from the belligerents of each side under the main headline "Foes Demand Asquith Quit the Cabinet" but with sub-headlines such as "Germans Report Duel of Artillery Increasing."³¹⁹ The combined European war coverage on the front page was approximately one and a half columns, a little less than usual. The amount of the front page dedicated to Villa and the southern border was nearly twice that total.

³¹⁵ "COL. William C. Brown," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 24 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123702>.

³¹⁶ *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 24 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123708>.

³¹⁷ "Germans Gain in West," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 24 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123708>.

³¹⁸ "Progress of the War," *South Bend News-Times*, 24 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464981168/>.

³¹⁹ International News Service, "Foes Demand Asquith Quit the Cabinet," *South Bend News-Times*, 24 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464981168/>.

That is not to say the European war was forgotten or no longer affected the United States. In February just as the *Lusitania* case was about to be settled Germany decreed starting 1 March 1916 they would resume sinking armed merchant ships.³²⁰ Wilson and his cabinet weighed their options and possible responses, but a letter from Wilson to United States Senator William J. Stone of Missouri made his position clear: “You are right in assuming that I shall do everything in my power to keep the United States out of war.”³²¹ Later in the letter Wilson did acknowledge the necessity of protecting American rights to traverse the Atlantic safely, whether on American ships or not, and, significantly, will not sacrifice United States’ honor for peace. A later Wilson address to a club in Washington D.C. reiterated these sentiments: the president said, “America ought to keep out of this war. It ought to keep out of this war at the sacrifice of everything except this single thing upon which its character and history are founded—its sense of humanity and justice.”³²² There was insufficient time for a complete diplomatic exchange to clarify the policy, so on 1 March 1916, there was great concern more Americans may be killed and move the United States and Germany closer to a “grave situation.”³²³ The

³²⁰ “Halt Settlement of Subsea Issue,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 15 February 1916, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=wZJMF1LD7PcC&dat=19160217&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

³²¹ Woodrow Wilson, “President’s Letter Warns Congress to Yield would be National Dishonor,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 February 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355271341/>.

³²² Woodrow Wilson, “Stirring Words Used by Wilson on German Crisis,” *Chicago Tribune*, 28 February 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355272769/>.

³²³ “U.S. Awaits Act Against Armed Ships,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 1 March 1916, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=wZJMF1LD7PcC&dat=19160301&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

United States was closer to a serious diplomatic situation and possible break with Germany because of German actions, not British propaganda.

Diplomatic Breaks, War, and Sabotage

Diplomatic tensions between the United States and Germany led to several diplomatic notes exchanged in order to clarify information and maintain civil diplomatic relations. It started before the new decree went into effect. On 28 February 1916 the United States received Germany's response to the United States' request to delay implementation in order to provide clarity on what was or was not a target per the new policy and what actions the U-boat commanders would take.³²⁴ Germany stated they would uphold the pledges from September and October of 1915, but refused to postpone the new action. The relations between Germany and the United States became more tenuous. At least one senator, Senator Thomas Gore of Oklahoma, feared if Americans were killed in another German ship sinking it would bring the United States closer to war, or possibly into it altogether.³²⁵ The first decided step towards war was often perceived to be a diplomatic break between the United States and Germany and many feared more American deaths because of German submarines would cause the break.

London's *Exchange Telegraph*'s Amsterdam correspondent reported Germany held up full implementation of targeting armed merchantmen for fear of a diplomatic break. The correspondent further claimed the German press reported the United States

³²⁴ "Berlin Refuses Demands of U.S. on Sea Warfare," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 February 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355272769/>.

³²⁵ Arthur Sears Henning, "Poll Shows President Victor on Sea Warning," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355041563/>.

had “. . . decided to declare war on Germany.”³²⁶ That was certainly not the case. Wilson affirmed at every opportunity his support for peace and the United States Congress, the actual authority for declaring war, was working to prevent situations to move the country closer to war. The Congress passed a resolution in early March warning citizens to not travel on “any and all ships of any and all the powers now or in future at war,”³²⁷ in order to try and avoid American deaths in ship sinkings.

Still later in March the French cross-channel steamer *Sussex* was torpedoed but not sunk, reportedly without warning and while carrying Americans,³²⁸ and the possibility of a diplomatic break increased. The *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, which rarely published European war news on the front page, included an article Washington D.C. reactions to the *Sussex* incident. The article did not shy away from reporting discussion of a break in diplomatic relations with Germany if there was evidence the *Sussex* was torpedoed by a German submarine.³²⁹ Germany initially denied torpedoing the *Sussex*, and instead claimed it hit a British mine,³³⁰ but passengers later reported seeing the

³²⁶ “Kaiser Halts U-Boat War,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 8 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123359>.

³²⁷ “Text of Resolution,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 8 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123359>.

³²⁸ “Boat with 436 Aboard Hit by Torpedo; Safe,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355216778/>.

³²⁹ “Situation is Grave,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 27 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123739/>.

³³⁰ Arthur Sears Henning, “Another Ship with American is Torpedoed,” *Chicago Tribune*, 30 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355218610/>.

torpedo approaching the ship.³³¹ Germany's violation of their pledge to not target unarmed merchant ships and consistent denials of responsibility made even the *Chicago Tribune* editors feel the nation was approaching war with Germany in their 30 March 1916 editorial, "It Looks Like War," placed the onus on Germany to preserve peace and asserted if the break happened because of Americans on ships torpedoed and sunk, then further ships carrying Americans were sunk, it ". . . must lead to an immediate declaration of war."³³²

In order to capitalize on American anger at Germany, Great Britain and France made certain to push as many articles or reports of ships torpedoed and sunk as they could. It did not matter if the ship was in the Atlantic, a merchant ship, passenger liner or not. The *St. Joseph Evening Herald* published a French article claiming a Red Cross hospital ship, *Portugal*, was sunk in the Black Sea.³³³ A week after the *Sussex* was hit the *Chicago Tribune* published an article written by passenger Edward Marshall, who stated unequivocally, "The *Sussex* was torpedoed by a German submarine, the German governmental statements to the contrary notwithstanding."³³⁴ Germany did not admit culpability in the *Sussex* incident until 11 May 1916, but even then claimed it was in error

³³¹ "Sussex Ferry Torpedoed," *The History Place*, 2009, <http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/firstworldwar/brit-sussex.htm>.

³³² "It Looks Like War," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/35218660/>.

³³³ "Red Cross Ship Destroyed," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 1 April 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123843/>.

³³⁴ Edward Marshall, "Takes Positive Stand Sussex was Torpedoed," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 April 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355114156>.

and the submarine's commander had intended to torpedo a different ship, identified as an auxiliary cruiser.³³⁵ Great Britain even started reporting the act of informing the United States embassy of a ship torpedoed or sunk as a war event, listed in the short, single sentence summations of events related to the war on some newspapers' cover pages, such as the *Chicago Tribune* or the *South Bend News-Times*.³³⁶ Recaps of war events from the previous year included ships torpedoed or sunk.³³⁷ Great Britain tried to capitalize on the United States' anger at sinking the sinking of the *Sussex* by building on the effect with subsequent submarine attacks such as the *St. Hubert*, which they specifically mentioned was not armed or warned.³³⁸ This was different than the British attempt to capitalize on the anger at the *Lusitania* by following it with the Bryce Report the previous year.

In 1915 the two situations Great Britain tried to link and exploit were quite different. The *Lusitania* was a ship sunk with callous disregard for international law and resulted in the deaths of Americans. The Bryce Report recapped and encapsulated reports of atrocities in Belgium which happened almost a year prior. The Bryce Report was published a week after the *Lusitania* sank, while bodies were still being recovered and identified. Americans did not divert their attention from the domestic impact of the

³³⁵ Arthur Sears Henning, "Fresh Attacks by Submarines Alarm Capital," *Chicago Tribune*, 11 May 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355097829>.

³³⁶ "Bulletin," *Chicago Tribune*, 4 April 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355115257>.

³³⁷ "One Year Ago Today in the European War," *Chicago Tribune*, 5 April 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355115614>.

³³⁸ International News Service, "Progress of the War," *South Bend News-Times*, 7 April 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464982345>.

Lusitania, with speculation about the content of Wilson's note to Germany regarding the United States stance on *Lusitania*'s sinking and the rights of Americans or any neutral to safe travel on the seas.³³⁹ and local Chicagoans were still waiting to hear the fate of family traveling on the Cunard liner.³⁴⁰ In 1916 Great Britain tried to be more subtle with the manipulative reporting. The British concentrated on similar events and highlighted what the United States had addressed previously in diplomatic notes to Germany; the ships targeted were neither armed nor warned. As with the initial American response to the torpedoing of the *Sussex*, in the Midwest as in the rest of the nation, was anger and fear Germany's actions may drag the United States into the war, all Great Britain needed to do was feed the anger and hope Germany would continue to provide fodder. The *Sussex* incident concluded much faster than the *Lusitania* incident, though. In early May the German government issued the "Sussex Pledge," where they promised to cease sinking all merchant and passenger ships, satisfactorily resolving the situation, even if, as Michael Neiberg paraphrased Rabbi Samuel Price's impressions, ". . . the tone of the German reply as 'brisk and insolent,' but [Price] thought it just good enough to avoid war."³⁴¹ While the *Tribune* did not publish a letter to the editor about the Sussex Pledge, if it received any, Midwestern Americans were reassured by the government's work to preserve the rights of Americans to travel in the designated war zone unmolested, as

³³⁹ Associated Press, "A Forecast of Wilson's Note," *Chicago Tribune*, 13 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355112395/>.

³⁴⁰ "Await Message with Two Hopes," *Chicago Tribune*, 13 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355112410>.

³⁴¹ Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 105.

University of Chicago professor and head of the department of German Languages and Literatures asserted in a letter to the *Tribune*'s editor on an unrelated matter.³⁴² Cutting's letter did indicate the national sentiment was turning against Germany, but in Chicago the general sentiment was still clinging to neutrality; the professor called those who expressed a preference for a victor in the war violators of neutrality.³⁴³ The sentiment regarding the belligerents was certainly changing, as was the sentiment regarding the war itself.

At the outbreak the war was always referred to as the "European war," but after nearly two years of fighting sometimes "European" was dropped in conversation, oration, and reporting. Wilson's address to a national service school military encampment for young women referred to the war without the modifier.³⁴⁴ This could be the result of previously referring to it as the "European war" in the same address, but not quoted in the article. It could also be the result of the amount of time the war continued. Later in May Wilson addressed a gathering in Charlotte, North Carolina and referred to the war as "this European war," while the section heading called of the article it "Great War."³⁴⁵ But the

³⁴² Starr Willard Cutting, "Letter to the Editor: A Breach of Neutrality," *Chicago Tribune*, 11 May 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355097871/>.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ "Wilson Finds Few Disloyal to U.S.," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 2 May 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363124330>.

³⁴⁵ "Wilson Hints of Peace Move," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 22 May 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363124650>.

local reporting is more consistent in using “European” when describing the war.³⁴⁶ The national transition is not as reflected in the Midwest, which maintains its strong ties to Germany. Midwest consistency referencing the war as “European” continued pushing the conflict as a foreign issue, separate from American concerns.

The Midwest had a large population of German immigrants or first generation German Americans with close relatives still in Germany. The *St. Joseph Evening Herald* published a letter received by local man, Gottfred Schreiber, from his niece, Helen Kohler, in Baden.³⁴⁷ Kohler’s letter was missing pieces, attributed to the censor, but claimed life was okay in Germany, though three of Schreiber’s nephews, it does not specify their relation to Kohler, had been killed in the fighting. This was published on the cover page of the *Evening Herald* under the largest headline in both font size and space occupation, taking two column headline spaces instead of one, though the article was approximately half of one column. Receiving direct news from Germany seemed to be an event worthy of sharing with the greater area, as the *Evening Herald* did not have the budget for their own foreign correspondents. A letter the recipient was willing to share was almost as good.

There was also continuing praise of German characteristics, particularly among German-Americans. The *Chicago Tribune* editorial published in early July discussed a gathering of hyphenated Americans on 4 July, with German-Americans conspicuously

³⁴⁶ “European War Summary,” *Chicago Tribune*, 20 May 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354881152/>.

³⁴⁷ “England Cannot Starve Germany Woman Declares,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 28 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123757/>.

absent. It posited the German-Americans felt alienated, but pointed out “They form an important, useful, honest part of the nation.”³⁴⁸ The celebrations and conversations when the German merchant submarine, *Deutschland*, docked in the United States with a cargo of dye and chemicals further demonstrated the respect and affection the Midwest had for German ingenuity.³⁴⁹ Pictures of the submarine were shown with the movies,³⁵⁰ partly for the novelty, partly for the pride in German accomplishment.³⁵¹ The continued support for German associated ideals and characteristics, despite increased antipathy for the German government demonstrated the Midwest was still not prepared to commit to fighting against the Germans, who could be their relatives on the front line, as Gottfred Screiber’s nephews were.³⁵²

Though Americans in the Midwest were not ready to fight their relatives, they supported preparedness. Preparedness was to defend the United States from attack, so it was more defensive in nature than offensive. Cities of all sizes planned “Preparedness Parades,” from Chicago, expecting 200,000 marchers, to smaller events in Benton Harbor

³⁴⁸ “Nationalism,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 July 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354930267/>.

³⁴⁹ “Craft Defies War Peril of Seas in 16-Day Trip,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 July 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354931801>.

³⁵⁰ “Castle State at Madison,” *Chicago Tribune*, 13 July 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354932900>.

³⁵¹ “The Deutschland,” *Chicago Tribune*, 11 July 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354932062>.

³⁵² “England Cannot Starve Germany Woman Declares,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 28 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123757/>.

and St. Joseph, Michigan³⁵³ and articles discussing other parades in Los Angeles, California and El Paso, Texas.³⁵⁴ The preparedness emphasis demonstrated the greatest fear was an existential threat to the United States; an invasion. Other parts of the country specifically identified an enemy as the Germans,³⁵⁵ but the Midwest avoided naming an enemy and emphasized preparing to defend the nation from an unspecified threat.

The threat coalesced late July 1916, when munitions depot in Jersey City was blown up. Black Tom was an island connected by a causeway to a freight facility with docks, making it an ideal cargo depot.³⁵⁶ It was not well secured and according to Michael Neiberg was “. . . the single largest depot for the transshipment of ammunition and explosives from the United States to Great Britain, accounting for almost three-fourths of all munitions shipments overseas.”³⁵⁷ Initial reports claimed a fire led to the explosion which shook five states and caused an estimated thirty million dollars damage.³⁵⁸ Explosions had plagued Du Pont Powder Plants across the country over the

³⁵³ “Plan Preparedness Parade; Twin Cities,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 3 June 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363124834>.

³⁵⁴ “Two Die in U. S. Parades,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 15 June 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363125026>.

³⁵⁵ Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 107.

³⁵⁶ Dwight R. Messimer, *The Baltimore Sabotage Cell: German Agents, American Traitors, and the U-boat Deutschland during World War I* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2015), 23, kindle edition.

³⁵⁷ Neiberg, *Path to War*, 116.

³⁵⁸ “New York’s Big Blast and Some of its Results,” *Chicago Tribune*, 31 July 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354900453>.

course of 1916,³⁵⁹ as recently as May in New Jersey.³⁶⁰ Manufacturing accidents were expected, and explosives were dangerous products, so the fire in initial reports was ruled undetermined, but suspect.³⁶¹ The investigators who immediately responded found evidence the explosives at the depot were being mismanaged and believed they found the point of ignition, but did not yet know if it was accidental or purposeful.³⁶² As the cleanup and investigation continued, local administrators required rail cars with explosives moved from New York City.³⁶³ The investigation and response initially was internally focused, on what went wrong with the management of the site,³⁶⁴ even as the cause of the fire and explosion was still being investigated.

Speculation on the cause of the explosion and ramifications was explored in the editorials, including the 11 August 1916 *South Bend News-Times* editorial, “A Foolish Mission.” The editorial argued against the actions of New Jersey state officials who

³⁵⁹ “3 Hurt in Powder Blast,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 15 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363122452>. “7 Hurt in Powder Fires,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 29 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363122657>. “Three Die in Powder Blast,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 8 February 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363122810>.

³⁶⁰ “14 Killed by Blast,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 16 May 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363124563>.

³⁶¹ “Suspect Plot Ruined Vast Powder Stores,” *Chicago Tribune*, 31 July 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354900453>.

³⁶² “‘Higher Ups’ to be Sought to Bear Blame,” *South Bend News-Times*, 31 July 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466798140>.

³⁶³ “Move to Bar Repetition of ‘Black Tom’ Disaster,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 August 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354907211>.

³⁶⁴ “Says Duponts Write the Powder Rules,” *South Bend News-Times*, 5 August 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466799385>.

requested the federal government embargo munitions exportation. If the fire and explosion were accidental, argued the article, there would be no point in stopping the enterprise: if purposeful then the explosion would have completed its purpose.³⁶⁵ Periodically there were further updates with the investigation, but the distance from the Midwest and the presidential election in November pushed other concerns ahead of the incident in New Jersey and speculation of sabotage.

Wilson Wins Again

President Wilson started his formal campaign for re-election as the Democratic Party's nominee on 2 September 1916. The Republicans nominated Charles Evans Hughes, a justice on the United States' Supreme Court appointed by President William H. Taft in 1910.³⁶⁶ Hughes was chosen over former president Theodore Roosevelt, because as Lewis L. Gould said in his book about the 1916 presidential election, "a presidential candidate would have to be firm enough on neutrality issues toward Germany to hold the support of the pro-Allied East while being sufficiently neutral to avoid alienating German Americans and Midwestern Republicans, who above all else sought to keep out of the European war."³⁶⁷ Hughes was seen as more moderate and electable than

³⁶⁵ "A Foolish Mission," *South Bend News-Times*, 11 August 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466801069>.

³⁶⁶ Lewis L. Gould, *The First Modern Clash over Federal Power: Wilson versus Hughes in the Presidential Election of 1916 (American presidential Elections)* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2016), 41, kindle edition.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

Roosevelt, who had criticized Wilson for a timid response in the past.³⁶⁸ The Republicans staged a state convention in Peoria, Illinois in late September, where Hughes attacked Wilson as much as advanced his platform.³⁶⁹ After Illinois, Hughes moved to Indiana, where he focused on economic issues, such as businesses independent of the war market.³⁷⁰ Hughes attention to the Midwest, including a planned stop in South Bend, Indiana, put him firmly in the local news.³⁷¹ He focused on domestic and economic issues more than war, consistently criticizing Wilson's "surrender to the labor chiefs."³⁷² Locals' viewed Hughes in some ways as a rebuke to Wilson or the Democratic Party. A Chicagoan who did not sign his letter to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* said he knew women who would vote against Wilson because the women believed the Democrats pushed for women's suffrage to pad their vote count, not because the party believed in woman's suffrage.³⁷³

Woodrow Wilson, meanwhile, ran under the motto, "He kept us out of the war," but there was some chagrin with that. A John T. McCutcheon cartoon from the cover of

³⁶⁸ Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 59.

³⁶⁹ E. O. Phillips, "Hughes Deals Hard Blows to Wilson Record," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355011171/>.

³⁷⁰ "War Proved Savior of U. S., Hughes Says," *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 22 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/365265258>.

³⁷¹ "Hughes' Condition Alarms Managers," *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 23 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/365265282>.

³⁷² "Hughes Alliance Starts a Bitter Fight on Wilson," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 October 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355020273>.

³⁷³ A Man Voter, "Letter to the Editor: No Women Voters for Him," *Chicago Tribune*, 21 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355011414>.

the 20 September 1916 *Chicago Tribune* showed a speaker, clearly not Woodrow Wilson, proclaiming, “He kept us out of war!” to an admiring audience, but with belligerents and opposition including Mexico and Great Britain stating other reasons the United States had not entered the war. The German soldier, wearing his picklehaube helmet, said, “He wouldn’t have kept out of war if I hadn’t been busy fighting seven other nations.”³⁷⁴ The Mexican, wearing a sombrero, said, “He wouldn’t have kept out of war if he had insisted upon the salute of the flag.”³⁷⁵ Chicagoans feelings about the national election prompted them to write in to the *Tribune* as well, like Mary Onahan Gallery who claimed to be representative of a group of Democratic women but “We will not vote for Mr. Wilson, even we women whose antecedents and affiliations are all Democratic, because we feel that four years more of him is more than this country can stand.”³⁷⁶ John Weisman of Chicago disagreed, thanks in part to a *Tribune* editorial, and said, “I am no more in doubt as to his policies; therefore I certainly will vote for Wilson.”³⁷⁷ Some locals were voting on the war, despite the downplay in the national campaign, such as Wm. K. Pflaum who claimed, “American citizens of German parentage were with Wilson, are with Wilson, and will be with Wilson, because they know the ravages that war brings upon a country

³⁷⁴ John T. McCutcheon, “He Kept Us Out of War,” *Chicago Tribune*, 20 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355011171/>.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Mary Onahan Gallery, “Letter to the Editor: Democratic Women Against Wilson,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354955654/>.

³⁷⁷ John Weisman, “Letter to the Editor: Wilson Good Enough for Him,” *Chicago Tribune*, 20 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355011207/>.

even if victorious.”³⁷⁸ Wilson was also well received when his train stopped in Chicago on his way west despite not scheduling a speech or any other formal appearance.³⁷⁹



Figure 10. John T. McCutcheon Illustration, 20 September 1916

Source: John T. McCutcheon, “He Kept Us Out Of War,” *Chicago Tribune*, 20 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355011171/>.

Each candidate held similar views of the European war situation: maintain the status quo and push for the rights of Americans to travel and trade unmolested. Because

³⁷⁸ Wm. K. Pflaum, “Letter to the Editor: A German For Wilson,” *Chicago Tribune*, 29 September 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355015369>.

³⁷⁹ “Wilson Jokes with Crowds on Way West,” *Chicago Tribune*, 5 October 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355199996/>.

of the similarities and the persistent preference for neutrality, the war was pushed to a secondary concern by the candidates.³⁸⁰ Pushing the war to a secondary concern demonstrated the war was still an “other;” it was important because it impacted the United States. Author G. J. Meyer called the election an excuse for Wilson to pause action regarding the belligerents—such as exchanges with Great Britain regarding their blockade of Germany—because he might not be responsible for the policy going forward.³⁸¹ The war was certainly something the Democrats wanted to affect the vote, otherwise their motto would have been different.

The contest was very close. The day after the election the cover of the *Chicago Tribune* had a table, “Vote for President,” tracking the electoral votes in three columns, Hughes, Wilson, and Doubtful. According to the table, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin all went to Hughes.³⁸² Three days after the election, Wilson was declared the winner,³⁸³ but the final electoral vote count published by the *Tribune* on 11 November 1916 gave Wilson 276 electoral votes and unofficial popular vote lead of approximately 400,000.³⁸⁴ Gould quotes Hughes’s autobiographical notes where Hughes blamed the

³⁸⁰ Neigberg, *The Path to War*, 151.

³⁸¹ G. J. Meyer, *The World Remade: America in World War I*, (New York: Bantam Books, 2016) 144, kindle edition.

³⁸² “Vote for President,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354907763/>.

³⁸³ “Wilson, 269 Hughes, 243,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354908345/>.

³⁸⁴ Arthur Sears Henning, “Late Returns give Wilson 276 Electors,” *Chicago Tribune*, 11 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354908626/>.

“He kept us out of war” slogan for the Republican’s unexpected defeat.³⁸⁵ The war seemed to have greater impact on the electorate and their choice for president than the candidates preferred: this preference was for avoiding the war as opposed to supporting the allies.

The people in the Midwest reacted with acceptance of the result, but also disappointment. C. N. Johnson of Merrill Wisconsin lamented the *Chicago Tribune*’s reach and posited if the newspaper had a larger regular circulation, stretching to more states outside the Midwest, then Hughes might have won the election.³⁸⁶ Another writer who only signed his initials, E. H. Z. of Chicago expressed a desire to trade the lowest workers in the south for those in the north to break up the solid voting block in the south and “. . . resurrect the southerners, as they are politically dead.”³⁸⁷ Overall, the response of the Midwest to the election was brief disappointment at Hughes’s loss, but quickly moved on to life after the election and the *Deutschland*’s return for another trade run.³⁸⁸

The people in the Midwest were excited by the return of *Deutschland*: they said of the ship and its crew, “They [*Deutschland*’s crew] personify all that is gallant and admirable in the German nation, to which courage and enterprise have never been

³⁸⁵ Gould, *The First Modern Clash over Federal Power*, 125.

³⁸⁶ C. N. Johnson, “Letter to the Editor: ‘The *Tribune*’s’ Influence,” *Chicago Tribune*, 16 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355035842/>.

³⁸⁷ E.H.Z. “Letter to the Editor: Break Up Solid South,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355036240/>.

³⁸⁸ “Hail and Farewell,” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 8 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/365266645>.

denied.”³⁸⁹ Part of the excitement of the new trade run for *Deutschland* was the symbolism that the United States and Germany were not imminently going to war. Periodically over the course of 1916 the feeling in the United States and even the heavily German Midwest was war with Germany was coming, but could be postponed. Scant days after Germany made the Sussex Pledge on 4 May 1916³⁹⁰ the *Chicago Tribune* published three letters to the editor written before the Pledge was published. Robert Perry of Springfield, Illinois wrote the day before the Pledge was published and seemed resigned to the likelihood of war with Germany “. . . for these rabid Anglo-maniacs who have forced it upon us, against Germans.”³⁹¹ so Perry blamed Americans for potentially bringing war against Germany. John M. Hess blamed both governments, stating German and American people had always been friendly to each other, but the right to travel on the Atlantic, even on armed ships, was absolute and might take two friendly nations to war, “. . . all because of an old bucket!”³⁹² Another writer from Chicago who only signed his initials, J. B. W., expressed his fear the current United States army was “. . . not big enough for one day’s killing in Europe,”³⁹³ based on the casualty reports regularly

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Simone De Santiago Ramos, “Sussex Pledge,” *International Encyclopedia of the First World War 1914-1918 Online*, 1 June 2015, https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/sussex_pledge.

³⁹¹ Robert Perry, “Letter to the Editor: Responsibility for War,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 May 1916, <https://www.newspaperscom/image/355095660/>.

³⁹² John M. Hess, “Letter to the Editor: Our Bucket and Our Goat,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 May 1916, <https://www.newspaperscom/image/355095660/>.

³⁹³ J.B.W., “Letter to the Editor: We Certainly Are,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 May 1916, <https://www.newspaperscom/image/355095660/>.

published. After the Pledge was made public, there was not a subsequent response expressing relief war was averted, or at least postponed.

The Germans upheld the Sussex Pledge, warning ships before sinking them and allowing the crews to evacuate, as confirmed by Frederick Curtis, an American steamer captain, whose ship was stopped, evacuated, and torpedoed. Curtis claimed he was taken aboard the submarine while the crew were left in lifeboats.³⁹⁴ The captain referred to his time on the German submarine as being held prisoner. His expression demonstrated continued animosity for German submarine activities, especially when compared with the British who detained ships for prize court instead of sinking them. Coverage of British contraband interdiction decreased, while U-boat activities were highlighted, particularly if they could be linked to the United States through American passengers or crew, or a possible violation of international law or norms by attacking non-combatant ships. The *South Bend News-Times* published an article discussing an older sinking, the *Arabia*, as well as a fresh attack when the Germans sunk the British liner *Marinia* in November 1916 without warning. This attack resulted in the deaths of six Americans there to tend the live cargo of horses for the allies.³⁹⁵ Less than two weeks later the *Britannic*, a hospital ship, was sunk in the Aegean Sea.³⁹⁶ Most of the patients and crew were successfully evacuated, but there were fifty reported deaths, though some modern articles

³⁹⁴ “American Captain is Prisoner on U-Boat,” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 14 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/365266953>.

³⁹⁵ “No Details on Arabia,” *South Bend News-Times*, 10 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466808439>.

³⁹⁶ International News Service, “Hospital Ship Britannic is Sunk; 50 Lost,” *South Bend News-Times*, 22 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466809046>.

drop the number to thirty. The *Britannic* was a sister ship of *Titanic* and when launched in 1914 was the largest ship in the world.³⁹⁷ The ship's size and relationship to the famous *Titanic* provided a possible alternative impetus for the mention, but the article was featured on the *South Bend News-Times* cover page the same day Austro-Hungarian emperor Franz Joseph died.

In December rumors circulated in Washington D.C. that Germany planned to extend its U-boat policy.³⁹⁸ Based on previous experience after the *Sussex* was torpedoed it was likely seen by the British as another opportunity to press upon the United States population the continued German disregard for life and decency demonstrated by submarine activities, in particular torpedoing without warning. The attack on the *Sussex* had moved the nation closer to war; it was being openly discussed and written in the newspapers before the *Sussex* Pledge tempered the reaction.

Then, in December, the Germans did something unexpected: they appealed to the allies for a peace conference, passing the communication through neutral nations like the United States and the Vatican.³⁹⁹ The Midwest, along with the rest of the United States, was relieved at this glimmer of the possible end of “. . . the greatest and bloodiest war in

³⁹⁷ History.com Editors, “*Britannic* Sinks in Aegean Sea,” *A&E Television Networks*, 21 August 2018, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/britannic-sinks-in-aegean-sea>.

³⁹⁸ Staff Correspondent, “Germany Plans to Extend its U-boat Policy?” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 December 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355106913>.

³⁹⁹ “Neutral Envoys are Notified of Desire to End Present War,” *South Bend News-Times*, 12 December 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466810223/>.

the history of the world.”⁴⁰⁰ The day after the offer John T. McCutcheon’s illustration on the *Chicago Tribune*’s front page showed a woman kneeling in a field of skulls wearing a sash of humanity with her arms raised in prayerful supplication towards a combination of star, cross, and the words, “peace on earth.”⁴⁰¹ Editorials immediately speculated on the prospects for peace and what it would look like.⁴⁰² Letters to the editor were somewhat sparse, but Kuno Meyer of Chicago wrote in somewhat skeptically, fearing peace at that moment would not solve the problems in Europe caused by the war.⁴⁰³ William Desmond of Milwaukee, Wisconsin wrote to the *Tribune*’s editor to express his opinion the allies should engage in the peace process, pointing out the people making up the warring nations never wanted war in the first place, it was the governments who bore the responsibility for it.⁴⁰⁴ Headlines from the Midwest newspapers continued to publish headlines on the German efforts for possible peace, but seemed largely content to let Wilson pursue the process. American enthusiasm was tempered, even in the Midwest, which had stronger ties to Germany than other places in the country.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ John T. McCutcheon, “The Star in the East,” *Chicago Tribune*, 13 December 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355109435/>.

⁴⁰² “Germany Proposes Peace,” *Chicago Tribune*, 13 December 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355109506/>.

⁴⁰³ Kuno Meyer, “Letter to the Editor: Thinks Peace Move Premature,” *Chicago Tribune*, 18 December 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355269638>.

⁴⁰⁴ William J. Desmond, “Letter to the Editor: Public Opinion and Peace,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 December 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355270702/>.

1916 Conclusions

Great Britain's propaganda efforts in 1916 benefitted from Germany's missteps. The *Sussex* torpedoing in March was denied by the Germans for weeks, despite mounting evidence to the contrary. This act violated the pledges Germany made in 1915 after sinking the *Lusitania*. The *Sussex* incident moved the United States closer to a diplomatic break and war with Germany, Americans in the Midwest and the rest of the nation feared. United States President Woodrow Wilson's firm stance against German submarines sinking merchant ships had wide support, but the Midwest in particular feared the possibility of Wilson's stance bringing war between the United States and Germany. There was anger at Germany's actions, but as Michael Neiberg said in his book, *The Path to War*, "Anti-German sentiment after the *Sussex* incident did not always translate into pro-Allied sentiment. German-Americans especially remained reluctant to see American foreign policy tied to the goals of the British, French, and Russians."⁴⁰⁵ British propaganda sought to exacerbate and mobilize the anger over the course of 1916. After the Sussex Pledge in May tempered the situation between the United States and Germany, Great Britain continued highlighting attacks by German submarines while minimizing their own interdictions and seizures which directed American anger at Great Britain. Britain needed to change the perception of Americans towards the Germans and the war, and Germany certainly aided British efforts with their continued attacks on merchant ships.

⁴⁰⁵ Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 115.

References to the war also changed. The modifier, “European,” was sometimes omitted in favor of referring to it as simply, “the war,” despite Pershing’s Punitive Expedition in with Mexico. However, terms for the Germans and the rest of the Central Powers did not take on significant derogatory terms, such as “Hun,” which British newspapers used from the beginning of the war.⁴⁰⁶ The large German population in the Midwest, many who were immigrants themselves or first generation with close relatives still living in Germany, interfered with the use of such derogatory references to Germans in mainstream newspapers. Newspapers in smaller cities without foreign correspondents published letters from local residents’ relatives in Europe, such as Gottfred Schreiber from Berrien County, Michigan who passed his niece’s letter to his local newspaper, *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, to publish.⁴⁰⁷ The harsh language used in Britain’s newspapers would alienate the Midwest, so even London generated articles avoided significantly prejudicial language. People in the Midwest were talking about the war, and Germany’s conduct was at times directly opposed to continued cordial relations with the United States. The anger the Midwest experienced for Germany may not have equaled that of the east coast, however the sentiment was beginning to skew for Great Britain and against Germany.

Americans were not prepared to go further than anger in 1916. The presidential election demonstrated isolationism was the national preference. The Midwest showed a

⁴⁰⁶“The Retreat of Civilization before the Modern Huns,” *The Times* (London), 2 November 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32771424>.

⁴⁰⁷ “England Cannot Starve Germany Woman Declares,” *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 28 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123757/>.

preference for the Republican candidate who emphasized America first and continued economic dominance after the European war concluded. Wilson's appeal outside the Midwest with the "He kept us out of the war," slogan out-competed the more heavily German areas. Wilson's narrow victory and enthusiasm for Germany's peace overtures demonstrated Great Britain had not changed the sentiment of a large enough segment of the United States population. In the Midwest, the skepticism towards the German offer coupled with Great Britain and the other allies rebuffing the overture demonstrated neither side garnered enough anger or sympathy to gain support for direct intervention from the Midwest. The war was still viewed as an "other," a European problem with secondary or tertiary effects on the United States through commerce while directly effecting small numbers of citizens who risked trans-Atlantic travel. The Midwest was behind the President, if reluctantly, but separate from Wilson's neutrality policy and promotion of peace talks between the belligerents, Midwest America did not view the incidents in 1916 sufficient provocation to fight.

CHAPTER 6

1917

1917 Timeline

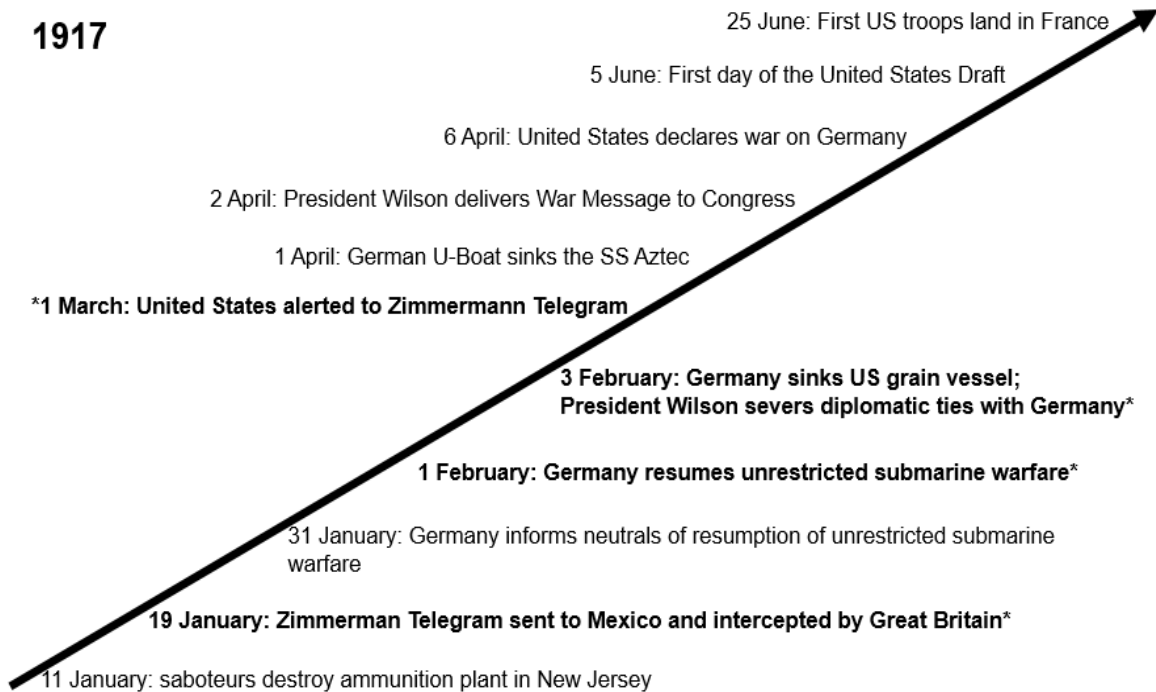


Figure 11. 1917 Timeline

Sources: “Interactive WWI Timeline,” National WWI Museum and Memorial, 2019, <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/interactive-wwi-timeline>; G. J. Meyer, *A World Undone* (New York, NY: Random House Inc., 2006), 304, kindle edition; Thomas Boghardt, *The Zimmermann Telegram: Intelligence, Diplomacy, and America’s Entry into World War I* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 91, kindle edition; “Kaiser Fixes Deadline on Sea; U. S. Allowed One Boat Weekly,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355032794/>; Arthur Sears Henning, “U. S. Strips for War,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355033474/>.

Note: This timeline is not exhaustive. It concentrates on the Western Front, British actions, United States of America actions domestically and abroad, and Central Powers actions useful for propaganda by Great Britain. Events outside those may be included in a case-by-case basis. Items in bold with an asterisk are of either propagandistic value to Great Britain or importance to the United States. The consolidated timeline with citations is available in an annex included at the end of this paper.

The Situation Deteriorates

As 1916 turned into 1917 the American Midwest's coverage of the European war continued to be nominal. The *Chicago Tribune*'s main headline for 1 January 1917 was "46 Women perish in Fire," which referred to a fire at a Canadian asylum where some of the patients died.⁴⁰⁸ The *Tribune*'s war news on the front page for New Year's Day included a "European War Summary" which paraphrased the sweeping events of the war on various fronts.⁴⁰⁹ This was a brief summation of a few key actions on the various fronts, such as the Roumanian[sic] or western, and a reference to the page the belligerents' official statements were published. The main article on page one pertaining to the war was by the *Tribune*'s Washington D.C. staff correspondent, Arthur Sears Henning. His article discussed the peace overtures Germany initially made in December 1916, including the German attempt to take control of the war narrative. Germany blamed the allies for continuing the war because "the allies are unwilling to declare the great struggle a deadlock and are bent upon continuing the war in the hope of dictating a victor's terms."⁴¹⁰ Henning's article was the only significant journalism pertaining to the war on the cover page. The remaining three articles comprised less than one column and were all from allied or neutral nations. This amount of the front page covering the war is

⁴⁰⁸ "46 Women Perish in Fire," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355142909/>; "Fight Madly to Escape Quebec Blaze," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355142909/>.

⁴⁰⁹ "European War Summary," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355142909/>.

⁴¹⁰ Arthur Sears Henning, "Berlin Ready to Talk Peace on Foes' Terms," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355142909/>.

consistent with the end of 1916, but the subsequent pages demonstrated Chicago's attention diverted from the war. The next article on the European war was not until page three, and described an exhibit coming to the city sponsored by the allies, particularly the French government.⁴¹¹

The exhibit was a component of an event called the Allied Bazaar and comprised photographs and war trophies from zeppelin debris as well as French equipment.⁴¹² The photographs were oversized, to maximize the impact to viewers. The French government sponsorship indicates this is a white propaganda effort to increase feelings of sympathy for the French, pride in their accomplishments, and perhaps remind Americans of the assistance France rendered the United States during the Revolutionary War. White propaganda merely indicates the source of the message is identified and the information is true and verifiable. The sponsor and source of the exhibit is prominently advertised and the items in the exhibit are from the European war. Some of the stories regarding their acquisition may have been exaggerated or embellished to increase their value, because fragments from a zeppelin shot down by French aviators would be more impressive than fragments from a zeppelin which crashed due to a mechanical issue.

Other components of the Bazaar were booths selling various items from expensive, luxury items such as pearl necklaces to rougher, inexpensive sentimental

⁴¹¹ "Nine Carloads of French War Exhibit Arrive," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355142945>.

⁴¹² Ibid.

items like crucifixes carved by soldiers in the trenches.⁴¹³ Money raised from the Bazaar was dedicated to allied relief work. The Bazaar had already exhibited in Boston and New York City, raising over one million dollars between the two, and Chicago expected to raise a significant amount as well.⁴¹⁴ Any funds raised solely benefited allied relief efforts, which may have persuaded some to stay away, but the temptation to see in person what had previously been in photographs or described in the written word proved a great temptation.

The Allied Bazaar in Chicago was a well-attended spectacle, with an estimated 50,000 visiting on Monday, 15 January 1917.⁴¹⁵ People from the surrounding area who were visiting Chicago went to the bazaar, which was noteworthy enough to get specific mention in the society column of the *St. Joseph Herald-Press* who noted a mother and daughter from Benton Harbor, Michigan went to the Bazaar while in Chicago.⁴¹⁶ The Bazaar was also effective at mobilizing support. The 17 January 1917 edition of the *Chicago Tribune* reported thirty new volunteers for the American Ambulance Corps, in service on the western front.⁴¹⁷ The names and addresses of the volunteers are listed, and,

⁴¹³ Associated Press, "Chicago Society Leaders Open Big 'Allied Bazaar,'" *The Daily Illini*, 12 January 1917, <https://idnc.library.illinois.edu/cgi-bin/illinois?a=d&d=DIL19170112.2.40>.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ "Fifty Thousand in One Day See Allied Bazaar," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355070941>.

⁴¹⁶ "Benton Harbor Happenings," *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 15 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362344962>.

⁴¹⁷ "Thirty Chicago Boys Offer to Serve in France," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355071251/>.

with the likely exception of Hoff, they are not ethnically German.⁴¹⁸ One volunteer in particular, William E. Thompson, is a first generation American. His mother was quoted in the article, saying, “You see, both Mr. Thompson and I were born in England, and while we hope there is no hyphen about us, we do love the old land and we are willing to make a sacrifice for it.”⁴¹⁹ She is later quoted as feeling a debt of gratitude, as an American, for France, but it was something explained to her that she should have. Mrs. Thompson demonstrated a few things in this statement. First, she felt an affinity for Europe, particularly her home country of Great Britain, as an immigrant American. Feelings of affection and obligation to the old country were emotions propaganda targeted. Second, she demonstrated susceptibility to persuasion, as when she was convinced of the American obligation to France stemming from French assistance to the United States during the Revolutionary War. This opened Mrs. Thompson to propaganda and moving from passive to active support, one of the goals of British propaganda. However, the emphasis Mrs. Thompson placed on being American without the hyphen inhibited direct intervention because of the internal motivation to be a good American. The United States was neutral, so the internal motivation countered the external pressures.

Mrs. Thompson’s American neutrality, while expressing sympathy for one of the belligerents was rather typical of the Chicago and regional sentiment. A writer who

⁴¹⁸ “For France,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355071251/>.

⁴¹⁹ “Thirty Chicago Boys Offer to Serve in France,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355071251/>.

signed his name A. B. Nelson of Chicago wrote to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* expounding on the good characteristics of being German, not specifically of Germans living in Germany or the nation itself.⁴²⁰ Another author who only signed his initials, A. H. G., also complimented German character while insulting allied conduct, citing the Allied Bazaar in Chicago at the time he wrote to the *Tribune*'s editor.⁴²¹ The final line of his letter is interesting, though: "This country [United States] is still neutral, even though certain people desire it otherwise."⁴²² This line indicates the author observed changing sentiments in Americans. The origin of the letter is not given, and it would be pure speculation to state A. H. G. meant exclusively his acquaintances, but the observation that sentiment had changed to wishing the United States was not neutral coupled with the irritated tone of his letter indicated a pro-allied stance. The greater Midwest still opposed the war, though. H. W. Beauchamp of Piqua, Ohio took a firm, generalized stance when he said, "The strictly American viewpoint is that the European conflict is wrong."⁴²³ Beauchamp referred to the war as "European," continuing the view of the war as an "other," something that happened around the United States, not to it. He also maintained an unambiguous negative view of the war itself. Later in the letter Beauchamp referenced propaganda, in this instance from American journalists as opposed to belligerent

⁴²⁰ A. B. Nelson, "Deutschland Ueber[sic] Alles," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355143558/>.

⁴²¹ A.H.G., "Taste and the Bazaar," *Chicago Tribune*, 15 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355147591/>.

⁴²² Idib.

⁴²³ H. W. Beauchamp, "No German Sympathy Here," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355070953/>.

operations, but it indicated Americans understood they were being targeted by propaganda.⁴²⁴ But not every distinctively ethnic article or illustration was propaganda.

The *Chicago Tribune* Sunday comics continued to reflect German cultural influence. The *Tribune* rotated the first comic of the section, but the 14 January 1917 *Sunday Tribune* featured “Hans und Fritz” by Rudolph Dirks, which took the entire Section Four, Comic Section, front page.⁴²⁵ The characters are given German accents, demonstrated by words like, “vait” for “wait” or “ziss” for “this.” The scenes depicted are consistent with comics, showing everyday life emphasizing absurdity. The popularity of “Hans und Fritz,” inferred based on its lead in the section, demonstrated the everyday acceptance of Germans in the area. The behaviors depicted in Dirks’s comic did not demonstrate any sort of contrition from the Germanic characters or caricature of German government or military for mockery. Dirks was German-American, born in Germany, but moved to Chicago at age seven in 1884.⁴²⁶ He remembered Germany, but by 1917 he had lived in the United States for more than thirty years. He had been a published comic strip creator since at least 1897 with the *New York Journal*, so by the time of the war his comic was an established part of Sunday newspapers.⁴²⁷ Dirks’s livelihood required sensitivity

⁴²⁴ Beauchamp, “No German Sympathy Here.”

⁴²⁵ Rudolph Dirks, “Dots Der Answer,” *Chicago Tribune*, 14 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355146947/>.

⁴²⁶ Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Rudolph Dirks,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, last updated 16 April 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rudolph-Dirks>.

⁴²⁷ University of Kansas Department of German Studies, “The Origins of the Comics of the United States (1897-1902) under the Influence of Wilhelm Busch: The

to the opinions and moods of the consumers, in this case the American people. His work indicated British propaganda was not changing Americans' views of Germans, but does not address the impressions of the German government, which Americans sometimes differentiated.

Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare in February, which did not improve the perception of imperial Germany in the United States. Any goodwill generated by the peace overtures made in late 1916 and continued in January 1917⁴²⁸ were quickly subsumed by anger and fear. The anger stemmed from the threats and dictates Germany imposed, including dictating the routes and frequency of United States trade to decrease the likelihood United States merchant ships would be targeted by German U-boats.⁴²⁹ The fear related to the 1916 Sussex Pledge, which stemmed from the torpedoing of *Sussex* and led United States President Woodrow Wilson to threaten a diplomatic break with Germany. The Pledge was a promise by Germany not to attack merchant or passenger ships and saved the diplomatic relationship between Germany and the United States.⁴³⁰ The possibility of a break between the United States and Germany

Comics of Rudolph Dirks,” <https://germanic.ku.edu/origins-comics-united-states-1897-1902-under-influence-wilhelm-busch-comics-rudolph-dirks>.

⁴²⁸ Henning, “Berlin Ready to Talk Peace on Foes’ Terms.”

⁴²⁹ “Kaiser Fixes Deadline on Sea; U. S. Allowed One boat Weekly,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355032794/>.

⁴³⁰ Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 105.

led Americans in the Midwest to fear imminent war between the two nations in 1916,⁴³¹ and that fear was revisited in 1917.

Immediately after the German declaration the newspapers went back to crisis mode: reminiscent of June and July 1914 and the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian heir which initiated the European crisis. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* cover page for 1 February 1917 was almost entirely dedicated to the new crisis and included text from the German note⁴³² as well as the reactions of the United States, which included preventing ships from leaving New York harbor.⁴³³ The *St. Joseph Herald-Press* did not regularly include main headlines, but it did include an article on the implications of the German decree.⁴³⁴ This single column on page one was still more coverage than the *Herald-Press*'s predecessor, the *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, published on 29 June 1914, which did not mention the murder of Franz Ferdinand until page three,⁴³⁵ their first edition after the deaths because the small, local newspaper did not publish on Sundays or holidays. The *Chicago Tribune* consistently published about two columns of European war news

⁴³¹ "It Looks Like War," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 March, 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355218660>.

⁴³² "Germany Says England's Sea Policy Forces Her to Use Every Weapon Available in War," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 1 February 1917, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=wZJMF1LD7PcC&dat=19170201&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

⁴³³ "U. S. Craft Seal Port of New York," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 1 February 1917, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=wZJMF1LD7PcC&dat=19170201&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

⁴³⁴ "Officials Admit Crisis is Grave," *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 1 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362347391/>.

⁴³⁵ "Royal Pair of Austria Slain," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 29 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363533805>.

on the front page, but the German decree, surrounded by supporting articles, dominated the front page.⁴³⁶ just as the initial war maneuvers dominated the first page in August 1914.⁴³⁷ Great Britain's propaganda apparatus was unsuccessful keeping the war prominently in the Midwest newspapers, which indicated Americans in the Midwest were more interested in who leaked details of a Wilson peace note than the allies or Central Powers.⁴³⁸ while the Germans were able to dominate Midwest America's attention, albeit negatively, without significant effort from Great Britain's propaganda departments.

The focus is further demonstrated by the editorials the papers published. The 31 January 1917 edition of the *Chicago Tribune* published five original editorials and one "Editorial of the Day" from the *Atlantic Monthly* and only two were related to the European war. One was more tangential than directly related to the war. It discussed *Tribune* correspondent James O'Donnell Bennett who was with the Central Powers on various fronts including the Isonzo Front. Bennett was sending his articles via cable and mail but some seemingly innocuous words used to describe the scene such as ". . . the peaks of the Alps are rose hued," were censored by the British.⁴³⁹ The editorial more directly relating to the war was "Reappearing Submarine Issues," addressed the allies'

⁴³⁶ *Chicago Tribune*, 1 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355032794/>.

⁴³⁷ *Chicago Tribune*, 2 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355142534/>.

⁴³⁸ Mark Watson, "Congress Quiz Brings Out Names of President's Aids," *Chicago Tribune*, 31 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355074793/>.

⁴³⁹ "Bennett via Wireless," *Chicago Tribune*, 31 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355074833/>.

decision to increase the armament on merchant ships as much as the possibility of Germany easing restrictions on their submarine operations.⁴⁴⁰ The 2 February 1917 editorials were all original to the *Tribune*, and every one related to “The Crisis with Germany,” including an editorial by that name.⁴⁴¹ However, the sentiment expressed in the editorials reflected resignation to the increasing probability of war, but remained unconvinced of the justness of either side, clearly stated in the first editorial, “We are caught between two incompatible necessities. Each belligerent has violated maritime law and justified violation by reference to the violations of its adversary.”⁴⁴² This was an oversimplification, since Britain seized ships while Germany sank them, but indicates the Midwest believed both sides in the war mistreated United States commerce in the name of military necessity. The sentiment reflected in this and the other editorials, “The Monroe Doctrine” and “Grasping the Nettle” demonstrated reluctance to proceed to war against Germany. The continued reluctance even in the face of German provocation and anticipated diplomatic break with Germany indicated British propaganda was not as effective at pushing the Midwest towards war as Germany’s decisions. Wilson’s decision to sever diplomatic relations with Germany and dismiss the German ambassador to the United States and recall the United States ambassador to German further demonstrated Great Britain’s propaganda was not as effective as Germany’s decisions and conduct,

⁴⁴⁰ “Reappearing Submarine Issues,” *Chicago Tribune*, 31 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355074833/>.

⁴⁴¹ “The Crisis with Germany,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355033111/>.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

even if Germany's dismissed ambassador Bernstorff continued to assert, "Germany will not declare war."⁴⁴³

The hostility towards Great Britain as well as Germany for the crisis in February 1917 was visible in the letters to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*. Nathaniel Uhlig of a Lutheran Deaf Mute Church in Chicago blamed the entente for the current crisis, "We must acknowledge that our failure to stand firmly against the encroachments upon our rights by the entente has brought us this crisis."⁴⁴⁴ Another writer, H. Bergstaedt of Shumway, Illinois, asked if the United States was still a British colony and lamented the possibility of war with Germany, "[Germany] who in every time of distress has proven the truest friend of the United States!"⁴⁴⁵ The continued animosity to Great Britain and the war indicate the ties to Germany and the German identity were stronger than the emotions British propaganda appealed to.

As February progressed the war and the crisis with Germany continued increased visibility on regional Midwest newspapers, taking more than four columns of the 27 February 1917 *Chicago Tribune* cover page as opposed to the two columns before the German decree and diplomatic break.⁴⁴⁶ The *St. Joseph Herald-Press* from the same day

⁴⁴³ Arthur Sears Henning, "Break with Kaiser Brings Quick Action," *Chicago Tribune*, 4 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355033474/>.

⁴⁴⁴ Nathaniel P. Uhlig, "Letter to the Editor: The Crisis," *Chicago Tribune*, 5 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355034363/>.

⁴⁴⁵ H. Bergstaedt, "Letter to the Editor: Protector of the Monroe Doctrine," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355034675/>.

⁴⁴⁶ *Chicago Tribune*, 27 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355251122>.

also had increased war news, including articles from Berlin and London.⁴⁴⁷ The London article, though, was designed to heighten anger at Germany. The piece is by a United Press staff correspondent, Ed L. Keen, an American working in Great Britain,⁴⁴⁸ and described the loss of the liner *Laconia*, with at least two American deaths, but Keen's article quoted unspecified London newspapers who called the sinking a "second *Lusitania*."⁴⁴⁹ Wilson ruled the *Laconia* attack an overt act, and congress used it to as a justification for increased measures against Germany. The *Chicago Tribune* Washington D.C. correspondent Arthur Sears Henning asserted there would soon be a "state of war with Germany which few officials believe can long be avoided."⁴⁵⁰ But Americans in the Midwest did not uniformly agree. The writer only signed his initials, W. H., but his letter to the *Tribune*'s editor made it clear he did not object to a forbidden zone in the water for the belligerents to fight, likening it to no man's land between the armies in Europe where "... neutrals would have no right to venture."⁴⁵¹ Signs pointed emphatically to imminent war between the United States and Germany, regardless of the feelings in the Midwest. This point was acknowledged by the larger newspapers own staff in the capital.

⁴⁴⁷ *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 27 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362350478/>.

⁴⁴⁸ United Press International Inc., "Unipressers & UPI Staff," 2007, <https://100years.upi.com/unipressers.html>.

⁴⁴⁹ Ed L. Keen, "2 Americans Known to have Perished," *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 27 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362350478/>.

⁴⁵⁰ Arthur Sears Henning, "Full Powers will be Given to President," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355251398/>.

⁴⁵¹ W. H. "Letter to the Editor: Fight it out on the Water," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/3552514646/>.

Regardless of the personal feelings of Americans in the Midwest, war with Germany felt more inevitable. Great Britain did provide a significant impetus for the Federal Government to feel obliged and make the declaration by intercepting an official German foreign office communication from the Foreign Minister, Arthur Zimmermann to the German Minister to Mexico, Heinrich von Eckardt.

Zimmermann's Telegram

The German Foreign Minister of 1917, Arthur Zimmermann, was new to the top position in the Foreign Ministry. He was appointed 22 November 1916, replacing Gottlieb von Jagow.⁴⁵² Thomas Boghardt described Zimmermann in his 2012 book, *The Zimmermann Telegram: Intelligence, Diplomacy, and America's Entry into World War I*, as a career diplomat, which was unusual since he was not an aristocrat. Zimmermann also was more extreme in his views on the conduct of the war and involved himself in covert and intelligence operations.⁴⁵³ His outgoing nature made him popular with most people, but Boghardt notes Zimmermann “did not respond well to stress. . . he cracked easily when under pressure or faced with conflicting demands.”⁴⁵⁴ Arthur Zimmermann was willing to try riskier ventures for the greater gain, particularly in the face of Germany's peace advances being spurned.

⁴⁵² Thomas Boghardt, *The Zimmermann Telegram: Intelligence, Diplomacy, and America's Entry into World War I* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 31, kindle edition.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 24-25.

The Allies rebuffed the German peace overtures in January 1917. Germany feared the United States would officially join the allies against the Central Powers so Zimmermann went back to an earlier idea to divert American attention to Mexico and away from Europe.⁴⁵⁵ The plan involved an offer to Mexico for an alliance and German support if Mexico declared war on the United States. The message was sent via telegraph, in code, over a circuitous route because Great Britain had cut the German trans-Atlantic cables in August 1914.⁴⁵⁶ The message had an intermediate stop in the United States State Department 19 January 1917, but as gentlemen did not read other men's mail, the United States passed the message to the German embassy for decryption and sending on.⁴⁵⁷ The British intercepted what messages they could, valuing the intelligence, and had been acquiring telegrams from the roundabout methods Germany used for communications since 1915.⁴⁵⁸ The exact route the message took crossing the Atlantic is not known, but it was intercepted by the British on, or about 17 January 1917 and decrypted.⁴⁵⁹ Great Britain did not immediately pass the message to the United States, instead choosing to hold onto the message for an opportune moment. The message was

⁴⁵⁵ Boghardt, *The Zimmermann Telegram*, 35.

⁴⁵⁶ National Archives, "The Zimmermann Telegram," 25 April 2018, <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/zimmermann>.

⁴⁵⁷ Boghardt, *The Zimmermann Telegram*, 129.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 95-96.

finally given to the United States in February, but the news broke to the public on 1 March 1917.⁴⁶⁰

The British were using the Telegram as grey propaganda. The message was accurate, and the source was not disguised, but the circumstances of Britain's acquisition of the telegraph was concealed.⁴⁶¹ The greatest impact of the message was the high level of the German government which transmitted it. The British challenge was passing the message to the United States without exposing how the message was acquired and without compromising either national reputation or disclosing the method of intelligence gathering. Protecting sources and methods is a vital component of protecting intelligence even in modern times, to ensure information continues to flow. Great Britain held the message until an opportune moment for turning it over. Failing to disclose the intercept to the United States upon translation, holding it for over a month from January to the end of February, demonstrated a desire to use the message for national gain, as opposed to international order and discipline.

The Zimmermann Telegram was front page news all over the Midwest, with headlines ranging from incendiary, such as the *Chicago Tribune's* "U. S. Bares War Plot,"⁴⁶² to the more skeptical *Milwaukee Sentinel*, "German-Jap-Mexican War Alliance

⁴⁶⁰ International News Service, "Germany Urged Southern Republic to get Jap Aid," *South Bend News-Times*, 1 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/465093972/>.

⁴⁶¹ Boghardt, *The Zimmermann Telegram*, 120.

⁴⁶² "U. S. Bares War Plot," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355075894/>.

Plan is Sifted,”⁴⁶³ The note was quickly declared authentic and declared a “German plot against United States.”⁴⁶⁴ The perceived threat Germany posed to the United States was readily acknowledged, but it was difficult to find consensus for the response to Germany’s offer to Mexico. The editorials further showed as wide a range of sentiments as the headlines.

The *South Bend News-Times* published an editorial on 2 March 1917 which asserted, “Germany has already done enough to goad us into a dozen wars, say nothing of the ‘freedom of the seas,’ through insults to our integrity, abuse of privilege, and misuse of our soil, is disclosed by this latest exposition of her treachery.”⁴⁶⁵ The *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, on the other hand, published an editorial which accused urban or metropolitan newspapers of jingoism.⁴⁶⁶ The *Chicago Tribune* editorial, “Why not Think of the United States?” took a more middle road. It acknowledged Americans supported each of the belligerents, investing emotionally in the fortunes of the warring nations. This editorial, however, finishes, “The United States is beyond the time of moralizing. It has

⁴⁶³ “German-Jap-Mexican War Alliance Plan is Sifted,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 1 March 1917, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=wZJMF1LD7PcC&dat=19170301&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

⁴⁶⁴ “German Crisis More Acute,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355076046/>.

⁴⁶⁵ “Another Severe Jolt for Those who Imagine They Know more About our Foreign Relations than do the President and his Advisors,” *South Bend News-Times*, 2 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/465094224>.

⁴⁶⁶ “A Senseless Charge,” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 2 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362350806/>.

reached the time of necessity and the first necessity is to consider merely itself.”⁴⁶⁷ This middle ground sentiment is most likely that espoused by the majority of the Midwest, and one of the most widely read as the *Tribune*’s reach extended even to Canada.⁴⁶⁸ The sentiment demonstrated a resignation to the necessity of defending the national rights and honor of the United States, but distinctly lacked enthusiasm.

Letters to the editor were also resigned or opposed to war. Minnie Kuelzow and Marie Paulitz, members of Chicago’s Daughters of Civil War Veterans, 1861-1865, wrote in to advise *Tribune* readers of the correct display of the American flag, noting they were happy to see so many flags displayed.⁴⁶⁹ This observation indicated there was an increase in patriotic fervor, perhaps similar to the increased display of flags and patriotism after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. L. P. Kizer of Hammond, Illinois, though, pointed out violations of international law by Great Britain and the Netherlands, as well as Germany, displaying a continued defense of Germany which indicated opposition to entering the war against Germany.⁴⁷⁰ John Math wrote a few days later, seemingly resigned to war with Germany, but preferred material support, “An infinite harm of Germany would more positively result if we put our industrial plants and

⁴⁶⁷ “Why not Think of the United States,” *Chicago Tribune*, 5 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355076887/>.

⁴⁶⁸ Non Bunkum, “Letter to the Editor: Hoakum-Bunkum,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355143821/>.

⁴⁶⁹ Minnie P. Kuelzow and Marie S. Paulitz, “Letter to the Editor: How to Hang the Flag,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355076205/>.

⁴⁷⁰ L. P. Kizer, “Letter to the Editor: Free Seas,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355076205/>.

mines at the disposal of England, France, and their allies as well as our food surpluses.”⁴⁷¹ Much the same as in February, when the Germans decreed unrestricted submarine warfare and established their own war zone, sentiment in the Midwest regarding direct involvement in the European war remained muted.

As the month of March continued, the political situation between the United States and Germany did not improve. Germany continued sinking ships, including neutral United States flagged vessels, which ensured relations between the United States and Germany could not be reconciled.⁴⁷² The editorials became more hostile to Germany, such as the *South Bend News-Times* editorial, “The Slaughter Season,” which criticized Germany’s dependence on “novelties” like the submarine or zeppelin, saying, “They have not proved to be the crushers designed to be.”⁴⁷³ The *St. Joseph Herald-Press* continued to favor editorials emphasizing a pro-American stand, as opposed to anti-belligerent or pro-war. Their editorial from 19 March 1917 discussed how Americans favored “a dignified assertion of American rights and American honor.”⁴⁷⁴ The generalization to all Americans is slightly disingenuous. It most accurately reflected the sentiment of the area the author lived. The United States was too large a country with to

⁴⁷¹ John B. Math, “Letter to the Editor: One Way Out,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355077577/>.

⁴⁷² “No Warnings are Given; 22 Missing,” *Chicago Tribune*, 19 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355167619/>.

⁴⁷³ “The Slaughter Season,” *South Bend News-Times*, 13 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/465095506/>.

⁴⁷⁴ “The People Speak,” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 19 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362352616/>.

many ethnicities to have homogenous views. The Midwest continued to value peace. The *Chicago Tribune* editorial “America Must Choose” published at the end of March stated it unequivocally, “The American people as a whole have no desire to enter the war. . . If it were a question merely of what we want, we should vote overwhelmingly to remain out of it and we should consent to considerable sacrifices for the sake of peace.”⁴⁷⁵ But this same editorial does not reasonably see war as avoidable. The United States must either fight in the ongoing war, or prepare itself against a coming threat through universal service, a two-ocean navy, and ample stockpiles of “all appliances of war.”⁴⁷⁶

Average citizens writing in to the *Chicago Tribune* from across the country agreed with the Midwestern editorial sentiment. Blandina Van Etta wrote from Washington D. C. to lament what the war had done to the European countries, and criticize the war enthusiasts. But her letter finished wondering why the United States thought they could escape a war which drew in the entire world.⁴⁷⁷ Closer to home Rudolph Reuter of Chicago asserted, “Nothing that Germany has done to us has emanated from a spirit of calculated aggressiveness. That she has sinned there is no doubt. That we join the allies against her is morally wrong.”⁴⁷⁸ The Midwest still had

⁴⁷⁵ “America must Choose,” *Chicago Tribune*, 30 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355172057/>.

⁴⁷⁶ *Idib.*

⁴⁷⁷ Blandina Van Etta, “Letter to the Editor: Where would War Lead?” *Chicago Tribune*, 30 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355172057/>.

⁴⁷⁸ Rudolph Reuter, “Letter to the Editor: Talks of Revolution,” *Chicago Tribune*, 31 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355172315/>.

many citizens opposed to the war. Great Britain's propaganda had not swayed everyone, but other circumstances forced the situation.

It Is War

As March turned into April, the last hopes for peace were exhausted. The *Chicago Tribune* staff correspondent to Washington D. C., Arthur Sears Henning, reported the reaction in the nation's capital to the German chancellor's address to the Reichstag. The chancellor's address did not contain any indications of compromise with Wilson and the United States. Henning reported United States politicians' reactions left "no doubt President Wilson will propose a declaration of a state of war with Germany when he appears before the extraordinary session of congress next week."⁴⁷⁹ The following day newspaper headlines all around the southern tip of Lake Michigan proclaimed the United States cabinet favored war.⁴⁸⁰ Chicago vociferously fell into line with the prevailing national sentiment. They held a rally 31 March 1917 highlighting patriotism and preparedness, showing solidarity with the federal government and feting war veterans from the Civil War, Spanish-American war, and serving military. However, the editorials

⁴⁷⁹ Arthur Sears Henning, "Hollweg Ends Last Hope for Peace, Belief," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355171994/>.

⁴⁸⁰ "Cabinet Voices War Sentiment," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 31 March 1917, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=wZJMF1LD7PcC&dat=19170331&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>; "Decision of Cabinet: War!" *Chicago Tribune*, 31 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355172275/>; "Wilson will ask Congress for Declaration of War," *South Bend News-Times*, 31 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/465097887/>.

still referred to the war as the “European war.”⁴⁸¹ War might be on the doorstep, but it was still an “other.” The war was still something happening far away, not something which would directly affect Americans in the United States. Individual sentiment shown by letters to the editor also dreaded the approaching fight. Philip Siebold sympathized with German-Americans who, he felt, should not be obliged in defense of their adopted homeland to take up arms against their former countrymen and possible family.⁴⁸² Public sympathy remained with German-Americans, who were put in a difficult position by the imminent declaration of war. This sympathy further indicated the region’s resistance to Great Britain’s propaganda. If the propaganda had the effect desired by Great Britain instead of sympathy for German-Americans, there would be resentment for any ethnic displays or affinities, similar to after the United States declared war and Germans were viewed as “trouble makers” and German culture which had been incorporated into American culture was removed.⁴⁸³

Despite his own personal misgivings, Wilson addressed the United States both houses of the congress on 2 April 1917 to ask for war. He framed it as a fight for “Justice and Rights,” and to rid the world of the threat to all mankind posed by imperial Germany.⁴⁸⁴ This is the speech where Wilson uttered the famous phrase, which is quoted

⁴⁸¹ “The Twilight of the Kings,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355266477/>.

⁴⁸² Philip J. Siebold, “Letter to the Editor: The German-American,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355266477/>.

⁴⁸³ Ives, “Part 1,” *American Experience*.

⁴⁸⁴ “We Must Fight for Justice and Rights,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355267121/>.

by politicians even today, “The world must be made safe for democracy.”⁴⁸⁵ Wilson’s address resonated with Midwest America. The small local paper, *St. Joseph Herald-Press* published an editorial admiring Wilson’s words and agreeing there was already a state of war between the United States and Germany, due to German acts against the United States.⁴⁸⁶ The anti-German rhetoric in Wilson’s speech went largely unreported in Midwest newspapers, buried under patriotism and the perception of existential threat.

In the United States, the legislative branch, Congress, is empowered to declare war, not the executive in the person of the president. While waiting for the Congress to act, the editorials demonstrated a firm stance behind the president. The 4 April 1917 editorials in the *Chicago Tribune* were all dedicated to the imminent American involvement in the European war. One exhorted rich young men to do their part and enlist⁴⁸⁷ while another asserted extravagance would be criminal during the war, because modern warfare dictated the whole population would be touched by the war.⁴⁸⁸ Letters to the editor showed a change in sentiment as well. Clayton Williams of Battle Creek, Michigan wrote to the *Tribune* even before Wilson’s address to Congress in April favoring sending American soldiers to Europe immediately after declaring war on

⁴⁸⁵ “Wilson Accepts Gage of Battle (continued on page five),” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 3 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362354714/>.

⁴⁸⁶ “The President Acts,” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 3 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362354658/>.

⁴⁸⁷ “To Rich Young Men,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355267400>.

⁴⁸⁸ “Extravagance will be a Crime,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355267400>.

Germany.⁴⁸⁹ Newspapers, especially one as large as the *Chicago Tribune*, received more letters to the editor than they had space to publish them. The editor was obliged to choose which ones would be published in a given edition. Sometimes there were letters with complimentary subjects by different authors, so they were included under the same heading. Other times, the sentiment was significantly opposed or aligned to the topics of the editorials or a significant event. In this case, Williams's letter was topically aligned to the newspaper, despite being written a week prior to the edition's publication. The United States declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917.⁴⁹⁰

After the declaration, the *Chicago Tribune*'s letters to the editor were selected for their patriotism, including a short one from an author only signing, Franklin, who suggested changing the military slogan from "Catch Villa!" to "Catch the Kaiser, dead or alive!"⁴⁹¹ and the other three letters were of similar sentiment. The smaller *St. Joseph Herald-Press* which did not publish letters to the editor showed its changed sentiment in editorials including "The Nation at War," which sought to steel the population for the test to come.⁴⁹²

The initial patriotic fervor did settle as April continued. The war featured prominently on the front page and in the *Chicago Tribune* Section One contained more

⁴⁸⁹ Clayton Williams, "Letter to the Editor: A Force to Europe," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355267928/>.

⁴⁹⁰ Meyer, *A World Undone*, 335.

⁴⁹¹ Franklin, "Letter to the Editor: Berlin or Bust," *Chicago Tribune*, 7 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355268201/>.

⁴⁹² "The Nation at War," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 9 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362355606/>.

war news than it had in January, though the official statements of the belligerent nations remained consistently, though not always, on page four. The editorials also continued to center on the war or United States preparations for growing the army for European service, such as the Young Men's Christian Association, which received a generous donation from several wealthy citizens to work with mobilizing soldiers in support roles, providing entertainment and administrative care.⁴⁹³ Letters to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* continued to show the ground support for military action, but this demonstrated the sentiments of the *Tribune* staff and owners as much as those of the *Tribune*'s readers. It is true the editors needed sensitivity to the preferences of the subscribers, otherwise the paper would lose money when subscriptions were canceled. But newspapers did not publish all the letters to the editor they received. The editors selected letters such as the one from Herman U. Thieben of Loda, Illinois who proposed arresting "tramps" loitering at the train yards and giving them the option of jail or the military for their subject matter.⁴⁹⁴ The United States was at war, and it was important to be a good American and support the president and his cause.

1917 Conclusions

In April of 1917 Great Britain's desire for the United States to join the war on the allied side was fulfilled. The federal government was sufficiently persuaded of the threat from Germany to declare war on 6 April 1917. Once the federal government committed

⁴⁹³ "Y. M. C. A. Work with the Troops," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354919210>.

⁴⁹⁴ Herman U. Thieben, "Letter to the Editor: Conscribing Knights of the Road," *Chicago Tribune*, 23 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354921701/>.

the United States to the war against Germany, Americans in the Midwest adhered to the precept of being a good American, even if that meant going to war.

Before war was declared, the Midwest sentiment was largely still neutral and war avoidant. The war had become normalized, so the attention paid to it, barring a significant new development such as peace overtures from Germany, was increasingly supplanted by domestic matters like murder intrigue or leaks from the White House. Germany's decision to resume indiscriminate submarine warfare on 1 February 1917 was a violation of the Sussex Pledge, a promise Germany made to the United States in May 1916 to stave off an earlier diplomatic break. The threat of a negative development between the United States and one of the war's principal belligerents in February led to greater attention in the newspapers, because the Germany's actions were directly impacting the United States. The United States principal complaints about Great Britain were the restrictions to commerce, and now Germany was doing the same thing, but took it a step further by threatening American lives as well as property. The perceived threat and insult to national honor, as well as American lives and property were too much for the federal government, but the Midwest still demonstrated a dedication to neutrality; citing misdeeds of each warring side and other neutrals to defend their position. Even the perceived existential threat promoted by the Zimmermann Telegram did not initially change the view. Time and the government were the biggest influences to change in sentiment reflected in the editorials and letters to the editor.

Ultimately, the change in sentiment was not directly the result of British propaganda. The Midwest did not pressure the federal government to declare war, rather they clung to the hope of peace and neutrality, even as the east coast and congress

agitated more for direct action against Germany. The Midwest's dedication to the United States and being good Americans trumped internal reticence to support for direct action against Germany and the Central Powers.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summations and Conclusions

The First World War was a seminal event in world history. It saw the advent of military advancements from the material such as the tank to a new domain, information. Belligerent nations for the first time organized governmental departments to target people non-lethally in their own country, their enemy, and notably neutral nations. Great Britain's propaganda apparatus was not established until after war was declared, but they planned, evaluated, and evolved the departments to better execute their functions. The different propaganda departments targeted the British people and larger empire to rally young men to enlist and the empire to victory. They targeted the enemy nations to damage cohesion and morale. They targeted neutral nations for the support in men and material to infuse the British and allied military.

The United States was an attractive target for its vast production capabilities in manufacturing and agriculture. Great Britain needed the United States to join the war on the allied side, but President Woodrow Wilson declared the country neutral, to the relief of the American people who did not want to become embroiled in a European problem. United States neutrality allowed Germany and the other Central Powers to access United States markets and products to maintain war capabilities. Neutrality had commercial benefits for the United States, but Americans also had familial affinity for the belligerent nations. Foreign-born Americans, first generation Americans, and resident aliens were common residents throughout the United States, and maintained ties to their European roots through continued contact with family in Europe and local ethnic societies.

American neutrality was a strong dis-incentive to fight, but so was the resistance to facing family across the battlefield.

The American Midwest had a heavy ethnic German population, both German immigrants and first generation Americans. This ethnic composition made that specific area a propaganda challenge for Great Britain because of the population's close ties and natural affinities for Germany. For Great Britain's propaganda to alter the way Midwest America viewed both Great Britain and Germany to the point of altering behavior and advocating fighting Germany, or at least approving it, seemed unlikely. A survey of newspapers from the area tentatively indicates British propaganda was not effective at altering Midwest American sentiment towards the belligerents or the war to make Americans around the southern tip of Lake Michigan favor war against Germany.

Europe did not feature prominently in the newspapers in the American Midwest before the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne in June 1914. Once the European countries declared war on each other in August the war became the most significant ongoing events in the world outside the United States. Particularly while the war involved significant movement on the western front it dominated headlines and the front page of the local newspapers. Page one was significant because it was the main draw for the purchaser on the street. The newspaper had to include items their target would want to read enough to spend one or two pennies on. As the war continued from weeks to months and the fronts stabilized; war news on the front page diminished. It went from the majority of the front page, to half the page, to a few articles which combined to about two of eight columns. In November 1914 the *St. Joseph Evening Herald* had more articles related to an epidemic of Hoof and Mouth Disease—two—than the European

war—one.⁴⁹⁵ New tragedies such as the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915 increased the coverage temporarily. The day before *Lusitania* was torpedoed the *South Bend News-Times* included a photo of British officers and four articles which occupied less than three of seven columns on the front page.⁴⁹⁶ On 7 May 1915, the day *Lusitania* was torpedoed and sunk, the inverse was true, and the front page included a main headline, when it typically did not.⁴⁹⁷

Significant domestic events, such as disasters or elections, routinely dislodged news of the European war from the local newspaper's cover page. The *Eastland* disaster in Chicago was negligence on the part of the ship's crew, but it pushed European war coverage off the front page and largely out of section one in the *Chicago Tribune*.⁴⁹⁸ The day following the 1916 United States presidential election the *South Bend News-Times* dedicated the entire first page to election results.⁴⁹⁹ Diminished or absent coverage of the war on page one of the region's newspapers indicated Britain's propaganda did not

⁴⁹⁵ "Cattle Epidemic is Now Under Control in Mich.," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 10 November 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363536497>; "Epidemic Threatens to Hit General Fund," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 10 November 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363536497>; "Cruiser is Reported Burned," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 10 November 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363536497>.

⁴⁹⁶ *South Bend News-Times*, 6 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464980933/>.

⁴⁹⁷ *South Bend News-Times*, 7 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464981050/>.

⁴⁹⁸ "919 Bodies Recovered," *Chicago Tribune*, 25 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354902273/>.

⁴⁹⁹ "Wilson Leads Hughes by 26 Votes," *South Bend News-Times*, 8 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466808268/>.

engage the attention of Americans in the Midwest as much as other, largely domestic concerns, or invest their emotions.

Germany's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare in February 1917 was a new crisis.⁵⁰⁰ After the United States broke with Germany on 3 February 1917 over the submarine warfare issue coverage on the front page of the *St. Joseph Herald-Press* jumped to two columns and a main headline.⁵⁰¹ This may not seem like much, but it is considerably more than the single article about an information leak from the White House tangentially linked to the war because it was a leak about a presidential peace note.⁵⁰² and no main headline.

Great Britain's intelligence agencies intercepted and decoded the Zimmermann Telegram, but they held it for almost a month before employing it. Britain concealed the method used to acquire the Zimmermann Telegram reaching United States officials and public.⁵⁰³ Captain William Hall, director of British naval intelligence, may have acted without authorization from the British Foreign Office, but his disclosure was a propaganda operation without benefit of affiliation with official propaganda departments.⁵⁰⁴ The telegram was dissected on the local front pages in the Midwest,

⁵⁰⁰ "Officials Admit Crisis is Grave," *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 1 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362347391/>.

⁵⁰¹ "U. S. Breaks with Kaiser," *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 3 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362347723/>.

⁵⁰² Herald-Press Special Service, "Says He had no Tip from White House," *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 31 January 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/362347224/>.

⁵⁰³ Boghardt, *The Zimmermann Telegram*, 119.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

which displaced other war news. However, the goal of propaganda was to excite emotion to instigate behavioral change. The combination of Germany's resumption of submarine warfare and the threat from the telegram kept the war on the front page and cast Germany as the villain, consistent with the goals of British propaganda to excite negative emotions against Germany, and some changes in the verbiage used to describe Germany.

The verbiage newspaper articles used to describe Germany, the other belligerents, and the war itself changed over the course of the war. Some of this was possibly due to brevity; "allied" is much more concise than listing out Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, and the rest of the countries who comprised the alliance at various points in the war. The grouping also inserts a slight positive feeling when used. The word, "ally," has predominately positive synonyms, including "friend," "colleague," and "helper," so its use to describe one side but not the other in the war subtly inserts positive perceptions. Initially, Germany and Austria-Hungary were referred to individually. When they acted in concert on a front, in 1915 and later, they were referred to as, "Teutons," a word describing a person of Germanic origin, to be more concise than listing both country names. Teuton had a strong, positive connotation in the Midwest, with at least one school team using it as their mascot name.⁵⁰⁵ Cables charged by the word or letter to transmit, so saving words saved money as well as time and space, always a concern for a newspaper. As countries joined Germany and Austria-Hungary against the allies a new concise term was needed and by 1916 they were referred to as the "Central Powers" or the "Central

⁵⁰⁵ "Congos Cinch Championship," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 8 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123348/>.

Empires.”⁵⁰⁶ However, the newspapers rarely used more pejorative words such as “Hun,” used in British newspapers since November 1914.⁵⁰⁷ Derogatory adjectives describing actions were used for both sides.⁵⁰⁸

The absence of negative words to describe Germany or the Central Powers, as opposed to pejorative descriptions of military or governmental action, indicated sentiment towards the Germans did not significantly turn negative, at least from mainstream newspapers trying to prevent obvious bias. Editorials and letters to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* continued to compliment German characteristics or sympathize with German-Americans practically until the United States declared war in April 1917 such as the letter H. Groeschner wrote, published in the 3 April 1917 edition responding to a late March editorial which encouraged readers to show sympathy for Americans with German blood after the “criminal folly of a Zimmermann.”⁵⁰⁹ Groeschner differentiated between the German government, which he views as flawed, and Germans in Germany who opposed the nation’s “militarism and monarchism.”⁵¹⁰ The dense ethnic German

⁵⁰⁶ “The Deutschland Returns,” *St. Joseph Herald-Press*, 3 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/365266561>.

⁵⁰⁷ “The Retreat of Civilization before the Modern Huns,” *The Times* (London), 2 November 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32771424>.

⁵⁰⁸ “Says Sea Fight was not Battle, but a Massacre,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355249817/>; “Providence with Kaiser,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355249829>.

⁵⁰⁹ H. Groeschner, “Letter to the Editor: The German in America,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355267166/>.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

population in the region may have been too significant and homogeneous to alter perceptions of the German people, but the German government was increasingly viewed negatively, as stated by Groeschner, who lamented “succeeding generations will find themselves still struggling beneath the rule of the autocrat and the militarist.”⁵¹¹ The language used to describe the belligerents slightly favored the allies, but they contributed more articles to United States newspapers because of trans-Atlantic communication access. The ethnic German population in the Midwest, though, tempered the sentiment and against Germany because German-Americans had established, independent views of Germany, as R. C. Adams of Kansas City, Missouri did, established by his parents who were born in Germany.⁵¹²

Germany was a popular topic, but there was a disparity in the amount of articles from Berlin or Germany. The British inhibited Germany’s communication in August 1914 when the British ship, *Telconia*, cut Germany’s communication cables with the United States.⁵¹³ Chicago’s *Day Book* mentioned both the cutting of the trans-Atlantic cables to Germany and tolls for trans-Atlantic cables from Great Britain’s “office of publication” would not be collected on 6 August 1914.⁵¹⁴ The loss of the German cable restricted Germany’s ability to pass articles across the Atlantic Ocean. Larger newspapers

⁵¹¹ Groeschner, “Letter to the Editor: The German in America.”

⁵¹² R. C. Adams, “Letter to the Editor: The Position of German-Americans,” *Chicago Tribune*, 5 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355267711/>.

⁵¹³ Ross, *Propaganda for War*, 27.

⁵¹⁴ “Merely Comment,” *Day Book* (Chicago), 6 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/77858231>.

were able to address this with correspondents stationed or sent on assignment to Europe. The *Chicago Tribune*'s James O'Donnell Bennett made several trips. He went to significant effort to report fairly and accurately about the Germans, even mailing an article to *Tribune* offices in September 1914 when he feared the British censors would prevent the transmission. The article discussed the kindness of German soldiers to English civilians around Aix la Chapelle. Bennett was correct about the British censors; they did not transmit the article at all.⁵¹⁵ James O'Donnell Bennett was in Berlin in early April, cabling articles back to the *Tribune* about the situation in Berlin as the United States Congress was about to declare war.⁵¹⁶

Many Midwest Americans, German societies in particular, pressed the newspapers for fair coverage and treatment of the belligerents and called out instances they viewed as unreasonably biased. Herman Deutsch of Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1915 took issue with *Tribune* bias against Germany, citing the paper's coverage of German atrocities after the *Tribune*'s own correspondents, Bennett and John T. McCutcheon, attested they could find no evidence of any reported atrocities.⁵¹⁷ But there were letters from *Tribune* readers praising the newspaper for its balanced coverage, including R. Grant of Chicago who praised *Tribune*'s fair play⁵¹⁸ and a writer who only signed his

⁵¹⁵ Bennett, "English Woman Lauds Kindness of the Germans."

⁵¹⁶ James O'Donnell Bennett, "Democracy Tide Sweeps Kaiser Toward Reforms," *Chicago Tribune*, 5 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355267667>.

⁵¹⁷ Deutsch, "Letter to the Editor: Unable to Grasp American Journalism."

⁵¹⁸ R. Grant, "Letter to the Editor: Thankful for our Fair Play," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 April 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355030080/>.

initials, C. M., who complimented *Tribune* cartoonist John T. McCutcheon for his illustrations regarding the *Lusitania* sinking.⁵¹⁹ The *Tribune* was the only paper included in the study to consistently publish letters to the editor, but the circulation of the paper was broad, as demonstrated by Herman Deutsch from Milwaukee and other writers from as far afield as Manitoba.⁵²⁰ Demands for unbiased coverage indicated Great Britain's propaganda did not sway the Midwest to view Germany unfavorably, and exciting negative emotions for Germany was an interim goal of propaganda. Turning negative emotions into action was the goal.

Smaller newspapers, such as the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, relied on wireless transmissions or cables for German content and did not consistently include letters to the editor. There was no published feedback to communicate views about the newspaper or its reporting of different issues. The *Sentinel* was consistent in the inclusion of Berlin articles, however, there was a noticeable difference in the articles from London opposed to Berlin. The 31 March 1917 edition of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* is an example of this. The front page included two articles from London and two from Berlin, but the size of the London articles dwarfed the articles from Germany. The London articles combined totaled one and a half columns, while the Berlin articles combined total less than half a column.⁵²¹ The amount of articles from Berlin or another German city remained

⁵¹⁹ C. M. "Letter to the Editor: Services of a Cartoonist," *Chicago Tribune*, 19 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355265897/>.

⁵²⁰ Non Bunkum, "Letter to the Editor: Hoakum—Bunkum."

⁵²¹ *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 31 March 1917, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=wZJMF1LD7PcC&dat19170331&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

consistent throughout the war. This indicated newspapers made an effort to provide coverage of both sides of the war, regardless of British propaganda. Newspaper editors had to be sensitive to the moods of the paper's subscribers or lose revenue when circulation dropped and advertisers took their business elsewhere. The stable inclusion of Berlin's articles indicates Britain's propaganda had limited effect on changing the demand for the German viewpoint as the war progressed.

Part of the foreign article contributions were propaganda, such as summaries on the belligerent nations' propaganda pamphlets, such as the German "White Book"⁵²² or the overview of the Bryce Report on German atrocities in Belgium in 1915.⁵²³ These were significant propaganda works, reported in the newspapers, but designed to be read independently as a book or pamphlet. There were articles which were likely grey propaganda published in the newspapers as regular articles. These articles, such as the 22 September 1914 *St. Joseph Evening Herald* article, "President Hit by Dr. Dumba," which purported a British war correspondent, James F. J. Archibald, acquired papers from the recently recalled ambassador to the United States, Dr. Constantin Dumba, which including disparaging views and remarks on the United States and President Woodrow Wilson.⁵²⁴ Dumba's first name is not included, but he is identified as the recently recalled ambassador. The name of the newspaper Archibald was affiliated with was also

⁵²² Wile, "Germany Cites Causes of War in 'White Book'."

⁵²³ "Reports on German Atrocities in Many Places in Belgium; Civilians, Women and Children are Among the Victims," *Chicago Tribune*, 13 May 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355112417>.

⁵²⁴ "President Hit by Dr. Dumba," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 22 September 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363530875>.

not listed. Lack of detail to independently verify indicated the piece was grey propaganda. Another common practice was for articles to discuss military actions or domestic issues in enemy nations. The *South Bend News-Times* article from March 1915 discussed a London *Exchange Telegraph* dispatch which quoted unnamed German and Austrian newspapers.⁵²⁵ Concealed or omitted details interfered with independent verification, but give the impression of independent evidence, a characteristic of grey propaganda. Newspapers were printing propaganda, but it was usually white or gray propaganda and presented to the newspaper as legitimate reporting. The propagandist intended the articles for the newspapers to be read as mainstream reporting. However, propaganda published in the United States did not go completely unnoticed by American journalists or readers.

Since at least 1915 Americans knew they were being targeted by propaganda from the belligerents, but it is unlikely they were aware of the vast extent of propaganda operations targeting them. A bomb attack on a Rhode Island newspaper known for exposing German propaganda was reported in the very small and distant *St. Joseph Evening Herald*.⁵²⁶ German propaganda operations were more often published in local newspapers, such as a German society in Maryland which admitted to participating in propaganda operations in 1916,⁵²⁷ but Americans speculated the other belligerents were

⁵²⁵ "Press Sees End of Constantinople," *South Bend News-Times*, 3 March 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464969992>.

⁵²⁶ "Journal Editor Near Death," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 3 March 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363123256>.

⁵²⁷ "Teuton Back of Peace Move," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 6 May 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363124412>.

also operating. The newspapers even admitted the official reports from the belligerent nations contradicted each other, though the newspapers did not call the information manipulation propaganda.⁵²⁸ Obvious, overt propaganda was not as effective as subtle, quite, patient propaganda. Stewart Halsey Ross stated in his book *Propaganda for War*, “few in America, and until near the end of the war only a handful even in Parliament, knew that the British government had a formal propaganda apparatus trained on the U. S.”⁵²⁹ The British propaganda apparatus were better at concealing their operations and working quietly in the background. Their propaganda articles are discernable, but not flooded in the market. British propaganda is certainly more prevalent than German, but the presence of propaganda is not necessarily an indicator of the effectiveness of it.

Editorials and letters to the editor, on the other hand, were indicators of propaganda effectiveness. Editorials express an opinion. This opinion could be informative, persuasive, or provocative, but it was opinion. Editorials which discussed the war appeared in waves. When there was a significant event, such as the beginning of the war in 1914 or the high-level diplomatic exchanges between Wilson and the German government regarding Germany’s submarine warfare policy the number of editorials discussing the war or those issues increased. That correlation is expected. But in the Midwest those editorials were sometimes focused on the United States’ situation resulting from the war. The *St. Joseph Evening Herald* published an editorial barely a week after war was declared in 1914 that speculated on United States commercial

⁵²⁸ “Day’s Official Reports on War Present Serious Contradiction,” *South Bend News-Times*, 15 October 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464986853>.

⁵²⁹ Ross, *Propaganda for War*, 18.

opportunity in South America because of the changes to commerce due to the war.⁵³⁰ But the *Evening Herald* published one or two editorials per edition. Larger newspapers published four or more editorials, so several different subjects could be discussed. The 26 July 1915 edition of the *Chicago Tribune* included five original editorials and one from the *New York World*. This edition was published two days after the *Eastland* disaster on the Chicago River. The *Eastland* recovery efforts, lists of victims, and investigation dominated the news, but two of the original editorials and the editorial from the *New York World* discussed war issues.⁵³¹ The first regular article related to the European war was not until page twelve.⁵³² The local disaster displaced the war from prominence in the *Tribune*'s first section, but not from the editorial section. Opinion writers thought about the war, even when domestic concerns, whether it was a local one like the *Eastland* or a national one like Pershing's Punitive Expedition, competed and overtook the war in conventional reporting. This indicated the war was prominent in Midwest Americans' consciousness, but the early transition to how the war impacted the United States demonstrated the first concern was the United States. Great Britain needed Americans concerned about Germany, but American neutrality and the Midwest's German affinity inhibited negative emotions about Germany from progressing to behavior and calls for action.

⁵³⁰ "Peaceful Trade Conquests," *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, 14 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/363535304/>.

⁵³¹ "The President and Defense," "War's Demands," "An Old Man's War," *Chicago Tribune*, 26 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354903149/>.

⁵³² "Wilson Favors Britain, German Editor Asserts," *Chicago Tribune*, 26 July 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354903188/>.

The ultimate aim of British propaganda was to draw the United States into the war on the allied side. That goal was met in April 1917 when United States president. Woodrow Wilson, asked the Congress to declare war on Germany and Congress obliged him. The ultimate goal was accomplished primarily by affecting Washington D. C. In the Midwest, observations from the words in the local newspapers tentatively indicate Americans there were not as convinced. The newspapers there fought to provide both sides of the story. Language in the articles linked derogatory verbiage to events more than entities. Editorials and letters from the readers indicated the people were concerned with the preservation and advancement of the United States more than which side should or would win the European war. Great Britain needed the United States to focus on the threat posed by Germany; invested in Britain's victory. The Midwest around the southern end of Lake Michigan, though, had entrenched views rooted in ethnic German pride and familial ties which moderated the British propaganda narrative. Even if they did not support Germany, neither did they oppose it. Americans in the Midwest supported the United States government, both in neutrality and once war was declared, with most prescribed to the Stephen Decatur quote the *Chicago Tribune* printed on the editorial page most of the war: "Our Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong."⁵³³

⁵³³ Stephen Decatur, "Quote," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355267928/>.

Further Inquiry

The First World War was a first in many things: first use of armor, significant foreign bombing, and government sponsored international propaganda. Targeting domestic and enemy populations with propaganda was an old concept, but targeting neutral nations was not. New departments for organizing the operations were needed and techniques for dissemination were developed. Technologies were incorporated, such as the new film medium, and older technologies were exploited, such as the trans-Atlantic cables which demonstrated the importance of controlling the fastest means of communication to influence the information available to the target nation. As the modern world wrestles with finding balance and regulation with new vectors of communication like social media, the experiences from the first attempts at mass coercion through propaganda further the understanding. Additional examination of societal components and how they were effected by Britain's use of propaganda in the First World War informs the student of effective techniques for pace, type of message, and effectiveness.

The United States is a heterogeneous society. The nation prides itself on being a "nation of immigrants," where all are welcome and the American cultural identity incorporates what citizens bring of their ethnic cultures. The size of the country and diversity of terrain and climate as well as the American characteristic of "nation of immigrants" forced the heterogeneity. But peculiar circumstances created homogeneous niches independent of the larger society. People sought communities for familiarity, leading the different regions of the country to have unique characteristics. Additional regional studies in heavily German areas such as around Kansas City, Missouri, would support or contradict this study, and indicate more homogeneity or heterogeneity in the

United States sentiment towards the First World War and the effectiveness of British propaganda.

Evaluating the effect of British propaganda on American college students would also indicate the effectiveness of British propaganda. College students were different from an ethnic sub-group in the United States. They were more homogenous in age than circumstance and the more prominent schools brought larger and more ethnically diverse cultures into close contact. Historical record identified college students, especially Ivy League students, traveled in Europe before the war and served with belligerent militaries, but the students at Normals or public state universities had different circumstances and potentially different views of the possibility they would be obliged to leave their studies and risk their lives for what initially was seen as a foreign cause, the European war. The universities generally had newspapers of their own to compare to contemporary mainstream newspapers. Curriculum records, professor notes and student assignments, examples or instructions will suggest how distinct a sub-group a regional university was from its surrounding areas and the level of enthusiasm for joining the war, either as an individual fighting in a foreign military or as an American in the United States army.

Understanding the first significant governmental use of propaganda on neutral nations, as well as how propaganda effected the individuals better allows modern employment against a target population and improved defense against outside interference. Examining historic effects of propaganda on different sub-groups of the target culture identifies characteristics which may have contributed to increased resistance or susceptibility to propaganda. Understanding the population's characteristics, the propaganda used to influence them, and the effect the propaganda had on the

population improves modern techniques for information operations, particularly message development and assessment of effect. Propaganda and information operations have become a normal part of war and peace. Information operations have grown as the technology has increased the communication vectors available and decreased the time required for information to travel around the globe. Understanding how the principles and military applications of propaganda operations were established and the applicability of generalized approaches pushes the modern information operations forward. The foundation of the modern concept of information operations was found in the First World War's propaganda.

APPENDIX A

CONSOLIDATED TIMELINE

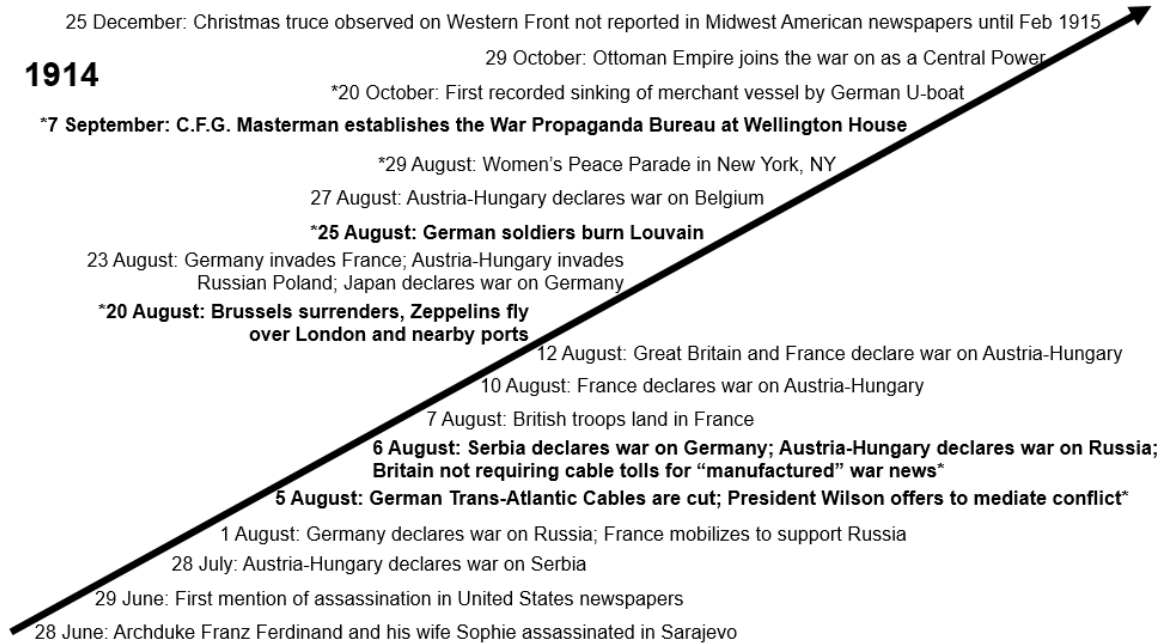


Figure 12. 1914 Timeline

Sources: "Interactive WWI Timeline," National WWI Museum and Memorial, 2019, <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/interactive-wwi-timeline>. "Royal Victims of Assassin," *South Bend News-Times*, 29 June 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464979974/>; Stewart Halsey Ross, *Propaganda for War: how the United States was Conditioned to Fight the Great War of 1914-1918* (1916; repr., Joshua Tree, CA: ProgressivePress.com, 2009), 27; "United States Offers Good Offices to End War," *South Bend News-Times*, 5 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464982706/>; "Merely Comment," *Day Book* (Chicago), 6 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/77858231>; John Buchan, *A History of the Great War* (1921; repr., London, UK: Endeavour Media Ltd., 2018), 15, kindle edition; Max Hastings, *Catastrophe 1914: Europe Goes to War* (New York, NY: Random House LLC, 2013), 267, kindle edition; "Host of Women in Peace Parade," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 August 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355239509>; M. L. Sanders, "Wellington House and British Propaganda during the First World War," *The Historical Journal*, 18 no. 1 (March 1975): <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2638471>.

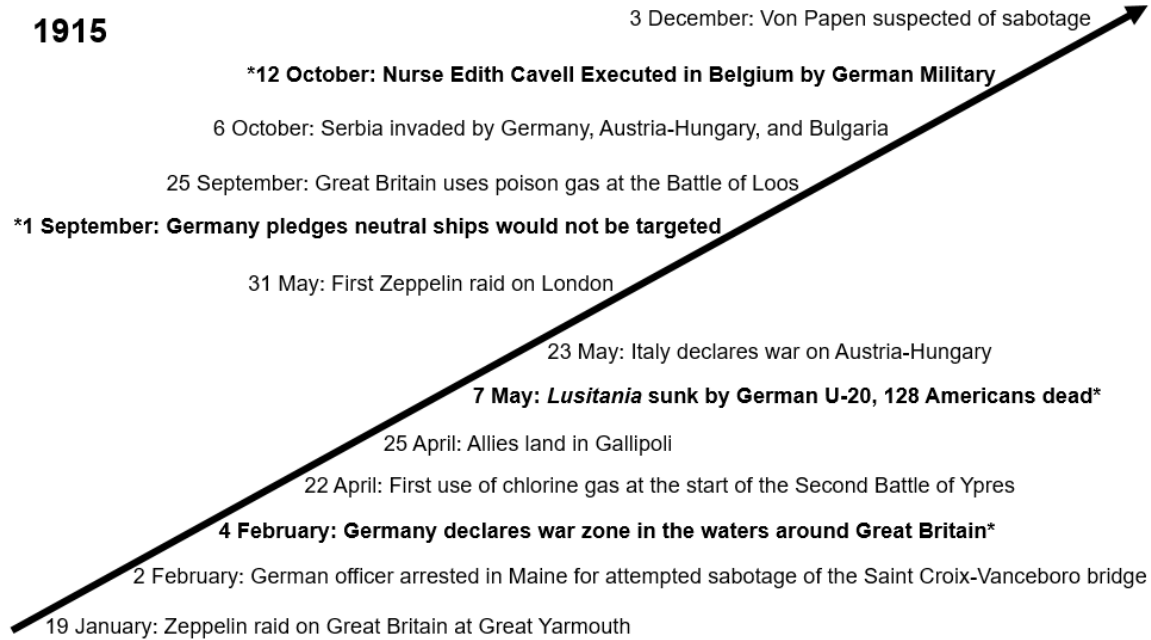


Figure 13. 1915 Timeline

Sources: “Interactive WWI Timeline,” National WWI Museum and Memorial, 2019, <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/interactive-wwi-timeline>; “Cities Damaged by German Airships,” *Chicago Tribune*, 20 January 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355059302>; G. J. Meyer, *A World Undone* (New York, NY: Random House Inc., 2006), 243, kindle edition; “Zeppelins of Giant Type Shell City,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 June 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355002969/>; Arthur Sears Henning, “Berlin Moves to Heal Breach with America,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 September 1915, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355124725>; Michael S. Neiberg, *The Path to War: how the First World War Created Modern America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016) 78, kindle edition.

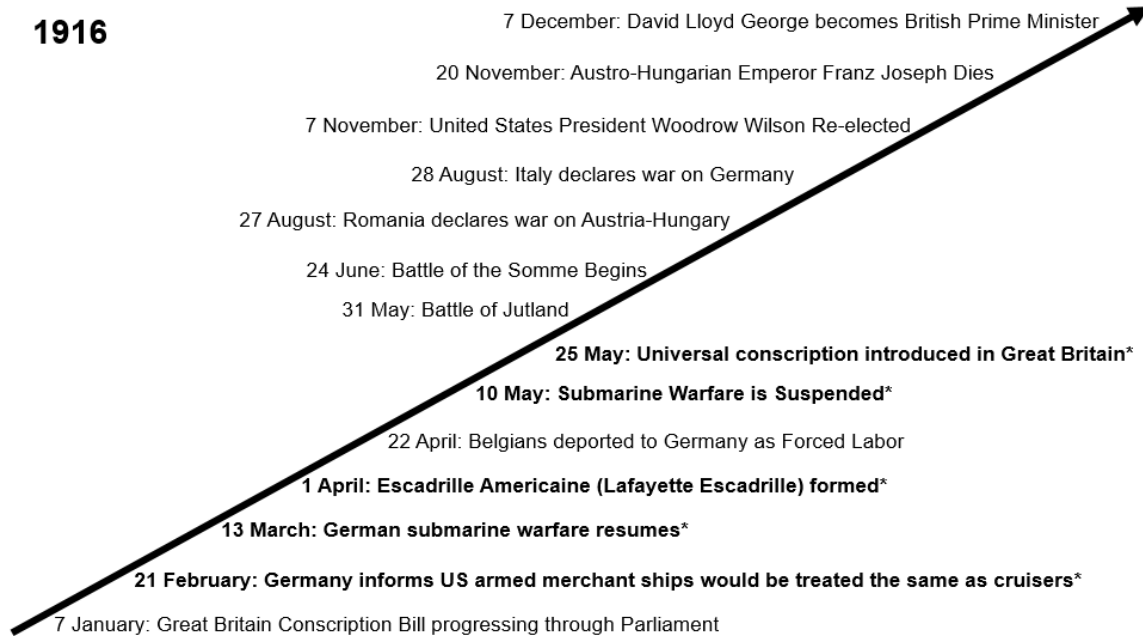


Figure 14. 1916 Timeline

Sources: “Interactive WWI Timeline,” National WWI Museum and Memorial, 2019, <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/interactive-wwi-timeline>; Associated Press, “Draft Wins; then a Split in Cabinet,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 January 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355224668>; International News Service, “Sub Question is Likely to Cause Break,” *South Bend News-Times*, 21 February 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464977926/>; “King George Signs Conscription Bill; Lauds Volunteers,” *Chicago Tribune*, 26 May 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354883147/>; “Roumanians[sic] Enter War for Allies,” *South Bend News-Times*, 28 August 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466803291/>; “Italy Declares War on Kaiser; Smashes Pact,” *Chicago Tribune*, 28 August 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355197627/>; “Franz Josef Expires in his Capital,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 November 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355038306/>; G. J. Meyer, *A World Undone* (New York, NY: Random House Inc., 2006). 304, kindle edition.

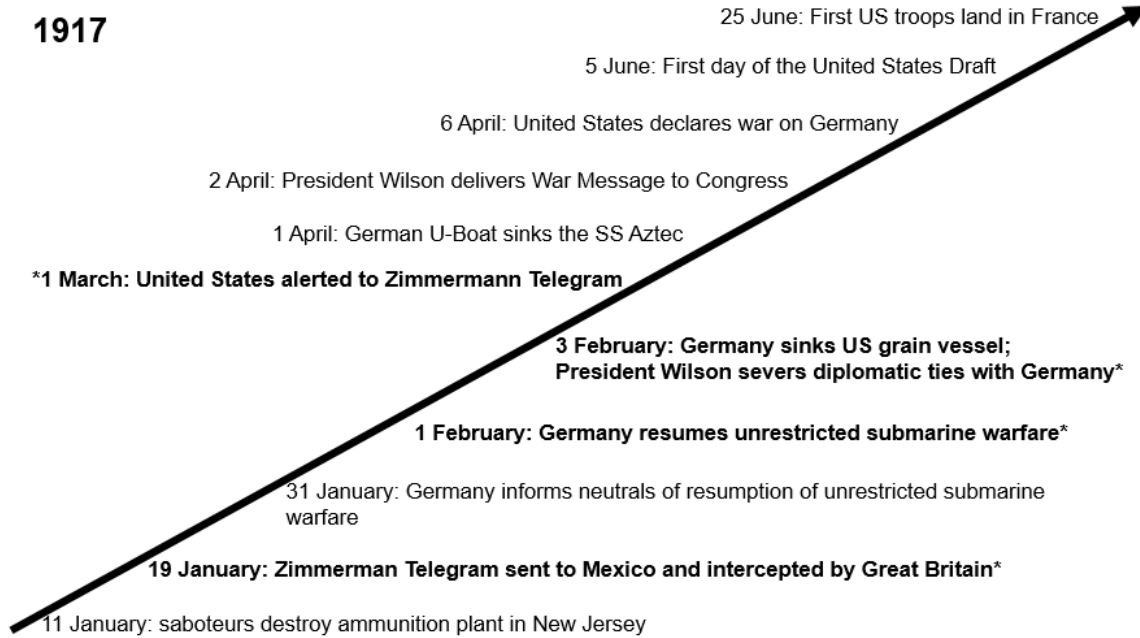


Figure 15. 1917 Timeline

Sources: “Interactive WWI Timeline,” National WWI Museum and Memorial, 2019, <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/interactive-wwi-timeline>; G. J. Meyer, *A World Undone* (New York, NY: Random House Inc., 2006), 304, kindle edition; Thomas Boghardt, *The Zimmermann Telegram: Intelligence, Diplomacy, and America’s Entry into World War I* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 91, kindle edition; “Kaiser Fixes Deadline on Sea; U. S. Allowed One Boat Weekly,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355032794/>; Arthur Sears Henning, “U. S. Strips for War,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 February 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355033474/>.

APPENDIX B

VECTORS OF BIAS

The British in World War I valued the American newspaper as a public opinion tool. British propaganda offices read American newspapers to inform themselves of American sentiment and attitudes towards the war and the belligerents.⁵³⁴ This allowed tailoring propaganda products, but the amount of newspapers published in the United States made it impossible to include every area or every city's newspaper. The modern researcher experiences similar issues.

The city of Chicago itself had several newspapers with different emphasis or bias. Selecting one for consistency puts one over all the others as the source for one city and judging the entire city's sentiment based off one source discounted the input of citizens who did not read the *Chicago Tribune*.

The smaller municipalities, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, South Bend, Indiana, and St. Joseph, Michigan were smaller newspapers and omitted some sections the larger *Tribune* included, such as letters to the editor or multiple editorials. The decreased data available led the researcher to greater dependency on inference. Based on advertisements in the newspapers, particularly the *St. Joseph Evening Herald*, some of the larger regional newspapers were pushed to augment the *Evening Herald*. Fortunately, one of the dual subscription deals was with the *Chicago Tribune*, and some of the letters to the editor of the *Tribune* were from Michigan, but rarely from either St. Joseph or Berrien County.

⁵³⁴ Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18*, 34.

Newspapers were moving towards professionalism and away from the yellow journalism rampant in the Civil War, however, the editor was still responsible for the content and layout of the newspaper. The editor was only human. He had his own biases and possibly explicit direction from the owner of the newspaper. This was observed in the 1917 *Chicago Tribune*, in particular. Letters to the editor in January and February, when they discussed the war at all, continued to view it as a foreign issue. March changed a little with focused anger at Germany's presumption, but still absent calls for the United States to become decisively involved in the war. In April when Wilson asked Congress to declare war and Congress did, letters to the editor published in the *Tribune* consistently supported the federal government's new path. Alice Hamilton's 31 March 1917 letter was more resigned to war, but still measured. It discussed the risks and burdens of true patriotism, democracy, and justice and decried people degrading pacifists in the name of patriotism for continuing to stand against war.⁵³⁵ After the United States declared war letters to the editor focused on America first, as Mrs. Wm Severin wrote.⁵³⁶ or agreeing with the *Tribune* to immediately send American forces to Europe, as Clayton Williams wrote in.⁵³⁷ The small corner of the *Tribune* dedicated to letters to the editor did not allow the paper to publish all the letters it received on a topic, and dedicating more space, as they did 20 September 1914 when an additional half a page published thirty letters to

⁵³⁵ Alice Hamilton, "Letter to the Editor: Pacifism and the Poor," *Chicago Tribune*, 31 March 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355172315/>.

⁵³⁶ Wm. Severin, "Letter to the Editor: German-Americans," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355267928/>.

⁵³⁷ Williams, "Letter to the Editor: A Force to Europe."

the editor on a single topic.⁵³⁸ This disparity indicated the letters to the editor published were specifically chosen, sometimes for content, other times for length, such as Bertrand Shadwell's letter in the 9 April 1917 edition which was one sentence long, but finished filling the column to even the appearance of the section.⁵³⁹ Contradictory information may have been censored at the time of recording due purely to bias in the source document, not because it did not exist or existed in gross minority.

A method for future inquiry to control for bias in a newspaper would be analysis of the newspaper owner and editor-in-chief, in particular diaries or personal correspondence to identify personal biases which possibly influenced the way the newspaper reported the war. Another option is incorporating personal diaries in the target region to identify how closely they align to or diverge from the newspaper's narrative, however significant numbers would be necessary to identify trends and prevent an anomalous author from introducing new bias. Some more rural regions possibly present a challenge to obtain diaries. Rural areas may not have had prolific diarists or the facilities to preserve the diaries for a later researcher because the diarists were not significant enough personages to have their papers or correspondence accepted by a facility for preservation. The Midwest around the southern end of Lake Michigan is very humid and experiences significant rainfall each year, and flooding. These weather considerations pose a challenge for preserving paper.

⁵³⁸ "Bennett's Letter on Atrocity Charges Evokes Widespread Comment," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 September 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355128410/>.

⁵³⁹ Bertrand Shadwell, "Letter to the Editor: An Honorable Peace for Germany," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 April 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/355269566/>.

A final, but unreliable, method is family history or lore. Terry Schmaltz, the author's father, discussed past conversations with his grandmother, Edith (Gast) Ott, where she said it was a point of pride for her that none of her children served in the Second World War. Ott's parents were German immigrants and she was a first generation American. She was born in 1897, so her age cohort was most affected by United States participation in the First World War. Her views on war were likely fixed long before the conversation with her grandson, but Schmaltz's decision to join the Army in 1965 caused a rift between him and his grandmother. Based on this family history, one could postulate Ott and her family were opposed to participation in either the First or Second World Wars, but both Ott and Schmaltz have since died, and Schmaltz's two brothers possibly were not present for the conversation. More than one hundred years have passed since the end of the war, so any centenarians who lived through it were likely quite young at the time and any memories are fuzzy and influenced by further life experience or learning about events they lived through. Their discussions with family, if not recorded at the time, would provide an interesting perspective, however, family lore is subject to exaggeration and decay over time and must be clearly identified and independently researched to establish its own credibility for inclusion.

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