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ANTI-GERMAN SENTIMENT IN THE UNITED STATES
1914 - 1917

by

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of America as an asylum for the oppressed and the poor had become a deep-rooted conviction even before the Revolutionary War. After Independence, this conviction became part of the national ideals of the new United States. "E pluribus unum", the motto chosen by Jefferson, Adams and Franklin for the great seal of the Union, expressed not only the union of thirteen colonies, but also American faith that this new land would bring unity out of diversity; and the democratic values incorporated in the Declaration of Independence postulated an equal share for all in the fullness of American life. An anonymous author wrote in a popular magazine in the 1839's:

The virgin world in which we dwell demands of the Old World but two influences - Men and Money ... This has ever been the asylum, the refuge, of every people of the Old World ... Well, let them come!(1)

And so they did come, all through the nineteenth century, "the hunted of every crown and creed", (2) fleeing from political, religious and economic disadvantages in Europe. They crowded through the Golden Door, some remaining close inside it, others pressing on into the interior of this abundant land.

Of all the groups which came, the Germans were the most numerous. Artisans, tradesmen, farmers and highly trained professional men, they left their Fatherland in hundreds of thousands, and were welcomed in the United States as citizens with a valuable contribution to make to her national life. By 1910 there were eight and a quarter million of them. Each new wave of German immigrants settled principally in communities already populated by their fellow-countrymen. They soon gained a reputation for thrifty, honest, industrious and orderly living. At the same time, they insisted on their right to their beer gardens and Sunday entertainments. As the names Rheingold, Schlitz and Anheuser-Busch may suggest, many German brewmasters brought a generous measure of gemütlichkeit to American life. Americans generally were already familiar with the rich German contribution to Western culture, especially as thousands of Americans had received their education wholly or partly in German universities during the nineteenth century.

Until the first World War, there was little to suggest that the "melting pot" was not doing its work successfully by absorbing this large immigrant group into the mainstream of life in the United States. Despite the influence of various "nativist" groups, few Americans doubted that the democratic process was smoothly and efficiently turning Germans into Americans as a matter of course. But the events of the years
1914 to 1917 were to show how little assimilation or integration had really taken place. Anti-German sentiment in the United States became evident very soon after the outbreak of war, and it grew steadily during the years of neutrality, fanned to greater intensity by events at home and abroad. This anti-German feeling changed the American image of the German (and the German-American) from that of an industrious, honest, jovial, music-loving citizen to that of a disloyal "thing" that would not melt in the great pot. (1)

The purpose of this thesis is to illustrate, and if possible, to explain, this change in public opinion in the United States during the years of her neutrality from 1914 to 1917. It is not possible to explain fully any change in public opinion, nor can the historian even be sure that he has caught and evaluated correctly whatever change there was. However, the contemporary literature gives ample evidence of anti-German sentiment which increased as the war continued and the United States moved steadily towards intervention on the side of the Allies.

(1) Cartoon to this effect in Life, 18 November 1915, pp. 942-3. See Appendix III. The concept of many nationalities "melting into a new race" in the United States began in the late 1770's when Michele-Guillaume de Créveceour used the term in Letters from an American Farmer. The "melting pot" theory was well established by 1914, and was constantly referred to by writers who discussed the failure of German-Americans to become "real" Americans. At this time, the image was not yet discredited; the melting pot was simply not working as well as expected. See, for example, "Democracy versus the Melting Pot", Nation, 18 and 25 February 1915.
For many Americans, especially those with a British heritage, there were two aspects to this anti-German feeling. The first was their reaction to the Kaiser's Germany and all that the "Fatherland" stood for. The second was their relationship with the Americans of German origin who made up part of their own nation. The antipathy of Americans towards the "new" belligerent Germany quickly manifested itself after August 1914, but it took longer for open antagonism towards German-Americans to develop. A number of events, both in the European war zone and in the United States, intensified this anti-German sentiment. In Europe, these events included the invasion of Belgium, the reports of atrocities on the battlefields, submarine warfare and other aspects of the Germans' war methods. In the United States anti-German feeling was increased by the German-Americans' attempts to stop the American arms trade with the Allies, the part they played in the 1916 Presidential election campaign, and a range of subversive or supposedly subversive activities. These events, combined with the highly coloured coverage given them by the English-language press, must be examined in detail in order to trace the overall change in public opinion. We must also look at American ideas about, and attitudes towards, Germany as a nation, and German-Americans as an immigrant group, before the outbreak of war, in order to see how these ideas and attitudes were affected by the events of the years 1914 to 1917.
This thesis aims at exploring the American mood regarding Germany and German-Americans between August 1914 and April 1917; and attempts to explain the changes which occurred in public opinion during that time. The largest single problem associated with such a study is the evaluation of the nature and influence of public opinion. What is it and how influential is it? How is it to be gauged and where is it recorded for us? Does the press reflect public opinion or does it mould it? The history of events is difficult enough to determine, and we can never hope to record it all. Still less, then, can we expect to find a record of public opinion in its entirety. If we accept that the press reflects public opinion to a significant degree, then there are written records of a small portion of it. But these opinions tend to be those of the literate and articulate sections of the public. We do not have the thoughts and ideas of the rest; we do not have any "tapes of the phone calls and who said what to whom in the pub". (1) In lieu of tapes of such conversations, the historian must study the opinions expressed in newspapers, journals, speeches, books and other products of the articulate

public. The most he can say with certainty is that these opinions were read, and probably held, by a considerable proportion of the public. Arthur S. Link, foremost modern historian of this period, stresses the importance of ascertaining the views of the public during these years:

We must try ... to know and understand the range and character of American thinking about the war in Europe ... because of the role that public opinion played in American political life in 1914 and afterwards. (1)

Any excursion into the field of public opinion studies quickly reveals that this is now a highly specialised "science" with an extensive literature and sophisticated methods of measurement and evaluation. Dr. George Gallup has given his name to a method of measuring public opinion which has become part of our civilisation. Polls, surveys, sampling, assessment of environmental factors, and analysis and interpretation of data, are all part of the modern method of judging what one historian has called "the most basic and surely the most baffling of problems". (2) For more than twenty-five years, states a writer on this topic, polling agencies have been systematically surveying the opinions of Americans, and the opinion poll has become the indispensable tool of the student of public opinion. (3)

There are no polls for the years 1914 to 1917, so the historian must do without this "indispensable tool" when dealing with this period, and use other methods of gauging public opinion. (1) One obvious starting point is to look at the definitions of public opinion given by some contemporary or near-contemporary writers, who looked at the phenomenon without the methodology of the present day specialists, but with considerable sensitivity. They recognised the importance, as well as the elusive nature, of public opinion, and tried to determine its influence in social and political life.

Lord Bryce's observation that in no country is public opinion so powerful as in the United States, (2) echoed Alexis de Tocqueville's much earlier assertion that everybody in that country adopts great numbers of theories on philosophy, morals and politics without inquiry, upon public trust. (3) Bryce defined public opinion thus:

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The term is commonly used to denote the aggregate of the views men hold regarding matters that affect or interest the community ... It is a congeries of all sorts of discrepant notions, beliefs, fancies, prejudices, aspirations. It is confused, incoherent, amorphous, varying from day to day and week to week. (1)

Walter Lippmann characterised public opinion as the pictures inside the heads of human beings, the pictures they form of themselves, of others, of their needs, purposes and relationship. (2)

For the purposes of this study, a working definition is offered: public opinion is the sum of the ideas, attitudes and prejudices held by large numbers of the population, regarding some public issue. In particular, I will be examining the expressed ideas and attitudes of some Americans about Germany and German-Americans in the period 1914 to 1917, and tracing as far as possible, the changes in such opinions over those two and a half years. The historian must assume that the opinions expressed by some members of the public (particularly in the press) are held by a reasonably large proportion of the population. If he errs in making such an assumption, it is an error committed in good historical company.

Naturally, everyone is predisposed to view events and ideas in a particular way, influenced by such factors as his previous education, habits of mind, religious allegiance or social milieu. No event, no speech or article, states Lord Bryce, ever falls upon perfectly virgin soil; the reader or listener is always more or less biased already. (1) Nevertheless, there are, in all societies, the opinion makers; those who know, or who think they know, the facts (or some of them) and who set forth certain arguments meant to influence the public. In the period 1914 to 1917 these were often the newspaper editors, the journalists and reporters, whose work reached a wide public, including that large residue of the citizens which, according to Bryce, is more or less indifferent to public affairs, reading little about them and thinking less, unreflective, but content to repeat current phrases. (2) For the pre-radio, pre-television days of 1914, we must also include among the opinion makers the speakers at public meetings and rallies. Every society, league and special-interest group used such meetings to reach and influence the public, inviting to the platform political, civic and religious leaders. Many of the speeches were printed in leaflet and pamphlet form for distribution by mail or at

future meetings. In mid-1915 a cartoonist gave an indication of those who, in his opinion, were influencing public opinion. Entitled "Making Public Opinion", his drawing showed Uncle Sam endeavouring to steer the United States' car, (a dashing T model Ford!) with passengers labelled variously Pro-German, Pro-Ally, Press, Business, Pacifism and Jingo, all trying either to wrench the wheel from the legitimate driver or to direct operations from the back seat. (1)

Contemporary writers of the period 1914 to 1917 were almost unanimous in declaring that public opinion was pro-Ally and increasingly anti-German during these years, and that this opinion intensified as time went on. It was, they agreed, affected significantly by various events, both at home and abroad, relating at least indirectly, if not specifically, to the war in Europe. This heightened feeling was finally to create a mood in which Americans were prepared to support their country's intervention in a European war. The existence of such a sentiment does not, of itself, account for America's entry into World War I. But the same can be said about any factor discussed. In proportion as we isolate a particular theme and study it, that theme becomes unreal. It cannot be isolated from all the other factors operating at the same time. A prevailing public opinion is derived from a multitude of sources, and activates and influences

(1) Literary Digest, 24 July 1915, p. 142.
men's actions to varying degrees. When we look for its influence in any period we must always be conscious that external events, while they may be judged in the light of prevailing opinion, also act as motivation for further action.

One particular source of evidence on public opinion during this period is very important. References to prevailing opinion during the years of neutrality are to be found in the speeches and letters of the nation's leaders. President Wilson, Robert Lansing, William Jennings Bryan, and Colonel House all considered the climate of opinion very carefully, and according to their own statements, it weighed in their decision making. Lansing observed that Wilson was surprisingly conscious of public opinion for a person who saw comparatively few people, (1) and Wilson spoke of himself as "under bonds" to public sentiment. (2) He told the British Ambassador in Washington that his main problem was a "psychological one", that of gauging public opinion and then taking the course which commended itself to the majority of the American people. (3) The President was aware of the overwhelmingly pro-Allied sentiment of the Americans and

estimated that ninety per cent of the people felt this way. (1) Robert Lansing had a great deal to say about educating the public to the dangers of a German victory and the necessity of intervention. (2) Pacifist William Jennings Bryan saw the President's first note to Germany after the sinking of the Lusitania as too strongly worded and so liable to inflame anti-German feeling. When Wilson refused to take a more conciliatory tone, Bryan resigned his position as Secretary of State. (3) Other public figures also spoke of the prevailing anti-German feeling. In mid-October, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, British Ambassador to the United States, wrote from Washington:

> About ninety per cent of the English-speaking people, and half the Irish, are on the side of the Allies; and in the glorious annals of German achievements nothing is so remarkable as the fact that Germany has almost made England popular in America. (4)

Ambassador Page in London wrote to Bryan that America would have hatred of the Germans, no matter what course she took, since the preponderance of American opinion was against Germany. (5) Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador in

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Washington, saw clearly that public opinion favoured the Allies from the beginning of the war, in spite of the President's plea for absolute neutrality as befitted the one great neutral nation of the world.

There is a special problem about public opinion in the United States, as represented by and reflected in the major journals and newspapers. Much of this opinion-influencing press is on the Eastern seaboard of the country, especially from Boston south to New York, Philadelphia and Washington. Statements about the unanimity of opinion in the United States in this period generally refer to this Eastern section of the country. One such report came from an English visitor who, during the first few months of the war (November 1914 to April 1915), travelled extensively "from the Atlantic seaboard to the lake cities of the Middle West", lecturing in schools, colleges and universities. He met Americans of every class and type, in large towns and small villages, and reported of them:

The students of Andover, Yale, Princeton and Harvard, the bankers and clubmen of New York, the manufacturers and the social world of Buffalo and Cleveland, the chance acquaintances ... one met in the "smokers" of the great express trains, everyone with whom I came in contact ... declared his stupefaction at the conduct of Germany and his ... sympathy for the cause of the Allies. (1)

In 1916 an American editor was reporting that pro-Ally feeling, especially in New York and Boston, was as strong as ever, (1) and by 1917 the same writer characterised it as amounting almost to hysteria, due to "injections of anti-Germanism" caused by events in the war. (2) Almost all commentators recognised this pro-Ally, and growing anti-German feeling in the Eastern United States as an established and acknowledged fact right through the thirty-two months of technical neutrality.

There was less agreement about sentiment in the Central West. Some thought this part of the country, heavily populated by German-Americans, was much more pro-German than the East. Sir Cecil Spring-Rice wrote in late 1914 that the "central districts" were full of German sentiment and that anti-English feeling prevailed. (3) A Boston journalist, however, reported of his visit there:

I have recently been to Chicago and into a portion of rural Wisconsin which ... is largely peopled by men and women of German birth ... I was surprised to find even among these, that the militarism of Germany did not strike a responsive chord. (4)

(1) Open Court, Vol. XXX, April 1916, p. 222
A Chicago editor, who was probably in a better position to judge mid-Western opinion, stated that the "Centre and West" were pro-German, Chicago being decidedly so, as well as the farmers of Illinois. (1) Lansing's evidence shows that after the Lusitania incident, when anti-German sentiment ran so high, and many people in the East were demanding the severance of diplomatic relations with Germany, this feeling was not nationwide. (2) As one went westward, he said, the demands for drastic action grew less emphatic, and were tempered with queries as to the propriety of Americans travelling on British vessels, and also as to the right of Germany to retaliate against Britain. (3) Whatever the original state of public opinion in this part of the country, it apparently changed to a certain extent as anti-German sentiment in the East was increased by events. The editor of the Milwaukee Journal saw, in late 1915, a decided change in opinion in the Middle West towards the country's participation in the war. It resulted, he said, from an increased hostility towards the German-Americans, who were being ostracised not only socially but also industrially. (4)

(2) See below, p. 219.
(3) War Memoirs of Robert Lansing, p. 27.
References to opinion in the South and West are more rare, and it would seem that public opinion in these areas was not considered so important as that in the East. Bernstorff stated that at least in the newspaper press of these two sections, hostility to Germany was not so great as elsewhere. (1) Again judging by the Lusitania affair, which was the decisive event affecting public opinion during these years, (2) Western opinion was less vehement than that of the rest of the nation. So in many respects the West remained relatively calm, while the pulse of the East responded nervously to every excitement. (3) And, it must be stressed, it was in the East that the decision makers as well as the opinion makers were to be found.

Did the newspaper press merely reflect this prevailing opinion, or did it also mould public opinion? Contemporary commentators were sure it fulfilled both functions. Through the printing and colouration of the news, through editorials, the opinions of columnists and cartoons, the papers and journals helped to make opinion as well as reflect it. According to Lippmann, moulding opinion was a recognised function of the newspaper:

(2) See below, pp. 141-161.
Acting upon everybody for thirty minutes in twenty-four hours, the press is asked to create a mystical force called Public Opinion. (1)

There would be those who would blame the press alone for creating a climate for war by 1917. Senator Works took this view in a Congressional debate on 4 March 1917, when American participation in the war seemed very likely:

The newspapers of this country are largely responsible for the condition in which we find ourselves today, and if we shall go to war with Germany the blood of the young men of this country who will be called upon to defend its rights will be on their hands. (2)

But, argued Bernstorff, while the American dailies were an important medium for influencing public opinion, they also mirrored it to a significant degree. (3) Leaders and people alike looked to the press to learn how the American public felt about the European war and the issues associated with it. The historian can reasonably assume that newspapers and journals represent the opinion of their readers, and when taken as a whole, characterise prevailing public opinion. The best source for popular attitudes, as far as they are discernible, is undoubtedly the press of the period.

In so far as newspapers were concerned, most commentators differentiated between the Atlantic seaboard press and that of the middle and far West, thus confirming other assessments of public opinion in the various sections of the country. A poll

(2) Congressional Records, 64 Cong. 2 sess. (1917), p. 4997.
(3) My Three Years in America, p. 28.
of five hundred editors taken by the *Literary Digest* early in the war showed that there were many editors who favoured one side or the other, but there was at this time no open desire to enter the war. In analysing this opinion geographically, the *Digest* reported that the Allies were favoured by the majority everywhere. New Englanders tended to be pro-Ally mainly because of their English ancestry and strong traditional ties with Britain. The South, the South-West and the far West editors also favoured the Allies, although not so strongly as those in the East. By comparison, in the central and north-western sections of the country a much larger percentage of the press was sympathetic towards the Central Powers, due, undoubtedly, to the fact that large numbers of German-Americans lived in these sections.\(^{(1)}\)

The *New York Times*, while it favoured the Allies, was also the best daily chronicle of the war. It devoted many pages of each issue to the war news, and made use of large, black, eye-catching headlines, sometimes stretching right across the page. Day by day the progress of the war was illustrated by relevant maps, and the paper often included surveys of press opinion and comment from the rest of the nation. The *New York World* was regarded as the spokesman for the administration, and whether it was or not, it tried to act the part.\(^{(2)}\)

\(^{(1)}\) *Literary Digest*, November 1914, pp. 939-41, 974-78.

\(^{(2)}\) May, *op.cit.*, p. 462.
language dailies were all pro-Ally, and in some cases openly anti-German. Indeed, it is easy to name the leading papers which stood out against the prevailing pro-British, anti-German sentiment. These were all the Hearst papers, (which included two New York dailies, the Journal and the American); as well as the New York Evening Mail; the Chicago Tribune; the Washington Post (which made an honest and fairly successful effort to be quite neutral); the Cincinnati Inquirer; the Cleveland Plain Dealer; the Los Angeles Times, and the San Francisco Chronicle and Call. (1) The real difference between these and the other main dailies lay in the fact that they did not use their headlines and editorial columns to carry on a crusade against Germany. The non-German religious press, by and large, swung into line behind the Allied point of view, for in these papers, too, the opinions of the editors as to the daily events of the war and the aims of the belligerents were dependent, to a large extent, upon the material they saw in the daily papers and magazines. (2)

The pro-Ally, anti-German attitude of so much of the press can be attributed, to a large extent, to the circumstances of the war and the activities of the British. The greater part of the news from Europe came through England as released by the British censor. Even the pre-war relation-

(1) Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism, (New York, 1942), p. 616.
(2) Abrams, op.cit., p. 18.
ship between the American press and the press of Great Britain influenced the situation. Few American newspapers at the time maintained European staffs of their own, while those who did had few trained American foreign correspondents to man them. Both newspapers and press associations tended to cover European politics from London. The New York Times, which perhaps gave more serious attention to European events than any other important American newspaper, had an Englishman, Mr. Ernest Marshall, as the head of its London bureau, and his staff was mainly English. Its Berlin correspondent, Mr. Frederick William Wile, was an American, but the Times shared him with Lord Northcliffe's English paper, The Daily Mail, which was strongly anti-German. The New York World's London correspondent was an Irishman who had never worked in the United States, and his staff, too, was composed mainly of Englishmen. Those correspondents who were American citizens had generally lived for a considerable time abroad, and they naturally reflected the atmosphere in which they lived. The result was that the American view of Europe was unavoidably coloured by British attitudes. (1)

When war commenced, newspaper correspondents from the United States rushed across to Europe in some numbers. Among those first in the field were Frederick Palmer, Irvin Cobb, and Richard Harding Davis. But it soon became apparent that

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(1) Details from Walter Millis, Road to War: America 1914-1917, (London, 1935), pp. 43-44.
the old style war correspondence was impossible in this new style war. Journalists were effectively hampered by official restrictions on their movements, by censorship at every point, and by the size and nature of the conflict. If a correspondent saw important fighting at the front it was either accidental, or due to an evasion of the rules, which was sure to result in a temporary suspension of the writer's privileges. French, British, German and Austrian authorities permitted occasional visits to the various fronts by accredited correspondents under careful military escort. With such handicaps and with the slow development of the war after the first few weeks, emphasis shifted from the correspondent in the field to the office military critic who, piecing together the official communiques, presented comprehensive analyses of the situation. (1) All this, together with the fact that England won the first round very early by cutting the cables between Europe and the United States on 5 August 1914, left only the English channels of communication open for the transmission of all war news to the American public.

The first hectic weeks of the war, especially the invasion of Belgium, set the tone for the press reports. Although most newspapers later became more sober in their reporting and tried to give a little more news from the German point of view, the early advantage gained by the

(1) Mott, op.cit., p. 619.
Allies was never lost. Professor Hugo Munsterberg, a German at Harvard, described this early period:

The first days the newspapers were filled with cablegrams from Germany's foes ... The papers reproduced these reports simply as they received them; the public in its excited frame of mind accepted them without a grain of salt. This at once gave to public opinion a vivid impulse against Germany ...(1)

The bulk of the press took an unfriendly attitude towards Germany as early as August 1914, and the current ran against that country from that date on.(2) Senator McCumber, reviewing in a speech the period of neutrality, when America was about to go to war, said:

When this war began ... the press of the country seemed united in a campaign of denunciation of the whole German people, indicting them as Huns, as savage and remorseless murderers ...(3)

This early unneutral attitude of the press is quite evident to the reader. By mid-August the Outlook, the Independent and Harper's Weekly, to name only some of the prominent journals, had charged Germany with beginning the war, and editorials condemning Germany had appeared in a number of other well-known papers and journals. These included the New York Globe, Tribune, Evening Post and World; the Baltimore

(2) Open Court, Vol. XXIX, November 1915, p. 641.
(3) Congressional Records, 65 Cong. 1 sess. (1917), p. 211.
News; the St. Louis Republic; the Springfield Republican and Philadelphia's North American. (1)

As the war progressed and German "crimes" multiplied, the press both reflected the heightened anti-German feeling and helped increase it still more. The growth of atrocity stories, the death of American citizens as the result of submarine attacks on shipping, the domestic issues, such as the sale of arms to the Allies and the presidential election in 1916, were all grist for the newspaper mills. One commentator, deploring the German methods of war, was gratified by the publicity they received, and (perhaps unwittingly) revealed the anti-German attitude of the press:

One thing the Germans are up against is printer's ink, especially newspapers. There were no newspapers to give any details about the proceedings of Attila and his merry Huns, but most of what the Germans do gets into print. (2)

By the end of 1916 most of the newspapers were in favour of United States' intervention in the war. They had fought the battle for military and naval preparedness, and were now ready to support the President in any action he might take. At this time Bernstorff reported to the German Chancellor:

Every piece of news which is unfavourable to the German cause, even if it emanates from an unreliable source, appears in bold headlines in the most prominent place.

(1) Literary Digest, 22 August 1914, pp. 292-295.
(2) Life, 5 November 1914, p. 794.
imaginary. The leading articles reek of unfriendliness and hatred for Germany. (1)

In March 1917, when intervention was much more certain, Senator Works declared that the columns of the newspapers were filled day after day with "misinterpretations, false accounts, insinuating articles", that inflamed and excited the public mind and aroused "prejudices and the anger and hate of the American people against Germany". (2)

It was not only the daily press which was pro-Ally and increasingly anti-German. Such influential journals as Nation, Independent, Harper's Weekly and World's Work all carried the Allied banner high. The Outlook was aggressively anti-German from the beginning of the war, and so was Life, a New York weekly. This latter journal was enlivened by many pictures, drawings and cartoons, and a very modern style of journalese. Week after week, by editorials, satire, cartoons and stories, it drove home the lesson of hatred for Germany and for hyphenated Americans. Its editorials were calling for American participation in the war from the time of the Lusitania episode, and indicted Wilson repeatedly for his inaction. Its message was reinforced by the practice of having whole editions of the journal devoted to a particular


(2) Congressional Records, 64 Cong. 2 sess. (1917), p. 4997.
theme. Such were the "Lusitania Memorial Number", (appropriately edged entirely in black), in May 1916; "Preparedness Number", calling for support in the campaign to increase the size of the army and navy; and "National Humiliation Number", which deplored Wilson's handling of the submarine question. Equally anti-German was the Providence Journal, (which had an Australian as its editor) which embarked on a self-appointed campaign of "revealing" German-American "plots". The Literary Digest gave weekly summaries of the nation's press views, but it, too, was firmly pro-Allied, and carried many illustrations and cartoons. The New Republic was launched with enthusiasm in the summer of 1914, and while not prepared to endorse entry into the war until some time later, campaigned vigorously for preparedness, and bemoaned President Wilson's handling of foreign policy.

There were anti-German books and pamphlets almost without number, each author presenting his view of the war, and of its causes. Condemnation of Germany, her crimes and her methods of war were common to all. James M. Beck, a well-known New York lawyer, published late in 1914 a legal analysis of the various official documents regarding the origins of the war released by the belligerents. In The Evidence in the Case he demonstrated from an allegedly unbiased point of view that the Allies had righteousness on their side, and pointed the finger of guilt directly at Germany. This book had a tremendous effect on opinion in the United States, and Beck
became a popular speaker at all sorts of meetings and rallies in support of the Allied Cause. (1) Samuel Harden Church was another author who came to the same conclusion as Beck about the causes of the war, and Church's book, The American Verdict on the War, was also widely read in the United States. By 1915 the British had composed a book of Sixty American Opinions on the War. The object of this publication, according to its compilers, was to show how many friends the Allies had in America. There certainly were many more friends than those listed, but at least half the contributors were people of wide influence, including Charles Francis Adams, William Dean Howells, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft and Charles William Eliot. Every "opinion", of course, favoured the Allies and opposed Germany and her part in the war. One editor, summing up the volume of printed matter in regard to Germany quite early in the war, wrote:

>We have read the newspapers, including great numbers of letters to the editor ... reports from returning travellers, appeals in great numbers from professional writers, and "white papers" and government manifestoes. We have read the English reviews, and our own magazines and reviews, and books or extracts of books... (2)

It is not true, of course, that everything printed and published was anti-German. But a large proportion of it was, and there can be no doubt from its volume that it both reflected and influenced public opinion. Professor

(1) Abrams, Preachers Present Arms, p. 20.
(2) Life, 5 November 1914, p. 806.
Munsterberg commented on its influence:

It is a systematic stirring-up of the anti-German sentiment, and the abnormal increase of suggestibility in the mind of the masses has deprived them of the power to discriminate, to judge, to be fair. (1)

The German-language press, the largest foreign-language press in the United States, (2) tried to combat the British influence and the resulting anti-German bias of most of the English press. In this it was entirely unsuccessful. The biggest obstacle, of course, was the language. Bernstorff stressed this point when discussing anti-German feeling in the United States:

The English press was always accessible to the Americans in the original language... In so far as public opinion in the United States was concerned, the German-American press - the press which was published in the German language - hardly reached the public at all. (3)

The German-Americans made a number of attempts to gain a hearing in the English-language press, but they were, on the whole, fairly unsuccessful. There were numerous invitations from "loyal" Americans for the German sympathisers to present their case, and the newspapers did open their columns to articles by Germans, both those resident in the United States and in Germany. But any such attempts at explanation were skilfully negated by subsequent editorials or leading articles, which pointed out the inadequacies or mistakes in the

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(1) The War and America, p. 19.
(2) See below p. 87.
given views. The New York Times was particularly prone to this habit. The difficulty in presenting any view that seemed to be pro-German was also due to the fact that anyone who openly stood up for Germany's cause was quickly labelled a "German propagandist", as a person of doubtful integrity. (1) There is evidence that the official German propaganda organisation in New York tried to buy an English-language paper to help their cause, but this attempt was also unsuccessful. (2) On 10 August 1914, a new English-language paper appeared on sale in New York and other Eastern cities. This was the Fatherland, founded, according to its editor, George Sylvester Viereck, to counteract the misrepresentations of the rest of the English press, and devoted to "Fair Play for Germany and Austria". (3) Discussing this venture some years later, Viereck said:

The Fatherland was undiluted pro-Germanism. Arising spontaneously in response to a world-wide need, it became the spokesman in the English language, of pro-Germans everywhere. (4)

It did become the most outspoken propaganda sheet in the United States. Although it built up a large circulation among

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(1) Bernstorff, My Three Years in America, p. 38.
(2) H.C. Peterson, Propaganda for War, (Norman, 1939), p. 139.
(3) Fatherland, 10 August 1914.
(4) George Sylvester Viereck, Spreading Germs of Hate, (London, 1938), pp. 53-54.
German-Americans, it is doubtful whether it had any real effect on the views and attitudes of the rest of the English-language press.

Clearly, then, the Eastern press and, so it would seem, Eastern public opinion, was solidly anti-German. The question remains, however: how valid is any discussion of public opinion in the United States and the part played by the press in moulding it, when the discussion largely concerns one section of the country, namely the Eastern States? Eastern opinion is not necessarily American opinion. When in 1917, the Eastern newspapers were urgently demanding intervention in the war, Congressman King reminded his colleagues of this same fact. He said:

Mr. Chairman, Edmund Burke once said: Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chirp, whilst thousands of great cattle repose beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field. (1)

In concentrating on Eastern opinion are we listening only to the half dozen grasshoppers under the fern leaf? Count Bernstorff affirmed that American public opinion is seldom so homogeneous and unanimous as in other countries. Americans react in widely differing ways and to different degrees, particularly in connection with political questions. He continued:

In the states bordering on the Atlantic coast, which is closely in touch with the Old World, there is, as a rule, a very definite public opinion on European questions ... It is true that the New York press is certainly the most important mirror of American public opinion on European questions. (1)

Since anti-German sentiment was so intimately linked with what was happening in Europe, it can be argued that the Eastern establishment papers and journals were the crucial ones, both in reflecting and influencing this aspect of public opinion during the years of neutrality.

Editors and journalists are well aware of the influence of the press on public opinion, and use several effective techniques to aid in this moulding of opinion. An important one is the continual repetition of words and phrases which are invested with a particular meaning, or are highly charged emotionally. When these are repeated constantly they conjure up immediately images and ideas which influence the reader. This is one of the prime methods of the propagandist. This "water-dripping" effect of the repetition of a certain vocabulary relating to Germany and Germans undoubtedly played a large part in increasing anti-German feeling in the United States. Quite often the words or phrases used by the propagandist are not entirely understood by a large number of readers or listeners but they are placed in a context which lends them a certain meaning. This is particularly relevant in relation

(1) Bernstorff, op. cit., p. 27.
to anti-German sentiment, since some of the vocabulary used was taken from the German language. Such words, when used about German methods of war, for example, took on sinister meanings which they did not have in the original. Half-truths and suggestion were also used with the same results. A half-truth repeated often enough begins to sound like the whole truth.

From the outbreak of war in 1914, such words as "civilisation", "humanity", "rights" and "justice" were used continuously in the American press. Germany's declaration of war, and especially her invasion of Belgium, "shocked the civilised world"; was against "all the dictates of humanity"; was a violation of "the just rights of neutral nations". The inference quite clearly is that Germany was not civilised. On the contrary, she was soon being characterised as "barbaric" and "savage", and her people were the "new barbarians", the "new Huns", emerging from the German forests to smash civilisation. The German soldiers were described as fierce, arrogant, and treacherous, and their methods of warfare were savage, brutal and ruthless.(1) The incorrectly quoted phrase of Bismarck, "blood and iron", was used to characterise German militarism, as was the term "might is right".

Machtpolitik was one of the German words used repeatedly in many contexts, often to describe German military theory and practice, and suggesting any and every idea of German

ruthlessness that the reader could imagine. "Frightfulness" came to mean anything the German government or German soldiers did, from invading countries to sending the Zimmermann telegram. 

(1) Prussianism, autocracy, absolutism, Kaiserism and Pan-Germanism became interchangeable terms, and were used in almost every article on Germany and the war. The very word "German" itself soon carried with it the suggestion of evil, and "Made in Germany" became a term of contempt and reprobation. Wars were made in Germany, as were Kultur, submarines, Zeppelins, poison gas, liquid fire and "hymns of hate". (2) The opening line of the German patriotic song, "Deutschland über alles", which means "Germany above all things in the whole world", was used consistently to illustrate Germany's desire to rule the world. There must have been many Americans who knew sufficient German to understand the correct meaning of the phrase, but it was habitually translated thus incorrectly to emphasise Germany's aggressive imperialist ambitions. It was popularly accepted as meaning "Let Germany rule over everywhere in the whole world". (3) This phrase (Deutschland über alles) was also generally displayed in cartoons which suggested the disloyalty of German-Americans, highlighting their alleged devotion to the Fatherland instead of to their

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(1) See below, p. 216.
(2) Life, 22 February 1917, p. 297.
adopted country. The expression "Gott mit uns" was interpreted as an expression of conceit, meaning "God is on our side", rather than as an expression of supplication, "God be with us". It was most often used in reports and cartoons emphasising Germany's more ruthless war methods, such as in the invasion of Belgium or sinking ships carrying non-combatants. Any suggestion that the Germans were relying on divine assistance was portrayed as blasphemous, since God could surely never help such savages; He must be on the side of the Allies and righteousness. One continual motif in the writings against Germany during this period could be called "God and the Kaiser", and it was intended to awaken God-fearing Americans to the wickedness of the German ruler. Such Americans were quite happy to have their President proclaim a day of prayer in October 1914, but when the Kaiser had done the same a few weeks before he was condemned for his action. The editor of the Chicago Tribune commented:

> Before establishing hell on earth the pietistic kings commend their subjects to God. Seek the Lord's sanction for the devil's work.(1)

Quite early in the war, the editor of the New York Times commented on a reported statement by the Austrian Emperor to the German Chancellor, "God is with you". He wrote:

> According to this man ... God is on the side of massacre and rapine, of wrath and destruction. He is the God of the armoured motor car, of the howitzer and the bombdropping.

airship ... He rejoices in the grief of the widow and the destitution of orphans. (1)

Another editor discussed this matter under a paragraph entitled "What God?"

The Kaiser says he and God are working together. What God can this be? Not our Christian God ... a God of love and hope and mercy. The God that helps the Kaiser is a god of broken faith, with bloodshot eyes, loose lips and dripping sword. He and the Kaiser make a strong team — for slaughter. (2)

The same journal some months later featured a full page cartoon, in which a very large devil pointed an accusing finger at the startled Kaiser, who stood with sword in hand and one foot on prostrate Belgium. The devil's words formed the caption: "Quit calling me God. I detest the word". (3)

Other cartoons carried the phrase "Me und Gott" when depicting the Kaiser as a particularly cruel and ruthless man. In 1917, when America's years of neutrality were at an end, one editor, discussing reasons for the country's entry into war, stated:

There has been no year in which William Hohenzollern has not publicly blasphemed Almighty God by imputing to Him an intent to uphold and abet the Hohenzollern's infernal designs. (4)

Indicting Germany as the enemy of Christianity and the Kaiser as a blasphemer was a constant theme of anti-German writings

(2) Life, 24 September 1914, p. 530.
(3) Ibid, 1 April 1915, p. 573.
(4) Independent, 19 February 1917, p. 291.
and discussion.

German methods of war were characterised in special terms. Cities were "burnt and lootled", submarines committed "indiscriminate murder on the high seas"; and Zeppelins raided "undefended cities and hospitals". This last phrase is a good example of the use of an isolated incident, (which occurred when the hospital in Brussels was hit by bombs), to characterise war methods in general. The fact that non-belligerents were wounded and killed by such new methods of war as submarines and bombs, only added to the general denunciations of Germany and her actions. These victims were always characterised as "innocent", just as Belgium had been innocent, and their deaths were labelled "murder". This over-worked word was used exclusively of the deaths of non-combatants, and never of the men on the battlefields of Europe, as if Americans could not understand that war is always murder. The war became the "Furor Teutonic", and writers often found it difficult to find terms strong enough to convey how they felt about it. One of them wrote:

It is a war whose weapons are fashioned in hell-a war to remove truth and honour, fidelity and good faith from political society and the intercourse of nations.(1)

"Truth and honour, fidelity and good faith" - these were all

characteristics of the Allies, never of Germany. That country was opposed to such civilised virtues, as well as being an implacable foe of democracy and all civic and personal freedom. Militarism, it was stated over and over again, had crushed all freedom in Germany, so that millions of men and women were "helpless subjects of the German state". (1) The military caste was blamed for having started the war, "with intent to destroy democratic institutions, and to establish despotism throughout the earth". (2) The violation of treaties was depicted as normal German practice, and the phrase "scrap of paper" conveyed a symbol of contractual infidelity, recalling Belgium and her heroic resistance. (3) This failure to keep her word always appeared in condemnations of Germany by American writers; she "tore the sacred laws of contract into scraps of paper".

Proper names of persons associated with the war were used frequently as a kind of litany of horror, symbolising all the evil associated with Germany. "Hohenzollern" became a title of scorn representing an aristocratic ruling class. "Krupp" stood for death and destruction because the great industrial works of this firm were turned to manufacturing weapons of war. This name was used in one journal in this mis-quotation:

(1) e.g. Independent, 19 February 1917, p. 292.
(2) Ibid, 14 April 1917, p. 98.
(3) See below, p. 116.
O death where is thy sting?
O Krupp where is thy victory? (1)

The same editor gathered all these terrible names on an "Iron Cross", another symbol of anti-German feeling, since it was a reward to German soldiers for their "frightfulness". It was entitled "The Iron Cross":

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<td>Zeppelin</td>
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<td>Krupp von Bohlen</td>
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Bernstorff, always an acute observer of the American scene, stated that the outstanding characteristic of the average American is a great, even though superficial, sentimentality. This trait, he said, had been greatly exploited to bring public opinion to bear on Germany. (3)

One image that played a major role in this respect was the "fearful plight" of women and children. This began with the invasion of Belgium, gathered strength with the sinking of

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(1) *Life*, 29 October 1914, p. 760.
(2) *Ibid*, 17 December 1914, p. 1118
(3) Bernstorff, *My Three Years in America*, p. 45.
the *Lusitania* and continued with the Zeppelin raids over England. Suffering women and children are a stereotype in the thinking of most Anglo-Saxons, and it is easy to make people weep for these "defenceless" beings. Writers, speakers and politicians all waxed eloquent on their sufferings and the very unfavourable light this threw upon Germany and Germans. "Innocent babes torn from their mothers' arms" became the most abused cliche in the rhetoric of the period. The atrocity stories always included reference to the suffering of infants and children, and for many the death of forty babies on the *Lusitania* was the worst aspect of the event.

One editor wrote in this regard:

> Those non-combatants - and especially the forty babies - have done a feat of great military value. By their death they have shocked the moral sense of a nation that needed a shock of terrific penetration to jolt it into action. (1)

Those forty babies, along with the others killed in various areas of the war, went on shocking the moral sense of the nation until they helped take that nation into war. After the sinking of the ship *Ancona* in the Mediterranean, and the Zeppelin raids on London, another editor wrote:

> The war upon the Kindergarten goes on relentlessly, whether in the streets of London or in the waters of the Mediterranean. (2)

One atrocity story which appeared repeatedly during the war,

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(1) *Life*, 20 May 1915, p. 903.

(2) *Literary Digest*, 20 November 1915, p. 1139.
having begun during the invasion of Belgium, was that which told of German soldiers using women and children as shields in their advance towards the enemy. It was used to good effect whenever the sufferings of women and children were being discussed, and for one writer was an example of the obedience which was demanded of the German soldier:

We think of the German soldiers of today, led by Prussianised officers, and obediently driving defenceless women before them as they marched against the enemy. "Wir müssen" they said, with tears in their eyes. (1)

When the members of Congress finally came to debate the question of American entry into the war, the fate of "innocent women and children" and of "babes torn from their mothers' arms", featured more prominently in their speeches than anything else except the question of unrestricted submarine warfare. The latter, of course, had a direct bearing on the former in their minds.

German-Americans were considered to bear the same characteristics as their countrymen in Europe. It was assumed that German-Americans admired all the reprehensible features of Germany, unless they publicly disavowed love of the Fatherland and proclaimed their loyalty to the United States. Anyone who favoured the Allied cause was a "patriotic" American, while one who favoured the German side, or even tried to maintain a neutral position, was a "hyphenated American", a dangerous

alien, a spy or a traitor. (1) Any political activity on the part of such persons was characterised as the work of the "Kaiser's party" in the United States, and, it will be seen; this sort of rhetoric played an important part in the 1916 presidential campaign. (2)

There can be little doubt that this repetition of words and images in the writings on Germany was effective in building up anti-German sentiment during these years. The clearest proof of this is to be found in the debates in Congress on the President's war message in April 1917. The Senators and Congressmen had read and listened to this special vocabulary for over two years, and their speeches are filled with it. All the familiar accusations against Germany are there, all the images and names that had filled the columns of the press day after day. Because of the picture of Germany presented to Americans they could feel justified in going to war against such a nation and people. So one of them, echoing the sentiments of all the others, exclaimed:

To me the issue appears as plain as the light of day. The cave man has once again broken loose upon the world... He knows not the impulses of humanity, he respects neither his own treaties and agreements, nor the rights of others ... he is bent on the unavering course of brute force, pillage and murder. That cave man is the crazy German emperor. (3)

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(2) See below, pp. 183-208.
Cartoons are a special kind of vocabulary, and always play an important part in helping influence public opinion. The cartoonist uses indirect suggestion, and infers and insinuates ideas more effectively and to a greater extent than the writer:

The cartoon ... moulds fugitive opinion into common pictures. It summarises what people have been thinking about, but have never put together ... The cartoon is past master in depicting human attitudes and opinions, ... It defines social weaknesses. (1)

Each daily paper carried its cartoons, and various journals, such as Literary Digest and Current Opinion, gathered numbers of them (from at home and abroad) for inclusion in each issue. Like the written and spoken word, cartoons tended to repeat the same ideas in various ways, thus reinforcing the anti-German feeling. But their impact must, in most cases, have been much greater, since they presented the images visually. It was one thing to read that the Germans were barbarous and had overrun "innocent Belgium"; it was quite another to see the act pictured as a huge, snarling gorilla, with blood dripping from his hands and feet, striding across the wreckage of Belgium, dragging the dead body of a girl by the hair and setting a torch to what might remain of the country. (2) The Kaiser featured largely in the cartoons, usually as the guilty perpetrator of any specific crime. Little children

(2) Life, 17 December 1914, p. 1117.
rose up from the waves to condemn him for the sinking of the Lusitania, and Uncle Sam held him responsible for the "martyrdom" of Edith Cavell. Commenting on this feature of the cartoons, George Viereck said:

Inasmuch as humanity can visualise a personal devil much better than an abstraction, the Kaiser ... became another Lucifer, revolting against the divinely appointed order. (1)

In the cartoons German-Americans were responsible for anything in the United States that savoured of "disloyalty". So explosions in factories, efforts to stop the arms trade or criticisms of Wilson's policy were attributed to short, fat, moustached German-Americans, who very often wore the German spiked military helmet. General ideas about German-Americans, such as the "German-American vote", were usually depicted as Dachshund dogs.

Special prominence was given in the American press to the work of the Dutch artist, Louis Raemaekers. This cartoonist gained international fame for his anti-German cartoons, and was invested with a special dignity by Americans because his work was condemned by the German government and banned in the German press. After 1916 he lived for some time in England to supply the Allied press with his work more easily. In 1915 an American journal, Cartoons, called him the "War's Greatest Cartoonist", and the editor wrote:

Every great crisis has produced a great

(1) Viereck, Spreading Germs of Hate, p. 33.
cartoonist - one who has given voice to the soul thoughts of the people ... By almost common consent the genius of the present war in the field here mentioned is the Dutch artist, Louis Raemaekers. (1)

Many of these cartoons, after having appeared in the daily and weekly press, were published in volumes in 1917 and 1918 to help the United States' war effort after intervention. In the edition entitled America in the War there is strong emphasis on German-American disloyalty in various forms, suggesting that even Raemaekers, living in Europe, had this image of this portion of the American population. (2) The Kaiser, submarine warfare, Belgium, Zeppelin raids, death and destruction were all treated by this artist in a manner that could only reinforce American opinion, less skilfully portrayed by their own cartoonists.

Public opinion is partly built up by the formation of stereotypes; what Walter Lippmann called "pictures in our heads". (3) These pictures may represent an approximation of, or be in direct contradiction to, the truth. They are built up by suggestion, half-truth, generalisation and the repetition of ideas and images. The process of suggestion begins by verbal formation of a mental picture, which is externalised and reinforced by the cartoon or specially chosen

(1) Quoted in Literary Digest, 11 September 1915, p. 526.
(2) Louis Raemaekers, America in the War, (New York, 1918). Almost all the cartoons included are from the period before American intervention...
(3) Public Opinion, Ch. 1, passim.
illustration. When the stereotype is a category (for example, a nation) membership in the category is sufficient to evoke the judgement that each member of the group possesses all the attributes belonging to the category. It was a change in such an image or stereotype in regard to Germans that took place in the United States between August 1914 and April 1917. The press played a very large part in the process, the special vocabulary and cartoons being the most effective agents in the change.

The American image of the Germans, and the German-Americans, changed under the influence of those agents. Shortly after the outbreak of war the editor of Life wrote of German-Americans:

... When we did think of Germans we thought of them respectfully and kindly, and with the sentiment that it was foolish of the abstinence party people to intervene between them and their beer. (1)

James Beck, supporter of the Allies and no great lover of the Germans, also wrote in 1914:

The normal German is an admirable citizen, quiet, peaceable, thrifty, industrious, faithful, efficient and affectionate to the verge of sentimentality. (2)

The Germans of Germany, while they shared in all the admirable characteristics of the German-Americans, had the added distinction of belonging to the country associated with such

(1) Life, 24 September 1914, p. 806.
great names as Goethe, Schiller and Kant, of Schubert, Schumann and Wagner. They, too, were held in affection by Americans who had known them:

The man who inhabits the border of the Rhine, the man who inhabits Bavaria and Württemberg, easily moved to tears and easily moved to laughter and easily moved to rage, is a man whom I have learnt to love ... (1)

The war, the press and anti-German feeling changed all this. Germans were no longer friendly, lovable people, but savages responsible for a war and a long list of consequent "crimes" which could not be forgiven. By September 1914, after the invasion of Belgium, the process had begun. One editor wrote:

In his present stage of development the German is the fat man of Europe whom nobody loves. (2)

At home in the United States it was the same. The German-Americans were coming under the scrutiny of their Anglo-American neighbours, and the latter early discerned a questionable loyalty in them. They had begun to share in the characteristics of the European Germans, unless they proved otherwise. The same editor commented:

Three months ago we gave them no special thought. Now we look at each of them, curiously trying to see in them some trace of this prodigious insanity that has shaken the world. (3)

(2) Life, 24 September 1914, p. 528.
(3) Ibid, 29 October 1914, p. 777.
By mid 1915, after the sinking of the Lusitania, the change was complete. Now the German was someone who could not be trusted to keep his word, who was ruthless and uncivilised. The German-American was no longer the ideal citizen, but a person of more than doubtful loyalty, who put the interests of the Fatherland before those of the United States. Upon him was heaped all the dislike and distrust which Americans felt for Germany and European Germans.

It is necessary to look in some detail at the development of these attitudes in the United States towards Germany, and how this change affected German-Americans during the years of neutrality. We must keep in mind the part played by the press in the process, both in the reporting of events and in the work of forming public opinion by editorials, articles and cartoons.
CHAPTER 2

ANTI-GERMAN SENTIMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

(1) Attitudes towards Germany, her people and culture

In 1870 Germany and the United States were both relatively minor powers. Germany was, in fact, struggling to become a unified nation, and Americans had just fought a civil war in an effort to overcome the greatest threat to their unity. (1) Now they, in turn, watched Germany's efforts in the Franco-Prussian war, and much sympathy and friendship for the German people and their cause prevailed in the United States. It seemed to Americans that Germany was fighting a defensive war against French imperialism and militarism, and the German aspirations for national unity appealed to them in light of their recent experiences in the Civil War. (2) Americans also had other reasons to feel friendly towards Germany. The German immigrants to the United States in the 1830's and 1840's had included a number of radicals who later supported liberal policies in their adopted country. (3) Germany, along with Russia, had been the chief European sympathiser with the North in the Civil War.

(3) See below, p. 84.
German universities were the centre of the world's intellectual life, and thousands of Americans were attending German universities. As a result of this, the German university helped to create and nourish American universities, many of which embodied German methods and ideas. (1)

During the forty years after 1870 this sympathy and evident friendliness towards Germany on the part of the United States deteriorated. By 1914 a legacy of suspicion, fear and distrust of that country undoubtedly existed within influential segments of the American public. This change in attitude was caused largely by a series of diplomatic and commercial incidents, and by certain definite tendencies in German policy, culture and society which were not acceptable to Americans. Conflict between the United States and Germany began over concessions in the Samoan Islands in 1878 (2), and continued when Germany took her part in the partition of China. During the Spanish-American war Americans generally suspected that Germany had far-reaching territorial and commercial ambitions in the Philippines. Americans may not have known what they wanted to do with the Philippines at this point, but they were quite certain that they did not want Germany to have any part

of them. (1) Germany's attempt to get a foothold in the
Caribbean area at the end of the century was especially
irritating to the United States because of the latter's
economic interests in the region and the fact that foreign
intervention here was a challenge to the Monroe Doctrine, the
most sacred expression of America's foreign policy. Admiral
von Tirpitz wanted to establish a base in the Danish West
Indies, and he was also actively interested in the Galapagos
Islands, belonging to Ecuador, on the Pacific side of the
Isthmus of Panama. Such ambitions were not acceptable to
Americans. (2) Significant increases in the German protective
tariffs from 1879 to 1905, particularly an embargo on
American meats, aroused the jealousy of American economic
interests. There was irritation caused by limitations placed
on certain types of American business in Germany, and minor
diplomatic disputes over such matters as citizenship of German
immigrants to the United States. (3) Finally, Americans
watched with distrust the Prussianisation of the German
Empire by Bismarck. The Kaiser appeared to them as the
spokesman and symbol of German power, prestige and ambition.
To many Americans he seemed to epitomise all that was most
objectionable in German life and behaviour. His statements
dealing with divine right, militarism and expansion incurred

(1) Julius W. Pratt, A History of United States Foreign Policy,
(2) Bemis, op. cit., p. 521.
(3) Schieber, op. cit., pp. 64-67.
the derision or sarcastic criticism of the American press. (1) Militarism was considered to be one of the more reprehensible features of German life and politics. In 1911 a Prussian general named von Bernhardi published a book entitled *Germany and the Next War*, which included such chapter headings as "The Right to Make War"; the "Duty to Make War"; and "World Power or World Downfall". The book sold millions of copies in Europe and the United States during the next several years, and its ideas were debated and denounced at great length in the American press. It was regarded by many Americans as the Kaiser's blueprint for aggression, and deepened their fear and suspicion of the militaristic aspects of German life. (2) So by 1914, the German image in the United States was somewhat tarnished. Most Americans did not have any clearer a picture of the actual situation in Germany than they did of any other part of the European continent. One historian has written:

> American opinion, so far as European affairs were concerned, was not only uninformed, but largely uninterested ... We were strong, we were rich, we were isolated, we were safe ... It was difficult for us to believe in the possibility of a general war. (3)

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(1) Ibid, p. 68.
When, in July, 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, the event was for most Americans little more than a headline and a press despatch. The events of the preceding weeks, although reported by the newspapers in some detail, apparently gave no real hint to them of the coming disaster, and the formal steps leading to total European involvement, crowded as they were in a few days, caught the American press unawares. (1) The first reaction of the people of the United States was one of amazement, revulsion and an almost complete lack of understanding of the situation. In fact the predominant American tendency appears to have been one of irritation that there should be a war at all. It seemed to them senseless, if not wicked, and utterly without cause. There was no background of American experience to warrant understanding of another continent where hostile invasion was a matter of hours, not of months. For them, one of the great interests of the early months was in observing the mobilisation of vast armies, the marching of divisions in a week from factories to battlefields. At a safe distance they looked on in awe and admiration. (2) The second reaction of Americans was an earnest, if ill-informed, idealism, a real desire to help the countries involved, and to forward the cause of

(1) Outlook, 8 August 1914, p. 823.
universal peace, provided it cost them little or nothing. (1) War appeared to them so unnecessary that it must yield to reason, and America's primary task was to keep calm and persuade the fighting nations that their duty and interests called for an early peace. (2)

Uncomprehension was not merely the result of distance from the war. Nearly two hundred thousand Americans in Europe for the summer vacation were stranded in what suddenly seemed a topsy-turvy world, without money in their pockets, and all eager to go home on the first steamer. (3) At first they were reluctant to believe that the war could disturb their holiday plans. Authoress Edith Wharton heard about the assassination at Sarajevo while in Paris, and related that, although the news sent a "momentary shiver" through the company, it made no difference to her plans for a "quick dash to Barcelona and the Balearic islands", before her return to England for the rest of the summer. But as she wandered through Spain, rumours thickened, and she decided to return to Paris. She continued:

Everything seemed strange, ominous and unreal, like the yellow glare which precedes a storm. There were moments when I felt as if I had died, and waked up in an unknown world. And so I had. Two days later war was declared. (4)

(1) Baker, op.cit., p. 21.
(2) Statement by Wilson, New York Times, 4 August 1914.
(3) Bassett, op.cit., p. 3.
Brand Whitlock, American Minister in Belgium, described such Americans pouring into Brussels from all over the continent, "in panic"; many of them "utterly helpless, undecided, bewildered", loath or afraid to brave the journey home, and hoping for some miracle that would stop the war, or at least spare them discomfort. Why, they demanded, should they suffer through a European quarrel among nations? Were they not Americans, and should they not be protected by their flag? (1) Whitlock wrote in mild exasperation:

They all think I have some supernatural power, that I can evoke ships, money, care, comfort for them; predict the course of the war, tell them where they will be safe, and how long the war will last ... it is maddening. (2)

For the first few weeks of the war the New York Times carried many pages of news of Americans stranded abroad, and published lists of names of those who arrived home safely.

The American press began reporting the war in ever increasing volume, and articles on the various belligerent countries, their part in the build up of events leading to war and their chances of victory or defeat, filled the pages of the newspapers and journals. Soon place names, formerly almost unknown to Americans, became household words, and the faces of the Kaiser, the Czar of Russia, and other members of European royal families, the military generals of all the

(2) Ibid, p. 6.
powers, became familiar through the pictorial sections of the press. The conviction that this was a European quarrel, far removed and of no real concern to Americans, was strengthened by President Wilson's formal proclamation of neutrality just fifteen days after the outbreak of war. As a nation fit beyond all others "to exhibit the fine poise of undisturbed judgement, the dignity of self-control, the efficiency of dispassionate action", the United States must be neutral, and her people must be "impartial in thought as well as in action". (1)

The unreality of such a course of action was quickly demonstrated. Almost immediately the great debate began. Who was to blame for the war? Who had caused this most terrible situation? The events leading up to the great conflict were analysed and weighed up, and it took most writers (and presumably their readers) only a short time to find the answers. By mid-August most of the press was blaming Germany. (2) Popularly, the very fact that Germany was the first to declare war, quite apart from any consideration of priority of mobilisation, furnished the obvious answer to the question. The responsibility of involving Europe in a war appeared to Americans to belong to Germany. (3) An American

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(2) See above, p. 22.
intellectual wrote:

The war is a German-made war, having its source and inspiration in the writings and teachings of the Pan-Germanists, in the ambitions of an autocratic military caste, headed by a highly neurotic, unbalanced and possibly mentally diseased overlord, with medieval views of his relation to his country and the world. (1)

This judgment of Germany's guilt was allegedly based on a calm consideration of all the facts, and right or wrong, the same judgment seemed to have been arrived at simultaneously by the whole press. (2) Official neutrality, as outlined by the President, was acceptable to most elements of American opinion, and there were frequent pleas in the press that it be strictly maintained. But it seems clear that the people early abandoned the neutrality of thought asked for by Wilson. The weight of American popular opinion was clearly on the side of the Allies.

Having decided on Germany's guilt, the American press writers then began looking for the "real" cause of her actions. They soon began to blame the war on what they saw as Germany's regrettable spirit of militarism. (3) This militarism made the nation capable of anything. One author wrote:

Now comes Germany like a monstrous dragon with crested head, scaly armour and terrible claws ... and boldly reverts to the cruel

(2) Nation, 26 November 1914, p. 621.
(3) Bernstorff, My Three Years in America, p. 53.
practices of barbarism and the savage. (1)
Writers searched back into Germany's history for the roots of this spirit, and a picture emerged of the German nation as the embodiment of autocracy and the policy of "might makes right". The fear was frequently expressed that a German victory would mean the "Prussianisation" of the world. There was little doubt, according to one German-American, that the "phantom of German autocracy" was at the root of all the American prejudice against Germany. It was this idea, he said, which made Americans see in the war a struggle between popular freedom and despotism. It persuaded them that German militarism was aiming at world domination and that a German victory would mean a direct danger to the peace and security of the United States. (2) Their reading of German writers convinced Americans that glorification of war was an important part of this spirit of militarism. The journalists quoted at length from the works of Nietzsche, Fichte, Hegel, and above all, from Bernhardi, to prove that militarism had a long history in Germany. German attempts at vindication met with little success. Americans were generally unwilling to accept the premises on which German apologists based their arguments, and attributed their actions to a ruthless disregard for others

in an attempt to create a German world empire, "from the North Sea to the Mediterranean and from the Atlantic Coast to Siberia". (1) For many, the German army symbolised the country and its spirit. Brand Whitlock, watching the German occupation of Belgium, described that army:

Those swinish soldiers with their thick bandy legs, their brutish necks, and little piggish eyes, and that conception of respect - the goose step. And this was Germany after forty years of blood and iron, and discipline, and government to the last degree, Kultur and so forth ... (2)

In all these discussions about Germany one topic that played a prominent part was that of Kultur, or what Americans understood by that term. In the battle waged between the intellectuals of the two countries in regard to the causes of the war, the Germans appealed to the many scientific and cultural achievements of their nation, and more than once claimed that it was Germany's mission to spread her culture to the rest of the world. It seemed to the Americans that the German people were taking the attitude that they were a superior race aiming at changing the world. (3) Americans could not accept this claim to superiority despite American willingness to accept Germany's lead in so many scientific

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(1) "The War Against Popular Rights", Outlook, 15 August 1914, p. 892.


(3) For the influence of race theories on anti-German sentiment, see below, pp. 66f.
and educational fields. (1) The battle for German supremacy was engaged in the United States as well as in the trenches of Europe, and the roll call of the great discoverers, inventors, thinkers and composers was called again and again by each side. This encouraged further discussion and examination of the great German thinkers, such as Goethe, Nietzsche, Hegel and Kant, to discover their part in the evolution of Kultur. Many of the American writers were willing to admit that there once had been culture in Germany, and names "great and immortal" were listed in evidence of this. (2) But an examination of Germany's more recent history seemed to show that the Prussianisation of the country had entirely changed her character and culture. One writer described this new Kultur, which seemed to be so different from what Americans meant by "culture":

This Kultur ... moves predominantly on the materialistic and technical plane. It operates ... not in the sphere of philosophy or literature or art, but in that of politics and the army and the fleet. Its organisation is conditioned by the temper of the Prussian race ... It is fundamentally materialistic. (3)

The Germans, according to this American view, had renounced individualism in the interests of organisation, had recast their institutions and subdued their soul for the better

(1) New Republic, 4 September 1915, p. 117.
(3) Ibid, p. 555.
service of the state. (1) This was the doctrine of "might is right", so inimical to true culture and civilisation. "A professor and a gentleman, a scholar and a poet? - no, sir, they are not made in Germany". (2)

Each writer had his own definition of the term Kultur, and although they varied enormously, they all had one element in common - they were not flattering. Kultur meant "pig-iron, Krupps, ships, beer, chemicals, discipline, military service and professors ... it was the hell of ruined cities, and violated women and tears and misery and blood and blackened fanes". (3) It had "intimate relations with beer, sausages, potatoes and rye bread". (4) On a more serious level it was defined as the "development of discipline, both self-control and state control" (5), typified by autocratic Prussian militarism, which bent the nation to its own imperious will. (6)

One writer painted this picture of German life:

German life is a vast network of regulation which has been built up without protest ... the spirit of the barracks silently pervades every department of life, and even little schoolgirls (so unlike English or American schoolgirls) never wish to be boys because it is forbidden

(3) Life, 22 October 1914, p. 716.
(4) Sprague, op.cit., p. 160.
(5) Nation, 19 November 1914, p. 599.
for girls to wish to be boys. (1)

The strongly disciplined German culture, always called Kultur by disapproving Americans, showed none of the elements of general refinement, love and practice of the arts exercised for the benefit of the community, or a regard for the equal rights of others, all of which would constitute important elements of American "culture". Hence Kultur, so conceived, seemed to Americans to have nothing to do with "civilisation". (2) In fact, the inference is so often there that Germany and Germans were just not civilised. The accusation was made quite explicit whenever Germany's "crimes" were being discussed. Energy, efficiency and force, declared one writer, constituted the Kultur which the Prussian theory would substitute for the civilisation in which other nations had tried to have humanity and fair dealing limit the activities of force. (3) The various "crimes" of Germany were usually listed as the fruits of Kultur. One indignant American wrote to the New York Times:

The German government with its highly efficient Kultur has ... reverted to a barbarism infinitely more revolting than that of the pre-Christian era. With a cynicism that strikes the heart cold it has torn the sacred laws of contract into scraps of paper, massacred

(1) Ellis, op.cit., pp. 551-52.
(2) Independent, 26 April 1915, p. 133.
Belgium and stealthily murdered American women and children on the high seas. (1)

The more extreme critics blamed the entire war on this degeneration of true culture in Germany. A typical example of this view is taken from a contemporary writer:

America now sees here in Central Europe, coming out of the German lands, an ancient spiritual monstrosity, a surviving primeval enormity, ever and anon breaking forth, whenever it reckons it might be sufficient, to steal or destroy the fruit of man's efforts toward a society that shall be entirely civil and really free. For two thousand years, out of these German forests and fogs, Europe's destroyers have come. (2)

Many critics were prepared to admit that Germany had made valuable contributions to the world's culture and development in various fields. One journal editor wrote:

The Germans write the best-organised symphonies and produce the best-organised steam ship companies. We turn to them for fairy tales for children and for works on bacteriology for physicians. They stand first in the collection of hymns of the ancient Aryans, and in the collection of city rubbish as well. They teach us how to organise hospitals and nourish foreign trade, to plan cities and organise rural credit banks, to make toys and social surveys. (3)

But any claims to absolute superiority were quickly rejected by Americans. Perhaps such claims were not made by all Germans,

(2) Herron, Germanism and the American Crusade, p. 10.
(3) Outlook, 28 March 1917, p. 550.
wrote another journalist. Perhaps the fault lay with the
country's public spokesmen, those "injudicious patriots"
who had asserted for Germany an absolute superiority in every
form of intellectual and moral endeavour. (1) To be sure,
Germany was rich enough in literary treasures to dispense
with idle glorification. Her achievements were of the highest,
but were not the highest. She had neither a Voltaire nor a
Rousseau, neither a Montesquieu nor a Bossuet, neither a
Molière nor a Balzac. Above all, what was best in German
thought and German life was all there before the days of her
military glory and political might. (2)

It was what Americans saw as the militaristic nature of
Kultur to which they objected most. Before long this aspect
of discipline and control, although only one element in it,
became for them synonymous with Kultur. One author wrote:

From his cradle the German imbibes the Teuton
idea of unquestioning obedience to the rule
of the state through the lullaby songs; this
is continued in the patriotic songs which he
later becomes familiar with . . . These
unconscious influences, added to the rigid
discipline of home, church and school, is
capped by the brutality of the drill sergeant
in the barracks in the production of the
finished product of German Kultur. (3)

The same writer believed that the Kultur "movement" in the
United States had been also conducted through the German-

(1) Nation, 8 October 1914, p. 425.
(2) Ibid, p. 426.
(3) William Herbert Hobbs, The World War and its Consequences,
   (New York, 1919), p. 121.
language parochial schools, and the German departments in American colleges and universities, together with the German-language newspapers and the many German-American societies in which the language and atmosphere were those of the Fatherland. (1)

A logical consequence of this view of Germany was the fear of what would happen if she won the war. Then her "much boasted frightfulness" would begin to spread over the whole world, and civilisation as Americans knew it would be doomed. This fear was increased by statements such as that made in a lecture by Professor Munsterberg, that one good result of the European war would be the spread of German culture by the conquest of the entire world. (2) Scholars busily searched out evidence from German writings that the Germans wished in fact to do just this, and came up with various examples, such as the one quoted in a letter to the editor of the New York Times. It told of a society with its headquarters in Berlin, devoted to the advancement of German education all over the world, controlling some sixteen hundred centres. Worse still, it was instrumental in having German taught in five thousand schools and academies in the United States to six hundred thousand pupils. (3) One editor wrote:

(1) Ibid, p. 194.
(3) Ibid, 17 October 1914.
A German victory may thus be expected to create, under German hegemony, an offensive and defensive alliance of precisely the most militant peoples of Europe; Germans, Poles, Swedes, Hungarians, Bulgars and Turks - did history ever record so virile a combination? (1)

Others depicted the results of a German victory more graphically. Life magazine displayed a map of the United States as New Prussia. Canada was labelled "Barbarians" and Florida was renamed Turconia. All the names of American cities were Germanised, some being quite obvious changes such as Von Papen Town, New Berlin and Kruppsburg. But others were more original suggestions, including Heinapolis, Omahoch, Ach Looey and Hyphenburg. In the south-west in Der Grosses Desert was a small American reservation, with only one town, Goosestep. (2)

As usual, cartoons played their part in furthering these ideas on the spread of Kultur. One typical example, under the caption "Kultur has Passed By", showed a young girl hit in a Zeppelin raid over Paris, with her distracted father shaking his clenched fist at the sky. (3)

The apparently strong belief of the German-Americans in an ultimate German victory caused indignation among Anglo-Americans who saw in this expressed faith in the Fatherland an effort by a disloyal section of the population to further the

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(2) Supplement to Life, 10 February 1916.
cause of Kultur in the United States. (1) A worried citizen wrote to the New Republic that if Germany won the war there would be almost civil war with these German-Americans, who would certainly want the rest of the population "to follow the conquerors' chariot". (2) Even Secretary of State Lansing joined his voice to the chorus of fear of a German victory. He wrote:

I have come to the conclusion that the German government is utterly hostile to all nations with democratic institutions because those who compose it see in democracy a menace to the absolutism and the defeat of the German ambition for world domination ... Today German absolutism is the great menace to democracy. (3)

This fear of the spread of German Kultur and its imagined consequences for America and democracy helped create an atmosphere in which involvement in the war was acceptable. With Lansing, many Americans saw the war (and the United States' policy in regard to it) as vital for the welfare of mankind, since they saw in the perpetuation of democracy the only hope of universal peace and progress for the world. (4) German victory could surely mean only one thing - the death of democracy and the extension of governmental control to the minutest features of life. It would mean the abolition of

private choice and initiative and the subjection of all personal aims to participation in a national purpose and the means of executing it. (1) Such a proposition was entirely unacceptable to any American. Americans particularly resented the claim that any form of civilisation worthy of the name could be based on ideas other than their own peculiar concepts of liberty and democracy. Kultur destroyed everything it touched:

In Europe woodlands are torn and twisted by shrieking iron; in place of the perfume of spring flowers comes the stench of rotting horses and pollution that was once brave young manhood. Devastation and desolation and heaps of ruins and charred rafters where houses used to stand... (2)

The feelings of Americans who feared the spread of this evil by the sword were summed up by a contemporary poet:

Should Prussian power enslave the world and arrogance prevail,
Let chaos come, let Moloch rule and Christ give place to Baal! (3)

The idea of the Germans as representatives of the Teutonic race, and therefore as superior to other nations, found its way into many of the discussions on Kultur and the German way of life. Any such notion of superiority was vigorously rejected by Americans. Theories of race had

occupied scholars and influenced the ideas of many people in both Germany and the United States for some decades before 1914. In Germany such theories had contributed significantly to the development of a nationalistic spirit, which, in turn, played a large part in bringing about the war in 1914. Popular, and quite often distorted, versions of these theories helped increase anti-German sentiment in the United States during the period of neutrality.

As early as the opening decades of the nineteenth century, a quasi-mystic cult, devoted to Nordic traditions, sprang up in Germany. John Dewey wrote in regard to this cult:

Patriotism, national feeling and national consciousness are common enough facts. But nowhere save in Germany, in the early nineteenth century, have these sentiments and impulses been transformed by deliberate nurture into a mystic cult. (1)

Patriotic Germans were quick to combine Hegel's explanation of the idea of the state as the absolute reality with Kant's doctrine of moral duty. This developed a national sentiment akin to religious devotion, which was reinforced by a long line of German intellectuals who repeated with increasing insistence the fact that world leadership belonged to the Teutonic race. (2) The writings of Herder helped not only to intensify the national spirit in Germany, but also served as a stimulus to Teutonic pride of race. Even more important was

the contribution of the philosopher, Fichte, who helped in the creation of that aggressive national spirit which appeared for the first time in the wars of liberation of 1813–1815. German historians likewise contributed to this growing race consciousness in the nineteenth century. Friedrich Schlegel's philosophy of history was founded largely on the doctrine that it was the purity and vigour of the German blood which had saved civilisation and regenerated it as it threatened to fall to pieces in the hands of the degenerate Romans. He found the unity of modern history in a Christianity which was derived from the vitalising of Roman culture by the special racial potency of the Teutons, a view that found repetition in the works of Gobineau, (1) and expansion in the works of later American historians. (2) The most extreme and possibly the most influential of the German historians who helped to swell the chorus of triumphant Teutonism was Heinrich von Treitschke. In his lectures and writings he asserted the superior merits of the Teutonic race and also of the Prussian state. The existence of power was justified because without it German culture would perish, and this culture was seen as unique. Even war was justified if it was waged to preserve this power and culture. (3)

(1) This writer is discussed below, p. 69.
(2) There is a lengthy discussion of this influence in Frank H. Hankins, The Racial Basis of Civilisation, (New York, 1931), pp. 51 ff.
More important than any of the above writers, because of his wide influence, was the Frenchman, Count Arthur de Gobineau, who published in 1835 his four-volume work, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*. To Gobineau it was apparent that:

... everything great, noble and fruitful in the work of man on this earth, in science, art and civilisation, derives from a single starting point; it is the development of a single germ and the result of a single thought; it belongs to one family alone, the different branches of which have reigned in all the civilised countries of the world. (1)

This supreme race among men is the Aryan, of which the Germans, said Gobineau, were the purest modern representatives. All civilisation, he asserted, had sprung from conquests of weaker peoples by Aryans, and all had declined when the Aryan blood became diluted by intermarriage. German scholars and statesmen alike accepted these theories and swelled with race pride, making Gobineau an important figure in the history of nineteenth century thought. Largely through the zeal of Richard Wagner, who became a close friend of Gobineau, the doctrine of the divinely ordained Germanic superiority became a virtual cult. Nietzsche, who also knew Gobineau personally, was greatly influenced by his theory of the blond superman who embodied all the greatest virtues of the human race. Another great European exponent of Teutonism was an Englishman, Houston Stewart Chamberlain. He was educated in France and Germany, and became an enthusiastic follower of Wagner, whose daughter

he married. In 1899 he published Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, an important work which shows clearly the influence of both Nietzsche and Gobineau. Chamberlain was the most ardent of Teutonists, and devoted four hundred pages to the story of Teutonic triumphs in every sphere of human achievement. In his work the chapter on philosophy and religion is entitled "From Francis of Assisi to Immanuel Kant", and that on art "From Giotto to Goethe". (1) It is, he wrote, the story of the creation of "a new world", of an "absolutely new order of society", adapted to the character, the needs and the gifts of a new species of man. (2) In the course of time, argued Chamberlain, this Teutonic race may be purified and strengthened by crossings of good Teutonic stock, and thus a race of supermen would eventually evolve. (3) The whole future of civilisation was safe only in the keeping of these Teutons: they alone could conserve what had been achieved, and they alone could advance the frontiers of learning. Compounded with the idea of the duty to spread German culture through the world, by force if necessary, this theory of racial superiority contributed in no small measure to the rapid growth of nationalism in Germany after 1890.

American scholars and writers drew on this Teutonic theory of race. Had not the Anglo-Saxons migrated from Germany to England and thence to the United States? In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the "Teutonic origins" theory was the dominant school of thought among American historians. The English historian Edward August Freeman was widely read in the United States, and had the greatest influence. According to this writer, the Teutons, chronologically the last of the Aryan peoples, and like their predecessors, the Greeks and the Romans, destined to be the rulers and teachers of the world, were recipients of the finest fruits of the racial heritage. Just as among the Greeks and Romans the Aryan institutional heritage culminated in the city state and empire, so the entrance of the mighty Teuton upon the historic scene marked the dawn of a new era in political organisation— that of the nation state. (1) This Teutonic heritage had been carried to the new colonies by the British, to flower in the free institutions of the Republic. The American Teutonists believed that the Anglo-Saxons who settled the American continent were a highly select group; that centuries of historical evolution had fitted them for the task of planting Teutonic institutions in America. The American environment, they argued, had further improved the racial type. "Only the prosperous and strong of spirit undertook voyages in those

days", wrote American anthropologist Ellen C. Semple, "and none but superior types survived". (1) This theory of American institutional origins became closely allied to Social Darwinism. To a generation of intellectuals steeped in confidence, the laws of evolution seemed to guarantee that the fittest races would most certainly triumph over their inferior competitors. And Darwinists happily read "the fittest" to mean "the best". Darwinism easily ministered to Anglo-Saxon pride. (2)

The ancient Teutons, wrote historian Herbert Baxter Adams, had evolved in their councils and village moots "the seeds of self-government, of commons and congresses". In the German forests were developed "the single head of the state, the smaller council ... and the general assembly of the whole people", nuclei of the institutions of Holland, Germany, England, New England and the United States. (3) Such versions of the Teutonic hypothesis found widespread acceptance among most of the late nineteenth century American historians and scholars. At Columbia, Harvard, Yale and Cornell, there were teachers and students alike who all gladly accepted and gloried in their Teutonic racial superiority.

With the outbreak of war in 1914, and the general revulsion

(1) Quoted in Saveth, op.cit., p. 92
(2) Higham, Strangers in the Land, p. 135.
against German ideas of Germanic superiority, the Americans were faced with the necessity of eliminating any Germanic flavour from the Anglo-Saxon tradition. John Higham writes:

This new distinction between hyphenated Teutons and unhyphenated Anglo-Saxons meant, of course, ignoring the latter's supposedly Teutonic origins. The Anglo-Saxonists, in effect, had to secede from the larger Teutonic race - a manoeuvre which they executed with dispatch. After 1915 little more was heard in the United States about the origins of liberty in the forests of Germany. (1)

Any claims to racial superiority on the part of the Germans were now condemned by Americans, who saw such claims as part of a plan to conquer the whole world. H. L. Mencken wrote:

Is the Teuton afoot for new conquests, a new tearing down, a new building up, a new transvaluation of all values? And if he is, will he prevail? ...
Let us not assume his downfall too lightly. (2)

Now "Teuton" became a word of contempt, scarcely better than "Hun" or "Boche", and there were wild flights of fancy among some writers who would explain German militarism on the basis of the racial character of the German people. Germans were pictured as being exposed from childhood to propaganda in regard to Teutonic supremacy:

/They/ have accepted the German legend of Teutonic supremacy in their impressionable years, and there is almost no hope of their escaping it. (3)

(3) New Republic, 19 December 1914, p. 18.
No true American could now lay claim to any part of the Teutonic racial characteristics. A well-known psychologist and writer, G. Stanley Hall, confessed that, owing to his German education, he had been an ardent advocate of Teutonism until 1914. But then he realised that the Teutons had turned their backs upon the traditions of their own golden age of philosophy and humanism, and become possessed with a malign demon of destruction. Thereafter he looked to the Anglo-Saxons to assume leadership of the civilised world. (1) William Hobbs, lecturing in patriotism to American college students, described how, although the Teutons and Anglo-Saxons sprang from a common stock "far back in the past and deep in the shades of the German forests", they had pursued widely differing courses of history:

Along the trail of the Anglo-Saxon we find such landmarks of liberty as Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, the Reform Bills and the Declaration of Independence ... The Teutons can show in their history only the so-called "War of Liberation" from the subjection of Napoleon, to survive under the Williams, the Fredericks and the Frederick Williams of the House of Hohenzollern ... (2)

Any claims to racial superiority were taken as part of the Germans' spurious claim to a superior culture, which they were trying to spread throughout the world by force. It was part of what the Americans opposed when they opposed Germany and all she stood for.

(2) Hobbs, op.cit., p. 114.
This, then, was Germany as seen by Americans. She was a nation determined to conquer the world, and to spread her Kultur by force if necessary. She appeared to be the cause of all the horror of the European war, and in time, wrote a German-American, Germany came to be accused of almost anything: ... from causing cyclones in Kansas to starting revolutions in Mexico, originating Spanish influenza, starting forest fires in Minnesota, firing ammunition dumps or giving the baby the measles! (1)

Americans could not approve of what they believed to be the German ideal. "We believe", reported one of them, "that the doctrine of Matchpolitik, the attempt by Germany to impose a civilisation upon humanity by force, must fail — must be made to fail". (2)

Paradoxically, Americans were reluctant to believe, at least in the beginning, that an entire nation could be so blameworthy as they saw the Germans. It was stated emphatically, many times, that the Americans had no quarrel with "the plain German people", (3) who seemed to their observers in the United

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(1) August Schinderhans, The Truth in the World War, (Dallas, 1921), p. 16.
(2) "Germania, 1914!", Outlook, 21 October 1914, p. 411.
(3) Although Wilson used this phrase as late as his war message to Congress in 1917, House had made this comment much earlier: "He/Wilson/ goes even further than I in his condemnation of Germany's part in this war, and almost allows his feeling to include the German people as a whole rather than the leaders alone." Diary entry of 30 August 1914, Charles Seymour (ed.) The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, (4 Vols., Boston, 1926), Vol. 1, p. 293, (hereafter called Intimate Papers).
States to be of a peace loving and domestic nature. (1) The plain people represented the Germany of high aspirations, of noble ideals and intellectual freedom, to whose spiritual leadership every nation in the world, including the United States, was deeply in debt. (2) What had happened to this Germany of "high aspirations"? Three years after the beginning of the war a journal editor asked the same question, which had troubled many Americans from August 1914 onwards:

How can the same people be at once the chief minister of mercy to the diseased, of vigour to the well, of comfort to the dwellers of cities, of prosperity to tillers of the soil, of efficiency to the organisation of business, of intellectual pleasure to the philosopher, of emotional exaltation to the lover of great music; and of duplicity in the field of diplomacy, even to the extent of bringing on war by forgery, of lawlessness in international agreement, of cruelty and barbarity in war? (3)

Individual Germans surely could not want a ruthless and destructive war in which thousands of ordinary people like themselves would be killed, maimed or left homeless. The means of solving this dilemma, of reconciling their verdict against the nation Germany with their faith in the German people, was found by the Americans in the person of the Kaiser. This "weak" man, himself under the influence of the

(1) Menner, _op. cit._, p. 104.
(2) _Nation_, 13 August 1914, p. 181.
(3) _Outlook_, 28 March 1917, p. 550.
"war party", must have driven his people into a war of conquest that they certainly did not want. (1) The "mute and meek millions" of Germany must surely have gone into the bloody business of war with heavy hearts, supporting the Kaiser and his government only because they had been tricked into believing that Germany's enemies had forced her into it. (2) Thus the feeling against the nation was focussed, in the early months of the war, on the Kaiser. His reputation rapidly worsened in popular opinion, and the most extravagant condemnations were reserved for him. He was the target of an enormous amount of sarcasm, criticism, abuse and misrepresentation. He was, wrote one German-American observer, the most lied-about man of the era. (3) Typical of the more extreme condemnations is one which characterised him as:

... the arch-murderer of the human race, guilty of the blood of his fellow-men to a greater extent than Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and Napoleon combined. (4)

During 1915 the idea of the innocence of the German people began to fade. While the Kaiser still remained the symbol of the militaristic state, the distinction between the people and their government was now made only rarely. The events of the first year of war had been for the Americans a

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(1) Menner, op.cit., p. 105.
(2) Outlook, 7 October 1914, p. 289.
(3) E. Stauffen, Europe Bled White, (New York, 1915), p. 46.
(4) Sprague, op.cit., p. 59.
gradual disillusionment concerning the attitude of the "plain German people" towards the Emperor, and the spirit in which they entered the war. Reports began to appear in the press from travellers recently returned from Europe, or from those who were living in neutral countries or Britain. In the best traditions of enterprising persons in like situations, many such Americans were writing home of their "experiences", and they generally contradicted the idea of a people forced into war against their will. In place of the early popular picture of a vast army of sullen, heavy-hearted men, dominated by the officers of the war party, there emerged one which highlighted the complete faith of the German people in the righteousness of their cause, and their whole-hearted and enthusiastic support of Emperor and government. (1) Americans now had to envisage the plain German people as part of the militaristic system; the modern Germans of business, the scientific, intellectual Germans of tradition, the phlegmatic, beer-drinking, pipe-smoking Germans of American fancies, were all warriors now. (2) This revelation of the unanimity of the German government and people in regard to the war did nothing to lessen the opprobrium in which Americans held the Kaiser. It only meant that the hatred formerly concentrated against him was now directed towards his subjects as well. At the beginning of the war

(1) Menner, op.cit., p. 106.
(2) Outlook, 2 September 1914, p. 38.
public opinion in the United States condemned the Kaiser but not the German nation. After a year of war it condemned both. (1)

Many writers and intellectuals continued to ponder the problem of how the German people had allowed themselves to be turned from their true spirit and led along the paths of "frightfulness" and militarism. They were sure that the true Germany was that of Kant, Schiller and Goethe, of Schubert, Schumann and Wagner, of service to humanity in many fields; and not the Germany of the Kaiser, the war party and the Prussian Junker, who were now in control. (2) Articles and letters to editors probed every facet of German life in an attempt to find the answer. Who and what was the real Germany? they asked. How far did the German philosophers and writers contribute to the formation of modern Germany? What had gone wrong with the education, the plans, the ideals of the nation, to produce the "German super-state, goaded on by the tenets of neo-mercantilism and neo-odinism, imbued with the idea of a mission to reorganise a decadent world?" (3) Fear and mistrust of Germany and Germans increased as the debate progressed, and pro-Ally sentiment increased accordingly because

(1) Menner, _op.cit._, p. 110.

(2) This idea was soundly refuted in the Fatherland, as a mistaken idea of American intellectuals. "There is only one Germany", stated its editor, "united against Barbarian hosts". Fatherland, 14 September 1914.

(3) _New Republic_, 20 November 1915, p. 62.
Americans saw in the possible victory of the Western powers the triumph of democracy and liberalism over autocracy and militarism. (1) The real issue of the war now appeared to be the delivery of the German people from their perverted state, and the restoration of the whole nation to its earlier and true spirit. (2) In the early days of the war some Americans had voiced the hope that anti-war forces within Germany, particularly the Socialist party, would effect a revolution. (3) This hope faded as the war dragged on, in spite of a report that the war had driven large numbers of German liberal voters into the Socialist ranks. (4) The Germans were clearly united in the face of war, and Americans were finally forced to admit that the whole German nation was "guilty" of supporting the Kaiser and his government in the prosecution of the war. This shift of emphasis was accelerated by the sinking of the Lusitania in May 1915, and the resulting long controversy over submarine warfare and America's neutral rights. By mid 1915, anti-German sentiment in the United States was directed against the whole German nation, leaders and people alike.

(ii) Attitudes towards German-Americans

For most Americans the idea of Germany and her people

(3) Outlook, 25 November 1914, p. 678; Independent, 29 November 1914, p. 335.
(4) Mencken, op.cit., p. 559.
was not only a remote European country, populated by unknown men and women. It was much nearer home than that. Millions of Americans bore German names, spoke the German language and, after the outbreak of war, defended the Fatherland vigorously against the attacks of their fellow Americans. It was entirely logical that sentiment against Germany on the part of many Americans should extend itself to these people as well, so we must look at the development of the second facet of anti-German feeling in the United States, that of antagonism towards German-Americans.

According to the census of 1910 there were 8,282,618 persons in the United States who claimed Germany as the country of their origin. Over two and a half million of these were born in Germany, and the rest had either one or two parents born there. Germans constituted a large ingredient of the melting pot; over one quarter of all "foreign white stock".

German-Americans had been coming into the United States ever since colonial days. The political and economic collapse that followed the Thirty Years' War, combined with recurring crop failures in the Rhine Valley, and religious controversy, were the primary causes of German immigration in colonial times. The efforts of colonial land agents and the propaganda of ship companies also played their part. By the time of the

American Revolution the German stock in the newly created United States probably totalled a quarter of a million. (1)

After 1830 there were new waves of German immigrants, drawn to the country by the promise of economic advantages. Ships' companies, railroads, land speculators and new western states eager for population all successfully drew Germans to the United States with the promise of good soil and cheap farms. Political unrest in Germany was only a minor contributory factor, although after the revolution of 1830 the numbers of migrants increased significantly. The numbers jumped spectacularly at the end of the next decade, and reached two hundred and twenty-nine thousand in 1854. This increase was not solely due to the unsuccessful 1848 revolution. Although the newcomers did include doctors of philosophy, graduates in theology, law and philosophy, state officials who had lost their posts, and other radical and liberal revolutionaries, the evidence from American and German sources shows that the bulk of the immigrants who came between 1850 and 1855 belonged to the farming class. (2) German immigration continued after the Civil War, and rose to new peaks after the Franco-Prussian war. Financial troubles and economic disarrangement in Germany resulting from the change to an industrial society, high taxes and the increasing burden of compulsory military training were all factors encouraging

(2) Ibid, pp. 43-44.
migration. Fewer peasants and more industrial workers came during this period, to play their part in the industrial transformation of their adopted country. By 1914 German-Americans were well distributed over the whole country, with definite agglomerations in the middle Atlantic states and the mid-West. They tended to settle in the cities (63% of their total number lived in the major cities) but many were also to be found in the rural areas. According to a governmental survey on immigration in 1910, 28% of all "male breadwinners of German parentage" were farmers. (1)

Although the German-Americans' contribution to the life of the United States was to be questioned by many other Americans in the trying years from 1914 to 1917, this had not been doubted before. One who found much to blame in their way of life was nevertheless forced to admit the important part played by German-Americans in the growth of the nation. He wrote:

In developing our national resources, particularly the agricultural resources of the Middle West, the German-American has had no inconspicuous part. His thrift and industry are proverbial. ... By virtue of his well-known qualities of dependability and prudence he has become a potent influence in the communities in which he has been placed. (2)

A recent historian of the German-Americans gives them a

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very prominent place in the life of the nation. Their influence, he says, has been of decisive importance. The West could hardly have been conquered and developed so quickly without German blood, sweat and muscle. And the Germans' obvious aptitude for science, education and technology, has contributed more than its share to America's unchallenged industrial establishment. (1) German immigrants founded and developed industrial enterprises in the fields of lumbering, food-processing, brewing, steel-making, electrical engineering, piano making, railroading and printing. (2) A considerable part of the German migration was from the intellectual class. The proportion of political and professional leaders was to produce an impressive number of civic leaders in the land of their adoption. A glance at the biographical dictionary of St. Louis for the early twentieth century, for example, reveals hundreds of German-Americans who had attained success in medicine and surgery, teaching, commerce and banking, journalism and politics. (3) German-Americans have produced such diverse and contrasting persons of consequence as Walter Lippmann, Rheinhold Niebuhr, H. L. Mencken, George Westinghouse,

Walter P. Chrysler, Carl Schurz, John J. Pershing, Paul Tillich and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Their record as builders of the nation is inextricably woven into the American fabric. (1)

Since many Germans had come to the New World in previously organised groups, and as they were naturally a gregarious and socially-minded people, they settled principally in communities already populated by their fellow-countrymen. In their homes the Germans tended to keep to the family circle, but in social life they brought a generous measure of joviality to American life. The German immigrant loved his beer and his beer garden, his Sunday picnics and dances and theatrical performances. Good beer and good food and good music went together, and Sundays were especially popular for Ausfluge, picnics and entertainments of many sorts. (2) John F. Kennedy wrote of this aspect of their influence on American life:

To the influence of the German immigrants in particular ... we owe the mellowing of the austere Puritan imprint on our daily lives. The Puritans observed the Sabbath as a day of silence and solemnity. The Germans clung to their concept of the "Continental Sunday" as a day, not only of churchgoing, but also of relaxation, of picnics, of visiting, of quiet drinking in beer gardens while listening to the music of a band. (3)

(1) O'Connor, op.cit., pp. 463-64.
(3) Kennedy, op.cit., p. 53.
The number and variety of German organisations in which German-Americans found expression for their gregarious and convivial instincts is legion. A list, far from exhaustive, would include choral and other musical societies; Kriegervereines composed of veterans of the German army; fraternal and benevolent organisations; societies to unite the Bavarians, the Low German and other German sub-groups; literary and study clubs; societies devoted to lectures and discussions of the arts and sciences; and German lodges of Oddfellows, Masons and Druids. (1) German-American religious denominations retained their own identity also, and societies organised by these for charitable purposes were almost as numerous as those for cultural ends.

After 1901 the National German-American Alliance, dedicated to high cultural aims, was chartered by an act of Congress, and thereafter co-ordinated many of the local activities through its various branch Alliances. The Alliance, which would feature largely in the story of German-American activities for several years, had as its object to bring together citizens of German descent for the pursuit of "such just aspirations and interests as are not inconsistent with the general weal of the country and the rights and duties of good citizens"; for the protection of the German element against "nativistic attacks" and for the promotion of "sound, amicable relations between America and the old German

(1) Wittke, We Who Built America, pp. 216-7.
Fatherland". (1) George Viereck boasted to a German audience in Berlin that the Alliance enjoyed the distinction of being "the most widespread German body that the world has ever seen". (2) In 1914 it claimed a membership of two million. (3) The Imperial German Government did much to strengthen this common bond between German-Americans. The German Ambassador was a frequent and welcome guest at meetings of the Alliance; the Emperor encouraged and endowed Germanic studies in the United States; exchange professorships were set up between German and American universities.

At the outbreak of the war German-language newspapers constituted forty per cent of the total foreign language press in the United States, and played a very important part in binding together the German-American population. (4) To read this press, each new generation of German-Americans had to learn the language, and this was a further binding force. Many German private schools were established in the United States. Three reasons contributed to their foundation. One was the desire on the part of German-Americans to maintain the German language in their new environment by having it taught to their children in the schools. A second was their

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(2) Fatherland, 8 November 1914.
genuine interest in a sound school system, and the third was the belief of some German-American leaders in the middle of the nineteenth century that American culture was at a low ebb. (1) These schools declined in importance towards the end of the century with the rise of a new generation of German-Americans who took advantage of the rapidly developing public school system. But German remained by far the most popular modern language in the high schools, where (before 1914) students taking German numbered at least three or four times those who studied French. (2)

By the end of the nineteenth century some German-American leaders were urging their fellow-countrymen to blend more readily with the American population, and advising them not to cling too strongly to the customs of the Fatherland. If one looked very closely at the German-American population, certain cracks could be seen in the solid structure, which widened rather than diminished during the placid pre-war days. The Germans in America, following so many changes, following the sinking of the nativist threat to the status of a remote memory, following the immigration of so many who would not conform to the old patterns, were losing that cohesion which had marked their earlier years in the Republic. (3) It would

(1) Wittke, We Who Built America, p. 232
(2) Independent, 5 April 1915, p. 5. See below p. 93, for the effect of war on this.
seem that the melting pot was doing its work by successfully absorbing this large group into the homogeneous mass which is the United States.

The events of the years 1914 to 1918 were to show how little integration had really taken place, and how little acceptance there was of German-Americans on the part of the Anglo-Americans. The latter found to their sorrow that the melting pot had not been able to erase in a decade what the process of centuries had wrought on the hard metal of racial consciousness. (1) A contemporary German-American reflected:

When the cold draft of war blows upon the mess, the fusion process is retarded and recrystallisation takes place along the internal lines of fracture. One part cools, the other gets red-hot, and presto! there is a pronounced division. (2)

The division was that between "hyphenated" and "unhyphenated" Americans, or between those who were loyal to the United States and those whose sympathies seemed to belong to one of the belligerents of the European war. Since German-Americans constituted by far the largest immigrant group, and since public opinion on the whole quickly lined up on the side of England and her Allies, "hyphenated Americans" soon became

synonymous with German-Americans. America's frank and preponderant sympathy for Germany's enemies transformed the natural sympathy of the German-Americans for their blood relations at home into a bitterness against the United States and her people. (1) The failure in the process of Americanisation was evident from the early months of the war.

The first reactions of most German-Americans to the outbreak of war in Europe did not differ greatly from those of other Americans. They were surprised, startled, shocked. But following on this came a long period of severe emotional crisis, and a conflict of loyalties which was to last until the end of the war. That the German element should be pro-German during the period of American neutrality was to be expected, for it was as reasonable to be pro-German as to be pro-Ally in a country which was officially neutral. But as feeling intensified in the United States, and the campaign of denunciation of Germany and all things German gathered momentum, German-American voices were raised in defence of the Fatherland in ever-increasing volume. The incessant attacks on the war aims and methods of the Central Powers, the persistent efforts to trace all accidents in American munitions factories to German plots, and the increasing practice of contrasting the unselfish aims of the Allies with the fiendish conduct of their adversaries, undoubtedly made many German-Americans more violently pro-German than they would other-

wise have been. (1) Men and women whose integrity and fundamental decency had never before been questioned, now found it necessary to defend their good names before their fellow-citizens, and in their ardour to vindicate the German viewpoint and their own reputations, sometimes overstepped the bounds of discretion and good sense, thus adding fuel to the flames. (2)

All those virtues and activities of the German-Americans which previously had been praised now came under suspicion. Here was an "alien" group, one whose speech and customs were very different from those of Anglo-Americans. It was easy to exaggerate these differences and to make them appear evil and undesirable. The well-organised features of German-American social and cultural life were now regarded as part of a well-laid plan to sweep the United States into the pan-German movement of the Kaiser; German-American newspapers, societies, churches and schools were seen as media for German propaganda. (3) While there was still praise for the part played by the German-Americans in developing the material aspects of their adopted country, they were criticised for

(1) Carl Wittke, German-Americans and the World War, (Columbus, 1936), p. 22.
(2) Ibid, p. 4.
not taking a greater part in the social life of the nation. They had been indifferent to the great moral, political and religious questions of the United States, declared one writer. This, to him, seemed to indicate a less than perfect loyalty to their new home. (1) There were those who blamed Americans themselves for the failure completely to Americanise the immigrants. One wrote:

We had assumed that, having carefully inspected the immigrant for contagious diseases and a few other matters, before letting him loose upon our soil ... to struggle with that new and pervasive lawlessness which we call American opportunity, he would, straightway, certainly after a few years, become an American. (2)

Among the many reasons given for this failure to make real Americans out of the German immigrants was the failure to insist on English as a common language:

We have allowed the development of community after community in which English is rarely spoken ... The German press is allowed to say what it likes in America but not in Germany. (3)

There was agitation in some quarters for the suppression of the German-language press, which contributed so largely to this retention of the mother tongue. (4) School textbooks which were even faintly "tainted" with propaganda were attacked. In a spelling book in use in the Chicago schools there was a

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(4) Ohlinger, Their True Faith and Allegiance, p. 52.
short eulogy of the Kaiser, and in June 1915, editors of certain foreign-language newspapers other than German protested to the Board of Education about this. These men found the story offensive to lovers of liberty, since the Kaiser had become "the bloodiest murderer in the entire history of the world."(1) The popularity of German as a foreign-language study declined as citizens' leagues and defence councils pleaded with parents not to let their children study the language of the Kaiser. When schools and colleges re-opened in September 1914, the "entrance and optional German classes" fell to a small proportion of their former size in many parts of the country. The students who declined German studied, instead, Spanish and some of the Slavonic languages. These classes had been "swamped", and many educational institutions found it difficult to engage enough teachers in these subjects.(2) In many cases German teachers were transferred to other subjects, sometimes to teach "American citizenship".(3)

It was not only German customs and institutions that were attacked. German-Americans themselves were soon under fire. A journal editor wrote:

By a natural logic the execration we at first reserved for the German government and general staff soon extended itself to

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(2) Independent, 5 April 1915, p. 5.
(3) Wittke, We Who Built America, p. 236.
the German army and people... It was equally inevitable that this should create further resentment among the mass of Americans of German blood. We cannot say that the German in Europe is brutal, amoral, servile, and expect his kin in this country to acquiesce in our opinion or even cherish friendly feelings towards us. (1)

German-Americans' objections to such criticism brought charges of all sorts upon themselves. In the press the charge of disloyalty, of un-Americanism, was dominant. But it seemed to the harassed hyphenates that nothing was left unsaid. "Is there never to be an end of these continuous slanders and insults?" cried one of them. "We are called perjurers, unneutral, faithless and a lot more". (2) Kuno Francke, a well-known German-American who tried to keep the peace whenever possible, called it a "most fantastic campaign of slander and vilification". (3)

The real hurt to German-Americans, wrote Walter Lippmann, was not among the advertised figures against whom the editorials were written. It was among the "voiceless men and women, whose relatives were dying in Europe, whose standing in America was threatened". And there were good Americans who increased the hurt, who stopped trading with German butchers, who discharged German servant girls, who turned and scowled.

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(3) Letter to the editor, New Republic, 13 May 1916, p. 42.
when they heard the German language spoken. (1) The Chicago
Presse, (a German daily), editorially complained that
Americans in Chicago were discriminating against German-
Americans in the city, where many German dealers had been
blacklisted. Grocers and butchers especially were affected
by this practice of "neutral Americans" refusing to patronise
their German-American fellow-citizens. (2) German-American
businessmen and tradesmen elsewhere also lost all or part of
their Anglo-American customers for no other reason than that
they or their parents had been born in Germany. German
professional men and women, teachers and artists, suffered
the same fate. (3) Mention is always made of the German
music teachers, who apparently abounded because of the German
love of music, and now were boycotted along with the rest of the
hyphenated population. (4) It was a risky business for any
German-American to criticise the administration, as the
example of Ernest Bruncken showed. He was employed as
Assistant Register of the Division of Copyright in the
Library of Congress, after having practised law for some
years in Minnesota. In May, 1916, he was dismissed from
office, "for remarks alleged to have been disrespectful to
Wilson's submarine policy." (5)

(1) "Patriotism in the Rough", New Republic, 16 October 1915,
p. 278.
(3) Ferdinand Hansen, Pillory and Witness Box, (Hamburg, 1920),
p. 25.
(4) e.g. New Republic, 10 February 1917, p. 40.
German-Americans in the United States had to pay dearly for the sins of their countrymen in Europe. The editor of New Republic wrote:

We know of one good American who has given up his German baker because of the barbarity of Von Tirpitz, while another patriot, a university graduate, is already looking forward to the day when we shall intern all these wrong-headed hyphenated Americans who talk too much.(1)

Theodore Roosevelt expressed his sentiments regarding the "wrong-headed hyphenates" in a letter to a New York writer. The motto "E Pluribus Unum" on the coins and seals of the United States, he said, might well be changed into "language adapted to the needs and speech of the present day United States", and the motto ought now to read "To hell with the Hyphen".(2)

From Grand Rapids, Michigan, a German-American wrote in 1915 that it was becoming every day more unpleasant for Germans in the West. Already the war had cost him his former position, and he was forced to work for a German firm of manufacturers for less money. He continually received insulting literature in his mail. His final plea must have been echoed by many of his compatriots: "Can a good German-American citizen who came over to the United States forty years ago to make an honest

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living no more be left alone?" (1) Harvard was reported to be full of German sympathisers because of the many German academics there. A hyphenated American wrote in this regard:

> How would you feel if at every turn you were suspected of being one of the Kaiser's spies, and were told that Harvard University is full of them? Can you imagine hearing this from a Harvard student, who is sure that one of the spies rooms above him? (2)

Loyal Americans were expected to give up their association with hyphenates. When he appeared before the Subcommittee of the Judiciary to give evidence in regard to German propaganda, a certain Mr. Alexander Konta, who claimed to have been pro-German until May 1915, but to have changed his allegiance after the sinking of the Lusitania, was challenged on the grounds that he had continued to associate with German-Americans after that date. In vain he protested that continued association did not necessarily mean sympathy with their ideas. He exclaimed:

> I had known these people ... You know people and you do not throw them over-board. If we had done that we would have had to sever our relations with every neighbour. (3)

(3) Senate Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Judiciary, Hearings on Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda, 66 Cong. 1 sess. (1919), p. 723. (Hereafter called Brewing and Liquor Interests).
Hyphen hunting became the favourite sport of the super-patriots, and they found it everywhere; at least everywhere in the German-American portion of the population. A typical attitude was expressed by one writer thus:

If we do not actively distrust our citizens of German birth, most assuredly we should not trust them. We should watch them constantly, scrupulously. (1)

In spite of its presence there, the hyphen in the names of other immigrant groups, and above all in the name Anglo-American, did not constitute hyphenism. Presumably longer residence on the continent had caused the hyphen to disappear for the descendents of the English and Scottish immigrant. When Theodore Roosevelt, one of the most ardent opponents of hyphenism, wrote on the subject, he was referring almost exclusively to German-Americans. (2) Those who supported the Allies or who favoured American assistance to them apparently considered themselves to be more truly American than those who opposed such attitudes. Support for the Central Powers was disloyal or unneutral, but support for the Allies was not. Congressman Barthold drew attention in the House of Representatives to this anomalous situation:

If sympathy for Germany is an evidence of disloyalty, as is claimed by our traducers, you will agree that sympathy for the Allies is exactly the same thing, and if that be true, we would be confronted

with the monstrous fact that the whole American press printed in English, with but a few exceptions, is disloyal to the United States. (1)

The evidence given by several witnesses before the Committee in regard to German propaganda confirms this idea. Whenever such persons were pressed to prove their patriotism, they stated that they were anti-German. Protesting against the inclusion of his name in a list of those allegedly supporting German activities, one gentleman declared:

> My ruling passion since the war began in 1914, has been, and is, concrete patriotic service. (2)

It is quite clear from the context that this "patriotic service" was anti-German. Even the President made it plain that he did not extend to German-Americans and (he would add) the Irish-Americans, the same confidence he had in the Anglo-American majority. This attitude was evident in a 1914 speech in which he attacked those Americans who needed hyphens in their names because only part of them had come over to their new home. (3) Wilson discussed with House the possibility of an uprising by German-Americans in the event of war (4), and continued to express his misgivings publicly. (5)

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(1) *Congressional Records*, 63 Cong. 3 sess. (1915), p. 4124.
(2) *Brewing and Liquor Interests*, p. 1655.
(4) See below, p. 247.
(5) Address to the Daughters of the American Revolution, 11 October 1915; speech to the Manhattan Club, 4 November 1915, both reported in the *New York Times*.
and active minority" to which the President made reference in his Flag Day speech in 1916, wrote a contemporary, was the German-American group, swayed by sentiment for Germany and following the dictates of Teutonic agents in America.(1) With the President of the United States thus publicly questioning the loyalty of German-Americans, it was not difficult for the press and professional propagandists to make others accept the insinuations. A German-American wrote:

"Are you aware that we were given the name of German-Americans by what Whitney Warren calls real Americans? I have been told over and over that I am a German, no matter how long a citizen ... therefore if the hyphen is objectionable, the fault should not be placed on us."(2)

Repeated calls went out from the "loyal" portion of the population for the hyphenated Americans to protest their loyalty. It is difficult to see clearly what was expected of them. Were they simply to stop making public their support of Germany, or were they to go further and prove their loyalty to America by supporting the Allies? The German-Americans blamed the influence of the British press for the almost unanimous sympathy of Americans with the Allied cause. According to Congressman Barthold they bitterly resented the "unneutral efforts" of the press "to poison the fountainheads of American public opinion against Germany". They clung to

(3) Congressional Records, 63 Cong. 3 sess. LII, Part 4, (1915), p. 4125.
the view that if Americans could be properly educated in regard to Germany's ideals and aims, such unneutral conduct would cease. They could see no reason why they should not protest their love of and loyalty to the Fatherland, because in their view this did not make them disloyal to the United States. Kuno Francke wrote:

The demand that German-Americans come out at this particular time with eager protestations of loyalty to the government of the United States is tantamount to the assumption that their conduct has given ground for suspecting their loyalty. This is a wholly unwarranted and mischievous assumption. (1)

When prominent German-Americans like Francke or Professor Hugo Munsterberg, came to the defence of Germany or tried to correct what they saw as distorted views of their native land, they were shocked and hurt by the indifference with which their efforts were received, and usually had to suffer further accusations of disloyalty as a result. Bernstorff later asserted that everyone who openly stood up for Germany's cause was stamped with the expression "German propagandist", and as such, as a person of doubtful integrity. (2) Another German who had lived in the United States gave the following evidence:

From the beginning the Americans always looked upon our propaganda as "illegitimate"... Everything that we ever did... whether

(1) New Republic, 13 May 1916, p. 42.
(2) Bernstorff, My Three Years in America, p. 38.
we wrote to the American papers, or whether German-American associations defended a given view, this was always denounced as "German propaganda" and to this ... was always attributed the underlying purpose of indulging in illegal methods opposed to the interests of the Union. (1)

Two special areas where Anglo-Americans found fault with the hyphenated population were their attitude to prohibition and their association with the Irish-Americans. The German's traditional love of beer was a well-known characteristic, and the National German-American Alliance gradually became involved in the fight against prohibition. This gave "loyal" Americans one more ground for complaint against German-Americans during the period of neutrality. Rheinhold Niebuhr wrote:

The prohibition movement has come to express the most enlightened conscience of the American people ... In his attitude of opposition as well as in his attitude upon other issues, the indifference and hostility of the German-American to our ideals is a betrayal of the ideals of his own people. (2)

Part of their opposition to the movement, wrote another observer, was probably based on their belief that prohibition was peculiarly representative of Puritanism, which was, in turn, the typical product of the Anglo-Saxon spirit. (3) A spokesman for the Alliance declared that the prohibition

(2) Niebuhr, op.cit., p. 17.
movement was directed at "German manners and customs, the joviality of the German people". The final result of the link-up between the brewers and the Germans was a Congressional investigation. The Senate passed a resolution stating:

The organised liquor traffic of the country is a vicious interest because it has been unpatriotic, because it has been pro-German in its sympathies and conduct. (1)

Although this investigation did not find any direct connection between the Alliance and German propaganda, (which was the specific charge laid against it), it did show that the brewers, many of whom had German names, had contributed money towards the propaganda cause. (2) But in the public mind Germans, anti-prohibition sentiment and disloyalty were all somehow connected.

The Irish, because of their understandable grievances against the British and their attitude that Britain's enemies were not necessarily Ireland's enemies, were drawn into common cause with the German-Americans during the war. As early as January 1907, the National Alliance had reached an agreement with the Ancient Order of Hibernians for "the good of the Republic", whereby both societies were to oppose entanglements of any kind "with any foreign power"; to prevent the enactment of laws "abridging the personal liberties of citizens"; and to

(1) Brewing and Liquor Interests, p. iii.
(2) Ibid, p. v.
combat the "restriction of immigration of healthy persons from Europe". (1) By 1914 other Irish organisations were willing to be included in the pact, and in some localities Irish-German-American Leagues and Boards of Mutual Conference were set up, thus further hyphenating the citizenship of the members. (2) The German-Americans joined in the celebration of Irish holidays; resolutions of sympathy for Germany were adopted at Irish-American meetings, and leaders of both groups frequently spoke on war questions from the same platforms. Irish-American leaders were especially popular as speakers at German-American gatherings. (3) The Irish rebellion of 1916 was seen by many Americans as a German-inspired movement, "hatched, at least in part" in the office of a German embassy official in New York City. (4) Two weeks after the event it was stated that evidence of complicity with German plotters, and of German money and arms, was alleged to be in the hands of the English government. (5) Twelve months later the rebellion was still being used to illustrate German "frightfulness":

What did the Kaiser care for an Irish Republic? Nothing. All he wanted was an Irish insurrection. And so his tools

(3) Wittke, German-Americans and the World War, p. 25.
cajoled Casement with lying promises of help ... And so Irish blood was poured out for the greater glory of the Hohenzollerns. That was the maddening thing!(1)

This "strange partnership" between "the well-known Prussian temperament and the equally well-known Celtic temperament" was reflected in the situation in the United States and tainted both groups with the charge of disloyalty.(2)

It is not easy to decide how much real cause for antagonism the German-Americans gave. They realised from the first that the United States could not and would not lend aid to Germany, and that the blockade of Germany, while preventing the less idealistic of America's business firms and industrialists from supplying the Central Powers with war materials, would allow them to supply the Allies. They therefore concentrated their greatest efforts on impressing upon the people of the United States the need for a strict interpretation of neutrality. From their point of view this was the best thing they could have done. The storm of opposition that this aroused was unquestionably out of all proportion to the numbers and real influence of the German-American population. Hugo Munsterberg described the situation thus:

The tragic conflict was unavoidable. The German-Americans rejected the anti-German onesidedness and as this onesidedness had

(1) Outlook, 14 March 1917, p. 457.
(2) Nation, 18 May 1916, p. 531.
become the creed and the passion of America, the German-Americans suddenly appeared anti-American. This is the psychological core. They had become "Kaiserites"; they served Germany instead of their own country—a crushing accusation; and yet no act and no word can be offered as evidence. (1)

One very natural result of the increased anti-German feeling was increased activity on the part of German-Americans. Humanitarian work of all kinds, for the benefit of the widows and orphans of fallen German and Austrian soldiers, began shortly after the declaration of war in 1914, and continued until the entry of the United States into the conflict made such activities illegal. German-American newspapers, churches and organisations of every kind solicited contributions and promoted various ventures to raise money for this cause. The newspapers accepted contributions for the German Red Cross and for the relief of suffering in the Fatherland, and from day to day published itemised accounts showing the amounts collected. (2) Bazaars and theatrical performances, concerts, sewing clubs and many other ingenious methods were devised to help raise funds. (3) Even these associations were seen by "loyal" Americans as further illegal activity on the part of German-Americans. One observer wrote of these efforts:

It is among the German-Americans pre-eminently that societies are being formed to promote in this country the interests of their Fatherland, and

(2) Wittke, German-Americans and the World War, p. 30.
(3) Ibid, p. 35.
perpetuate the sense of undying fidelity to it. (1)

Even more suspect were the many mass meetings of protest held by German-Americans in various parts of the country. After a series of these held early in 1915 to demand real neutrality and freedom of trade for all countries, there was much indignation expressed and good advice given in the form of letters to the editor of the New York Times. An editorial reply commented:

The so-called German-Americans have apparently forgotten their oath of allegiance to the United States ... They/ are going too far with their pro-German leagues, their threats of what the German vote is going to do at the polls ... (2)

The National German-American Alliance, well organised and co-ordinating a large number of activities, came strongly under suspicion. At its annual conference in August 1915, the Alliance declared that unless the immigration laws were modified, Germans would return in great numbers to the Fatherland. This called forth a scathingly caustic comment from the editor of Nation, on what the departure of such figures as George Viereck, Hugo Munsterberg and Dr. Hexamer (3)

(3) Editor of the Fatherland, eminent Harvard professor, and president of the Alliance respectively.
would mean to the country:

> It would rock our nation to its very foundations. Our best culture would disappear over the ship's side, our truest guardians of the national conscience would be borne away from us. (1)

At this same meeting the Alliance decreed a new national holiday, American Day, to be celebrated on 19 October, the anniversary of the surrender of Cornwallis, so that Americans would never forget the day they were freed from British control. The state branches of the Alliance were directed to form special classes outside school hours for instruction in German literature and history, now so sadly neglected in the schools. (2) It did seem as if the German-American part of the population was glorying in its Germanism, and organising itself in all sorts of ways to resist the process of Americanisation and to preserve as perfectly as possible its national characteristics.

Even when the German-Americans tried by their activities and at their meetings to demonstrate their loyalty, their intentions were misunderstood or suspected by many other Americans. One typical example was a large meeting held in Washington in January 1915. According to Congressman Barthold, the purpose of the conference was to direct the activities of German-Americans into "loyal American channels".

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(1) *Nation*, 12 August 1915, p. 194.
It was a remarkable gathering, he continued, not pro-German but decidedly pro-American, attended by heads of great church and civic organisations of all parts of the country; Republicans and Democrats, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics, Protestants and Free Thinkers, all joined for the common purpose of insisting on the observance of "strict and genuine neutrality as defined by all American presidents from George Washington to Woodrow Wilson". (1) But this is not how the editor of the New York Times saw it. To him it looked like "a plan of operations deliberately intended to embroil us with a friendly nation", and to commit the United States government, for the benefit of Germany, to acts of unneutral interference in the war. He concluded:

Never since the foundation of the Republic has any body of men assembled here who were more completely subservient to a foreign power and foreign influence, and none ever proclaimed the un-American spirit more openly. (2)

This reaction was fairly typical. Barthold commented that the pro-English papers denounced the platform of the conference with a "blind fury", and rushed to the defence of British interests against the so-called hyphenated Americans, foreigners and traitors. (3) There was much talk of a "German lobby" and of a "pro-German plot". The Literary Digest

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(1) Congressional Records, 63 Cong. 3 sess. (1915), p. 4126.
(3) Congressional Records, loc.cit., p. 4127.
reported "grave misgivings" in the press. The conference was bitterly attacked in the New York Sun, Globe and Herald, as well as in the Boston Transcript, Springfield Republican and Philadelphia Public Ledger. It was denounced by the Brooklyn Eagle as "a close resemblance to treason". (1) Barthold drew attention to the fact that the New York Times had deliberately reversed the position which the conference had taken with regard to American and foreign interests. The last resolution adopted by the conference stated:

We pledge ourselves ... to support only such candidates for public office ... who will place American interests above those of any other party and who will aid in eliminating all undue foreign influences from American life. (2)

But the New York Times interpreted it thus:

When the representatives of German-American societies pledge themselves publicly ... to oppose all candidates for office who will not sacrifice American interests to German interests, they are straining American patience to breaking point. (3)

It was clear that any interpretation of neutrality that included reference to both Britain and Germany was offensive to many unhyphenated Americans. German-Americans resented

(1) Editorial opinion quoted in Literary Digest, 13 February 1915; also New York World, 2 February 1915.
(2) Platform of the conference quoted in Fatherland, 10 February 1915.
(3) New York Times, 1 February 1915. See below, p. 166 for the activities of this conference in relation to the arms trade.
this "most-favoured nation" treatment systematically accorded to Britain. It seemed to them that the United States government was using "kid gloves against England and the mailed fist against Germany". (1)

Each time further activities of German-Americans roused the opposition of their fellow Americans, there was a great deal written in the press about the special allegiance which the immigrant or son of immigrants should give to the United States as the land which had given him asylum. Americans seemed peculiarly blind to the difficulties of shedding one's ethnic ties, even in the United States, that land of opportunity for the unfortunate and homeless. One observer commented:

- The alien should in some way be endowed not merely with citizenship papers, but with an American mind, American sympathies, American ideals, and with so large a degree of detachment from Europe that European affairs would no longer have more than academic interest for him. (2)

When this transformation did not automatically take place, the native American was angry and incredulous. If America was worth coming to, it was worth paying the price of complete renunciation of the old country. When, perversely, the German-Americans clung to their love of Fatherland, and publicly voiced their sympathies, they were accused of "divided allegiance and downright disloyalty". (3)

(1) Congressional Records, loc.cit., p. 4125.
(3) Congressional Records, loc.cit., p. 4124.
With a large and growing proportion of the population in sympathy with the Allies and antagonistic towards Germany, it was inevitable that events in Europe would influence public opinion in the United States. The reaction of Americans to these events meant an increase of anti-German sentiment, which further exacerbated the already strained relationship between German-Americans and the greater number of their fellow-Americans.
CHAPTER 3

EVENTS WHICH INCREASED ANTI-GERMAN SENTIMENT: FOREIGN

(i) Invasion of Belgium

While Americans were still adjusting themselves to the idea of war in Europe, Germany committed the first of her "crimes", an event which helped most of the citizens of the United States to answer more quickly and satisfactorily the question they were already debating. Who was to blame for the war? Antagonism towards Germany as a nation was increased and intensified in the United States when the Germans invaded Belgium on 4 August 1914. This event had a tremendous effect on American public opinion. Americans seemed unable to discuss any phase of the war in which Belgium featured without throwing reason to the winds. Some years later Count Bernstorff testified before the Reichstag Committee of Inquiry into the causes of the war:

Throughout the entire war, the Belgian question was the one which interested Americans most and which was most effective in working up public opinion against us. Up to the time of the Lusitania there was absolutely nothing else in the entire mass of anti-German propaganda in America except what bore upon Belgium. (1)

Americans agreed with him. Writing in October 1915, a journalist, reviewing the events of the first year of war, stated:

...There is one psychic phase of the war which rose to consciousness after the first weeks, which maintained its poignancy throughout the vicissitudes of months, and needs only to be mentioned to re-assert its grip on our hearts. This is the sorrow of Belgium... After a year of war, and ten million men in the casualty lists... after Zeppelin and submarine, yes, even after the Lusitania,... one need only mention Louvain to find the emotional centre of this dreadful year. (1)

According to others, this invasion of Belgium was much more than the "emotional centre" of the war; it was still remembered three years later, and contributed to the final break between Germany and the United States. The debate in Congress on Wilson's war message in 1917 brought the event into prominence once more. Congressman Linthicum of Maryland voiced a typical sentiment when he said:

That the German Government could think of its solemn treaty /with Belgium/ as a "scrap of paper" came as a sharp awakening to the American public ... In the violation of Belgium, the burning of her cities, the devastation of her fields, the slaughter of her women - in these things Germany laid the foundation for the present hostility of this Republic. (2)

During the period of neutrality little was written on German-American relations that did not refer to the event in some way. It always came first in any list of German "crimes", no matter how long the current list or the actual topic under discussion,

and was usually cited as the most conspicuous example, albeit the first, of Germany's policy of "frightfulness" and "militarism". The editor of Outlook wrote:

The outrages of Belgium are a natural outcome of the German military party's doctrine of national conduct. The doctrine which German military authorities have preached, German military forces have practised ... the weak nation has no right against the strong, and the only efficient and defensible rule is the rule of the mighty. (1)

This invasion of a small, neutral country was, for Americans, a "crime against civilisation" (or alternatively, "humanity") a "wanton violation" of the country. There were many and lengthy descriptions of Belgium's "unspeakable agony", of "Belgium prostrated" and "trampled into a bloody mire". A pamphlet issued by the Liberty Loan Committee to help its cause described the invasion and occupation of the country in terms common to most contemporary descriptions:

[It] is a long black story of unspeakable crimes. Brigands ... pillaged houses, cut down orchards and vineyards ... burnt cathedrals and libraries, mutilated old men and women, violated little children ... crucified Canadian officers and Roman Catholic nuns ... and thrust little children between themselves and the Belgian and French soldiers defending their native land. (2)

Since a treaty existed between Germany and Belgium, Americans were particularly outraged by the invasion, for they apparently

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(1) Outlook, 7 October 1914, p. 298.
placed great faith in the binding force of treaties, greater than the facts of history would warrant. The President spoke strongly of Germany's disregard of treaty obligations and was indignant at the German Chancellor's designation of the Belgian treaty as being only a scrap of paper. (1) So the "scrap of paper" joined the clichés of war time, and became a symbol both for the barbarism of the Germans, who could so easily tear it up, and for the courage and honour of Belgium, taking its place with such symbols of faith as the flag, the ring and the cross. (2) The United States and her citizens, remembering a heritage of struggles over neutral rights in the war of 1812, and already meeting difficulties in this regard in a world again at war, seemed unable to forgive the Imperial German Government for striking thus at a neutral state. A debate was soon in progress through the columns of the press as to whether Belgium really was neutral, with the pro-German view insisting that the manoeuvre through the country was a military necessity to forestall a French invasion of Germany through Belgium. But the technicalities of the situation paled into insignificance before the American vision of a defenceless country sacrificed to the doctrine of "might makes right", a vision heavily underscored by the newspaper reports of the progress of the war. The unexpected force of

(2) "The Symbol", Outlook, 11 November 1914, p. 560.
the Belgian resistance certainly surprised Germany, if not the whole world, and the American press made much of this heroism. "Belgians Wipe Out Whole Regiments of German Invaders" ran an early headline, (1) while another reported "Belgium Believes its Soil May See Battle That Will Settle Europe's Fate". (2) There were numerous reports of individual and collective heroism on the part of the Belgian soldiers and of the high morale of those defending their native land. Such an admirable fighting spirit had a particular source, according to one news report:

The heroism of Belgian resistance has astonished the world. It has surprised the Belgians themselves. The war is the ... opportunity for the expression of a new Belgian democratic spirit ... /They/ are defending, each man for himself and for his neighbour, their responsible share in an increasingly popular government. (3)

Here one can see the beginnings of what was to become an important part of anti-German propaganda, the fact that Germany was warring against democracy. The atrocities reportedly committed during the invasion, (4) increased the poignancy of the reports coming from Belgium. During the night of 24 August a Zeppelin dropped bombs on Antwerp, (the capital after the early occupation of Brussels), killing about ten persons;

(1) Washington Post, 6 August 1914.
(2) New York Times, 8 August 1914.
(3) Ibid, 15 August 1914.
(4) See below, pp. 126-7.
and wounding others. These, of course, were "innocent men and women", according to the reports. One journal featured a photograph of a Zeppelin, with the caption: "The New Vulture of the Sky. Dropping Bombs on Sleeping Women and Children is the Newest Method of Warfare". (1) There was a great deal of pictorial matter illustrating the invasion, pictures of burning houses, damaged public buildings, refugees fleeing from the battle zone. "Hungry and homeless, by grace of the War Lords", was the caption of a picture of eight children and three babies. (2) The Belgian royal family featured significantly in the news reports. The king was constantly with his soldiers, comforting the wounded and encouraging all ranks by his presence. Reporting this, the New York Times devoted two columns on its front page to a eulogy of Albert:

[He] is a lovable figure, full of enthusiasm and patriotism ... The King is beloved by the army. It is known that he has vowed to perish at the head of his soldiers, defending Belgium's patrimony, rather than bow the knee to Germany. (3)

It was also reported that the Queen had visited a military hospital, where she listened to the soldiers' stories and asked after their families. (4) The two "boy princes", saddened by war, were described visiting a Brussels school on

(1) Independent, 7 September 1914, p. 339.
(4) Ibid, 14 August 1914.
15 August, the Feast of the Assumption, and a national festival day:

After wandering around the courtyard and speaking in subdued tones to several well-known people, they inscribed their names in the autograph book... The shadow of grief hangs very heavily over these royal children. I have never seen boys with such sad faces... Even the resounding cheers of the school-children could not bring smiles to their pale faces. (1)

A photograph of the King bore the inscription "The Proudest Ruler in Europe", and two years after the invasion a speaker at a Belgian protest meeting in Carnegie Hall, New York, was characterising Albert as "that Bayard sans peur et sans reproche", who for the honour of his country and the welfare of mankind, "put at hazard his crown, his throne and his life". (2)

A great deal of space was given in the press to the hardships caused to the civilian population by the invasion. One reporter described:

... the unspeakable agony of hundreds of thousands of non-combatants... now wanderers on the face of the earth - fatherless, perhaps, or widowed, homeless and forlorn and almost hopeless. (3)

The New York Times published a description of a refugee encampment in Paris which was occupying a former circus

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(2) Address given by J. M. Beck on 15 December 1916, (pamphlet, n.p.d.p.)
(3) "Desolated Belgium", Nation, 8 October 1914, p. 423.
building. Recognising the extreme susceptibility of Americans to any thought of children suffering, the writer made good use of such a circumstance. Instead of children's happy laughter in response to the clowning fun, he wrote, all that could be heard in the great rotunda was a "low ground swell of lamentation, broken here and there by the sharp cries of babes". (1) The plight of such refugees was kept constantly before the American mind, and late in October the New York Times stated that seven million of them faced starvation. Ambassador Whitlock in Brussels was reported to be living on "peasants' black bread" with only two weeks' supply left. (2) Organisations for the relief of the Belgians were established and patriotic Americans knitted, gathered foodstuffs and donated money for distribution in the country. By early November the Belgian Relief Fund totalled nearly four hundred thousand dollars, and the editor of Nation was urging his countrymen to even greater generosity on behalf of a "people crushed beneath the weight of affliction". (3) The Commission for Relief in Belgium was seen by one editor as the greatest single agency for lessening the terrible sufferings caused by the war; (4) an insinuation, probably unrealised by the writer, that the greatest sufferings were in Belgium.

(2) Ibid, 27 October 1914.
(3) Nation, 12 November 1914, p. 572.
(4) New Republic, 4 December 1915, p. 104.
Descriptions of the invasion given by the returning Americans who had been stranded on the continent at the commencement of the war, and by other alleged eye-witnesses, were used in the press to good effect. One such gentleman painted a "graphic picture of the state of Belgium", where the stench from the shallow burial trenches was unbearable, and the bodies in such graves "often cut by the wheels of passing artillery". (1) The significant aspect of this particular report (and the same is true of many others like it) is the fact that the reader is left to presume that the "passing artillery" is German artillery. No other nation, it is inferred, could be capable of such barbarity. Another American described the entry of the German army into Louvain:

Round the corner swung the head of an infantry brigade, giving full voice to "Die Wacht am Rhein" ... They wore heavy, knee-high cowhide boots ... [which] struck the road with a concerted shuffling thump that shook the earth ... The horde was still pouring through when we awoke. It was to pour through without intermission for three days until earth and air and sky became one great grey machine to manufacture death. (2)

Theodore Roosevelt, although not an eyewitness, wrote equally impassioned descriptions of the fate of Belgium, and joined loudly in the general condemnation of Germany for her actions. But he also used the occasion to press home his point, by this time already a familiar note in his speeches

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(1) New York Times, 1 October 1914.

and writings, of the necessity for war preparation at home. "This cataclysm, this frightful and crushing disaster to Belgium", had occurred precisely because no effort had been made in the country to prepare for just such an attack. (1)

The ancient city of Louvain was enveloped by the German armies in the movement that included Brussels, in the fourth week of the war. What happened there on 25 and 26 August became the subject of intense debate, but it left much of the city in ashes, including the cathedral and the ancient Catholic University with its irreplaceable library. Louvain had become "the name that is written on the heart of the world". (2) The German report stated that Louvain residents had fired on the occupying troops, but the Belgians insisted that the German guards had fired by mistake at German soldiers fleeing from the nearby areas of battle. The "official" report from London stated:

Without inquiry and without listening to any protest, the German commander announced that the town would be destroyed immediately. The inhabitants were ordered to leave their dwellings ... and soldiers with bombs set fire to all parts of the city ... /Louvain/, the intellectual metropolis of the Low Countries, is now nothing more than a heap of ashes. (3)

The Washington Post described in detail the "Last Days of Louvain":

(1) Roosevelt, Fear God and Take Your own Part, p. 383.
(2) Irwin, op.cit., p. 355.
After a night of incendiarism and execution in the streets... the Germans killed the Burgomaster, magistrates, Police, the Rector of the University and 300 men and boys. At 5 o'clock the next morning, ... all the priests were taken out by the soldiers and shot together with eight Belgian soldiers, six bicyclists and two game-keepers. (1)

This destruction added to the intensity of anti-German feeling in the United States as being further evidence to Americans of the Germans' insensitivity to real culture and tradition. As reported in much of the press, the action appeared as wanton destruction on the part of "an unknown German military commander", and as such was "absolutely unjustified by the rules of war". (2) But such was the confusion of conflicting reports that on the same page as the "official" report quoted above, the New York Times carried the following report cabled from Antwerp:

The news which came from Malines today suggests that this action at Louvain was not the result of the mad rage of a body of soldiers, but is part of a deliberate plan to fight the Belgian army with such weapons as to immobilise it without too great an expense of German soldierly. (3)

Again there was a great deal of pictorial evidence in the press, and all through the latter part of September and into October 1914, the destruction of art treasures and buildings

(2) Outlook, 9 September 1914, p. 67.
in Belgium was kept before the public eye by means of photographs in the magazine sections of the press.

The destruction of the University library was widely publicised as an act of unparalleled vandalism, and the very mention of its loss moved some scholars to outbursts of tears. (1) An American intellectual called for a combined protest by the universities of the United States, so that the same fate might not befall the Sorbonne, the Louvre, and even Oxford and Canterbury. (2) "The ruined walls of Louvain are a silent accusation of German militarism which no words can ever refute", declared the editor of the New York Tribune (3) while another commentator wrote:

> If we dwell as we do on the crime of Louvain it is because its significance lies in the revelation ... of the character of that militarism which dominates the councils of the Kaiser and of the German imperialist bureaucracy. (4)

The fact that for all their bravery and heroic resistance, the Belgians were defeated and their country occupied, did nothing to diminish American sympathy. Indeed, Belgium now had the added glory of having been completely "sacrificed" to German militarism. She now became "poor little Belgium",

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(2) Letter of Professor J. Garner, University of Illinois, Nation, 8 October 1914, p. 431.
(3) Quoted in Current Opinion, Vol. LVII, November 1914, p. 303.
(4) Nation, 3 September 1914, p. 269.
who had paid dearly for her attempted independence. She had stood in the path of an almost invincible military power, "an heroic protagonist of the principle of nationality", and had illustrated the "indomitable spirit of humanity, unafraid in the presence of almost certain disaster".(1) What did Belgium do to deserve such treatment? demanded Senator Pittman, recalling her agony two years later. He answered his own question:

... Little Belgium had the honour and the bravery to protect its rights against an inevitable defeat ... Oh, yes, Belgium has been punished and it is a little, helpless nation. The Belgians, women and children, have been punished because their husbands and fathers did nothing but defend their rights.(2)

In her defeat Belgium had passed into the realm of legend. It was a legend that would be used to good effect in all the anti-German propaganda during the years of neutrality. From the time of the actual event until America entered the war, the press continued to reiterate that American public opinion could never forget Belgium nor forgive Germany for this act. A great wave of indignation had swept over America because of this "criminal act"(3), and American public opinion had "but one judgement - and that a stern one", for Germany's action.(4)

The invasion of Belgium was the first in a long list of "crimes"

(1) "Heroic Belgium", Outlook, 21 October 1914, p. 412.
(3) Outlook, 9 September 1914, p. 68.
(4) Independent, 14 September 1914, p. 365.
which greatly intensified anti-German sentiment in the United States during the years before she finally entered the war.

(ii) Atrocities

Close on the heels of the invasion of Belgium came the first reports of the misbehaviour of the German soldiers. These were quickly met by countercharges from Germany, and the atrocity propaganda war was under way.(1) This quite substantially added fuel to the flames of anti-German feeling in the United States, and helped to confirm Americans in their view of Germany's "frightfulness". From submarine sinkings to insulting an officer; a thousand different acts of war were labelled atrocities by both sides. War is necessarily brutal, but Americans, still in their last years of innocence, had seemingly forgotten the horrors of Andersonville and of Sherman's march through Georgia. They had conveniently forgotten that terrible things could, and did, happen when men fought each other with deadly weapons. They had forgotten that in every large army there must be a "proportion of men of criminal instincts whose worst passions are unleashed by the immunity which the conditions of war afford".(2) Atrocities were to play their part in converting public opinion in the

(1) Some historians argue that the atrocity propaganda was a deliberately calculated move on the part of the Allies to gain the support of the United States. See, for example, J. M. Read, Atrocity Propaganda, 1914-1917, (New Haven, 1941).

United States during the years of neutrality.

The first atrocity stories came from the confused days of the invasion of Belgium during August 1914. The Germans marched into the country prepared to end the war quickly in a swift thrust to France. The Belgian civil population evidently did not understand the nature of "modern" warfare. Patriotic Belgians did their best to assist their country's cause by attacking (and even killing) German officers and soldiers. The Germans apparently confused the actions of civilians with those of soldiers, and punished the non-combatant population unjustly. Hostages were taken, buildings destroyed, and sometimes individuals or groups were executed. Reports of atrocities of all sorts soon appeared in the American press. Counter charges and contradictions followed. The Belgians accused the Germans of killing priests, women and children, and the Germans stated that the Belgians had dragged German women naked through the streets by the hair, that a Belgian boy had killed the commander of the Germans in Louvain and that the Austrians had killed twenty young girls in a single house. On 19 September, the New York World carried a report by a Belgian officer of the atrocities he had seen in the field, and on the very same page a denial of the current atrocity stories by an American journalist just

(1) Peterson, Propaganda for War, p. 53.
(2) Bryce Report, pp. 32-33.
(3) Nation, 3 September 1914, p. 266.
returned from Europe.(1) The same paper reported a few days later that the Kaiser's generals had issued orders that no Frenchmen were to be spared; all prisoners and wounded were to be killed.(2) Some other returning Americans also stoutly denied the atrocity stories. The most notable of such denials by those qualifying as eyewitnesses was a declaration drawn up in the first week in September 1914, by five American correspondents, Roger Lewis of Associated Press, Irvin S. Cobb of the Philadelphia Public Ledger, Harry Hansen of the Chicago Daily News, and James O. Bennet and John McCutcheon of the Chicago Tribune. These men had spent two weeks with the German armies in Belgium and were unable to substantiate "a single wanton brutality". (3) Bennet stated that he had interviewed an average of twenty persons in each of a dozen towns he had visited, and found only one instance of a non-combatant who had been killed without justifiable provocation. (4) But the American public still received and read long reports on atrocities. Even when a report was received of an atrocity story proven to be faked by an Englishman, the editor of Independent took the occasion to moralise. He wrote:

We must not conclude from the two instances ... which we have cited, that the Germans may not have been

(1) New York World, 19 September 1914.
(2) Ibid, 26 September 1914.
(3) Ibid, 7 September 1914.
brutal in Belgium ... The armies ... comprising all the able-bodied men of a country, must include the most brutal and depraved men to be found outside the insane asylum and the prison.(1)

The inference here seems to be that the Germans, rather than the Belgians or the French, were brutal and depraved. The American public, even so early in the war, believed the Germans capable of anything.

The Belgians, evidently with a view to gaining the sympathy and support of the United States, dispatched a mission to the country, composed of leaders of the majority parties. These delegates saw President Wilson on 16 September 1914, and handed over documentary evidence their government had compiled, but not before Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, had protested against this betrayal of neutrality by the United States in receiving the delegation.(2) Wilson's reply was cautious and diplomatic, but a summary of the text left with the President was released to the press, together with two cables on the most recent examples of German brutality.(3) Although the New York Tribune and other papers advised caution and expressed the hope that charges against Germany would be disproved by further evidence, stories of all sorts of atrocities continued to appear in the press quite regularly. The sinking of the Lusitania, the worst

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(1) Independent, 1 February 1915, p. 148.
(2) Foreign Relations of the United States: Supplement, 1914, p. 793.
"atrocities" of all because it involved Americans, not Belgians or other Europeans, brought more litanies of charges against Germany. (1) This list in Nation is typical:

The "scrap of paper", the execution of hostages, the sacking of towns, the imposition of fines in Belgium, the use of asphyxiating gases in Flanders and the poisoning of wells in Africa, the sinking of the Falaba, the Gulflight, and now the Lusitania - never was there a more conspicuous example of terrible consistency. (2)

In May 1915, the British government published the Bryce Report on atrocities in Belgium. (3) The chairman of the committee, Lord Bryce, was popular in the United States since his stay in Washington as Ambassador, from 1907 to 1913. His colleagues were reported in the American press as "men accustomed to weighing human testimony", and to "sifting out the true from the false". (4) The New York Times printed the whole text of the report in three consecutive pages under heavy headlines, (5) and Nation declared that a suspension of judgment in regard to atrocity stories was no longer possible in view of this report which constituted an indictment of the German army in Belgium and the north of

(1) See below, pp. 148-150.
(2) Nation, 13 May 1915, p. 523.
(3) The Bryce Committee was officially named the "German Outrages Committee", and was appointed by the Prime Minister on 15 December 1914.
(4) Nation, 20 May 1915, p. 554.
France which was at once shocking and crushing. (1) The atrocity issue was once more front page news.

How much real evidence is there in the actual report of the "fiendish torture", the "slaying of the children and aged like cattle", the "ravishing of women of every age" of which the headlines and journal articles speak? There is a great deal said about the drunkenness of the soldiers, due to the large quantities of wine pillaged in villages and country houses in both Belgium and France. (2) This condition, even if exaggerated, could perhaps account for some of the things which actually occurred. The destruction of property is very heavily stressed; again the Americans, deploiring this, had forgotten what the Civil War did to the South. One cannot judge the motives of those who destroyed property in Belgium, but a reading of the report leaves the impression that there were no justifiable motives, and that it was all merely "wanton" destruction. The other atrocities cited run the whole gamut of offences; the killing of civilians, bayonetting of children, the cutting off of women's breasts and children's hands and the violation of women and girls. All of these are reported as being part of a plan, systematic and deliberate, countenanced by the officers of the German

(2) Bryce Report, p. 31.
army. (1) Considerable doubt has since been thrown on the veracity of much of the evidence on which the report was based. Most of it was given by Belgian refugees in England to men other than those specifically named on the committee, (2) but this point is irrelevant in the present context. At the time of its publication the report confirmed all the American ideas of the brutality and inhumanity of the German soldiers and increased their conviction that the war was being fought to save the world from autocracy and militarism.

In October 1915, the German army tried and convicted an Englishwoman, Nurse Edith Cavell. A fresh outcry was raised against the Kaiser and the nation which could do such a fiendish thing. Nurse Cavell soon became the personification of all the "innocent" people who were being crushed under the German war machine, and her execution came to be the second ranking atrocity story of the war. (3) This English nurse was in charge of a nursing school in Brussels, founded in 1907 by a certain Dr. Antoine Depage in an effort to raise the standard of nursing in Belgian hospitals. After the invasion of Belgium she and the nurses of the school were occupied in caring for the wounded who were brought in large numbers to the city, and then for the refugees who poured in from the

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(1) Bryce Report, p. 48.
(2) Read, Atrocity Propaganda, p. 205.
(3) Peterson, Propaganda for War, p. 61. According to this writer the Lusitania was the first.
devastated towns in the wake of the German advance. (1) Brand Whitlock described her, probably romanticising somewhat in view of later events:

She was a frail and delicate woman about forty years of age ... She was a woman of refinement and education; she knew French well; she was deeply religious, with a conscience almost Puritan ... Everyone who knew her in Brussels spoke of her with that unvarying respect which her noble character inspired. (2)

Nurse Cavell was arrested on 5 August, 1915, and charged under German military law. She confessed to having hidden in her home English and French soldiers, as well as Belgians old enough to bear arms, all wanting to go to the front. She had given these soldiers money to enable them to travel to France and helped them to leave Belgium by finding guides to conduct them across the Dutch frontier. (3) She said she had helped over two hundred soldiers in this way. (4) At her trial, when asked why she had engaged in such a dangerous business, she replied quite simply that otherwise these men would have been shot by the Germans, and that she was only doing her

(3) Letter of the Chief of the Political Department of the German General Government in Belgium to Whitlock, 12 September 1915, Lansing Papers, Vol. 1, p. 49.
duty to her country by saving their lives. (1) After being held incommunicado for nearly two months, she was brought to trial with about thirty others on 9 October, and sentenced to death. This news reached Whitlock on October 11, and there were hurried negotiations by both the American and Spanish Legations in Brussels, in an attempt to have the sentence changed or postponed. Whitlock was in bed with influenza but he sent a plea for mercy by two Embassy personnel, who accompanied the Spanish Minister to the German political department headquarters. These men had to wait for the German officials to return from the theatre, and when they finally met Baron von der Lancken, chief of the Political Department, he refused to believe that the sentence would be carried out so quickly. He was persuaded to phone the prison, and returned to say that the execution was indeed planned for the next morning. The American and Spanish officials pleaded their case until after midnight, but nothing could be done. Edith Cavell was shot early on the morning of October 12. (2)

The first reports reaching the United States were confused and contradictory, but there was no confusion in the attitude of the press towards the event. The Literary Digest summarised press comment throughout the nation:

A thrill of horror swept over a shocked world when the news came from Brussels.

(1) Lansing Papers, Vol. 1, p. 59
of the execution of Edith Cavell ... This act has met with universal reprobation ... (1)

There was not a single day from 19 October to 4 November, 1915, on which the New York Times did not carry some news of the case, and it continued to be featured quite frequently until the end of November. There were several aspects of the story as it finally appeared which made it good press in the United States. The apparent confusion and haste in regard to the sentence and execution (2) caused some to believe that the American deputation had been deceived, and that the sentence was carried out quickly in order to prevent any further intervention on the part of the diplomats. (3)

Because the affairs of the British Embassy in Brussels had been taken over by the American Embassy after the German invasion, (4) Nurse Cavell was under the protection of the United States. This fact, according to some editors, made the whole affair appear as an insult to the United States:

Her secret trial and hurried execution (not making it possible for Whitlock to intervene) was a studied affront to the American minister at Brussels and

(1) Literary Digest, 6 November 1915, p. 1001.
(2) This confusion is shown quite clearly in the documents on the case in the Lansing Papers, Vol. I, pp. 52-53. The German official who received the deputation from the Embassies was apparently unaware that the execution had been planned for the following morning.
(4) Journal of Brand Whitlock, p. 36.
therefore to the American nation. (1) Edith Cavell was very quickly compared with Joan of Arc, hailed as a martyr of patriotism and judged completely innocent of espionage (the charge for which she was executed). That the Germans would execute a woman was taken as evidence that they did not pay "such respect to women as English and American courtesy requires", and proved them markedly inferior to the men of those two countries. (2) Nurse Cavell apparently showed considerable bravery at her execution, refusing to have her eyes covered, and this was given due emphasis in the press reports. The first story of the event reaching the United States stated that she fainted before she reached the place of execution, and was shot in the head by the officer in charge of the firing squad as she lay there. (3) Later reports changed this version, and reported that she was fired at by the whole squad, shot in the leg and then shot as she lay on the ground. This latter version, of course, was more sensational and newsworthy. The same report affirmed that some of the soldiers who had been forced to take part in the execution had wept, and that the priest who was present, overcome with horror, was now suffering a nervous breakdown. (4)

(2) Independent, 1 November 1915, p. 506. The women of the United States were at this very time fighting for the suffrage and were having a long, hard battle. The American respect for women did not yet extend to the arena of politics.
Much was made of Nurse Cavell's aged mother in England, and the brutality of the sentence imposed by the Germans was contrasted with that passed by the English who had recently sentenced a convicted woman spy to prison for six months. This was certainly Germany's "crowning atrocity", and an example of her "incomprehensible stupidity", which had struck the world with horror. It was, according to the editor of Nation, an act calculated to arouse the indignation and scorn of mankind. He continued:

That the original blunder of invading Belgium should now have been capped with the huge mistake of putting to death an English nurse in Belgium shows how slow the German high command is to learn moral lessons. (1)

This act, wrote another editor, which was the "fruit of the stern, blind German devotion to the ruthless ideas of militarism and state power", was a "poignant reminder" to the rest of the world of what would happen if, through a German victory, her "unspeakably horrible ideas should come into dominance and the hands of the clock of civilisation be turned back a thousand years." (2) The fact that from this time Nurse Cavell's execution was always included in the lists of Germany's "crimes" is evidence enough of its place in the promotion of anti-German sentiment. She became the symbol of all the women and children who had suffered at the hands of the Germans in their ruthless conduct of war.

(1) Nation, 28 October 1915, p. 509.
Another "atrocity" which caused such a disturbance that it threatened to jeopardise the current peace efforts of the President was the compulsory removal or deportation of Belgians to work on German farms and in German factories in 1916. The German government asserted that the measure was designed to relieve unemployment in Belgium, but the American State Department interpreted it as a means of releasing German workmen for military service. (1) Bernstorff later reported that the deep-rooted antipathy towards Germany on the part of the entire press of the United States on account of the invasion of Belgium received a new impetus from this further policy. The indignation of the press over the "slavery" to which the Belgians were being subjected was, he continued, a "widespread, deep-seated and genuine emotion". (2) The newspapers and journals certainly devoted much space to the topic, with angry editorials and reports of this latest suffering inflicted on the "innocent" Belgians. A representative of the German government, von Bissing, explained the German position in a long interview with a correspondent of the New York Times. But the editor of the Times recalled that the responsibility of Edith Cavell's death lay with von Bissing,

(1) Lansing to Wilson, 21 November 1916, Lansing Papers, Vol. 1, p. 43.
and he, at least, was not prepared to accept the German's explanation. (1) The Philadelphia Public Ledger thought there had not been such a tragedy since the fierce barbarous tribes swept over Europe. (2) Once again the inference was that the Germans were the "new barbarians". Such expressions as "huns", "Attila" and "Hohenzollern slave traders" were used by almost all writers on the topic. Lansing was aroused to "an intense feeling of abhorrence" by a practice which seemed to him a "reversion to the barbarous methods of the military empires of antiquity" and suggested to Wilson that some way be found to bring moral pressure to bear on Germany to abandon the policy. (3) Wilson replied in the affirmative, stressing the point that the German policy was harming his efforts at peace making. He considered it one of the most unjustifiable incidents of the war, and was disturbed that he could express such judgements in private only. (4) The ensuing official protest was of no avail and the whole matter, coming soon after similar deportations from Lille and apparent failure in official American efforts to relieve sufferings in Poland and Serbia, only hardened the opinion in the United States that

(1) New York Times, 12 November 1916
(2) Quoted by Bernstorff, Official German Documents, Vol. 2, p. 1034.
the Germans were capable of any brutality and outrage.

It is evident that the "atrocities" of various kinds associated with the war, and their sensational reporting in the press, had a marked effect on anti-German sentiment. They were an important factor in preparing Americans to accept the idea that if they entered the war it would not be such a terrible step. It would be for them a war to end all wars, to end "Prussian militarism" and barbarism, which was responsible for all the present human suffering. It would be a war to save civilisation, democracy and the rights of people, a war for the liberty of the human race. The editor of the New York Tribune wrote at the end of 1916:

The one thing that is certain is that there cannot be peace between Germany and civilisation while Germany remains the exponent of all things that mean the destruction of civilisation and the denial of common humanity. (1)

Added to all her other crimes, atrocities helped to confirm Americans in their opinions and strengthen their case against Germany. According to a German official there was, by November 1916, a very strong party in existence in the United States which regretted that America had not already taken up the fight against Germany on the side of "civilisation and freedom". (2) Atrocity stories had played a large part in bringing them to this opinion.

(1) Quoted in Literary Digest, 25 November 1916, p. 1397
(iii) The Lusitania and Submarine Warfare

Every record of the years of America's neutrality has, of necessity, to devote a great deal of space to the matter of submarine warfare. It was around this question that America's position of neutrality revolved, and it was, according to Wilson's war message to Congress on 2 April, 1917, the stated reason for the United States' declaration of war against the Central Powers. (1) The sinking of the Lusitania was the central point of the whole controversy, and it intensified anti-German feeling in the United States to a greater degree than anything else, except perhaps the invasion of Belgium. After the sinking of this ship, wrote Bernstorff later, "the conversion of American public opinion was as good achieved". (2) The legal technicalities of the situation, whether the Lusitania was carrying arms, and whether the sinking of the ship was an infringement of American neutral rights, have engaged the interest and attention of scholars ever since the event. (3) My concern with the controversy in this study is entirely in regard to the effect it had on the growing anti-German sentiment in the United States. This crisis was of such gravity that some Americans thought war with

(1) Congressional Records, 65 Cong. 1 sess. (1917) p. 103.
(3) e.g. Alice M. Morrissey, The American Defence of Neutral Rights, (Cambridge, 1939); Karl E. Birnbaum, Peace Moves and U-Boat Warfare, (Stockholm, 1958)
Germany must be the result. War was averted, but the resulting increase of feeling against Germany was a major step towards creating an atmosphere in which the final break was made inevitable.

Great Britain's blockade of Germany, and Germany's answer in the form of submarine warfare during the last months of 1914, caused a good deal of indignation in the United States. In fact it created something of a sensation in the press. The New York Tribune described it as a "Threat of Lynch Law against Neutral Shipping", and the New York Evening Sun characterised it as "A New Zone of Horror". (1) When the German government, on 4 February, 1915, declared all waters surrounding Great Britain and Ireland a war zone, the American government took a firm stand. In a note dated 10 February, Wilson stated:

If the commanders of the German vessels of war ... should destroy on the high seas an American vessel or the lives of American citizens, it would be difficult for the Government of the United States to view the act in any other light than as an indefensible violation of neutral rights ... The Imperial Government can readily appreciate that the Government of the United States would be constrained to hold the Imperial Government to strict accountability for such an act of their naval authorities. (2)

In the ensuing controversy the phrase "strict accountability" was to become the central issue. In the actual text of the

(2) Bryan to Ambassador Gerard, 10 February 1915, Foreign Relations, 1915: Supplement, p. 95.
note no distinction is made between American ships and those of the belligerents. In other words, the presence of an American on any ship would give that ship an immunity that a belligerent itself could not have claimed. America's protest, with its challenging threat of "strict accountability" was founded on the false premise that the United States was privileged to speak not only for American vessels and their personnel, but also on behalf of American citizens on Allied or other vessels. (1) This confusion was the basis for the intense feeling about the sinking of the Lusitania, which was, after all, a British ship, and therefore liable to attack by the Germans according to the ordinary rules of warfare. American public opinion, as reported in the press, applauded the President's firm stand, as expressed in the note, and took it for granted that Germany would respect their neutral rights according to his definition of them, confused though it may have been. "We do not consider it possible", wrote the editor of Nation, "that any German commander of a submarine, unless he had gone crazy, would deliberately carry out the threat of the German admiralty". To sink a neutral vessel thus, without stopping to inquire what would become of the passengers and crew, he concluded, would be an atrocity tinged with madness. (2) For the moment the problem of American travellers on belligerent

(2) Nation, 18 February 1915, p. 186.
ships seems not to have concerned anyone. Those who discussed
the issue were thinking of American ships. The German
government replied to the note politely, but firmly, assuring
the United States that they had no desire to harm neutral
rights, but stating that the war situation demanded a
continuation of the declared policy. (1)

After this exchange of notes Americans continued to travel
abroad in the restricted area, and commerce between the United
States and British ports increased rather than decreased. But
in view of the stand taken by both governments it appeared
certain that some event must soon occur to strain relations
between the United States and Germany. Lansing wrote:

The situation is growing more and more
delicate, and ... we are liable at any
time to have a disaster over there which
will inflame public opinion. (2)

The editor of Current Opinion expressed it more forcefully:

The vast military vortex that has already
sucked in such a large portion of the
civilised and semi-civilised world is now
drawing with clearly increasing force,
all the neutral nations that have ships
to sail or commerce to carry ... All
the rights of neutral nations ... are
in danger of being blown into thin air
by the changes in naval warfare wrought
by the submarines. (3)

(1) Lansing Papers, Vol. 1, pp. 354-358
(2) Lansing to Wilson, 15 February 1915, Lansing Papers,
Vol. 1, p. 353.
The first American casualty occurred on 28 March, when a German submarine sank a small British liner, the Falaba, outward bound from Liverpool to West Africa. Among those killed was an American citizen, Leon Thrasher. The reaction of the American press was violent. "Barbarism run mad", a "triumph of horror", a "humiliation to all the world", "shocking bloodthirstiness" and similar phrases filled the editorial pages. (1) Lansing set to work to draft a note to Germany, and produced one whose language was, in his own words, "plain almost to harshness". It denounced the sinking of the Falaba as an outrage, and a "flagrant violation of international law and international morality". (2) American public opinion, he told Bryan, would never stand for a colourless or timid presentation of a case in which an American citizen had been killed by "an atrocious act of lawlessness". (3) The inflaming of public opinion which Lansing had foreseen had begun. It was intensified on 1 May 1915, when the American tanker, Gulflight, was torpedoed. During the explosion of the ship the captain died of heart failure and two sailors were drowned when they jumped overboard. This latest outrage seemed to Lansing a sign that the German

government meant to force a rupture with the United States. (1)

It was condemned strongly in the press in language which was beginning to sound familiar. One author put it thus:

To attack without warning non-combatants, whether of a neutral or a belligerent nation, is not war; it is a crime. If done deliberately it puts the combatant who does it on the plane of the pirate and the highwayman. (2)

According to most commentators this event, because it involved an American ship, threatened the most serious complication that had yet arisen between the United States and Germany. (3)

Both these infringements of America's neutral rights were still being discussed, at the official level and in the press, when the sinking of the Lusitania on 7 May, 1915, blotted everything else out of the news.

The British liner Lusitania, "largest, fastest and finest" ship in the Atlantic service, sailed from New York on 1 May, with almost thirteen hundred passengers on board, including a number of Americans. Many New York papers that morning carried an advertisement, over the name of the German Embassy, in some cases printed right next to the notice of Lusitania's departure, warning travellers of the dangers to be

(2) Outlook, 12 May 1915, p. 59.
(3) Nation, 6 May 1915, p. 484.
faced when travelling on any ship flying the British flag, or that of her allies. (1) Although Lansing was disturbed by this "formal threat" to American citizens, (2) it did not seem to worry the prospective passengers, and apparently only one of them cancelled his passage. Captain William Turner assured reporters that there was no danger of the ship being torpedoed, and in the city office of the Cunard Line the general manager denounced the notice as a German trick to cripple the company's business. (3) Six days later as she was nearing the end of an uneventful voyage, the Lusitania was torpedoed off the Irish coast. In eighteen minutes the ship sank, and the death roll totalled 1198, including 128 Americans.

The American reaction to this event can only be described as hysteria. On Saturday, 8 May, the morning papers carried bigger and blacker headlines than they had used since the early days of the war, and the event drove all other news from the front pages. The New York Times reported the sinking in eight solid pages, and the two following days had three and five pages, all devoted entirely to the subject. Outlook filled fourteen pages with every aspect of the "Lusitania "Massacre". "In this great crisis", wrote one editor, "it is

(2) Lansing to Bryan, 1 May 1915, Lansing Papers, Vol. 1, p. 381.
necessary for Americans to remain calm ... If the Germans have gone mad, all the more reason for us to keep our heads." (1) Yet his own, no less than the other editorial pages of the nation, blazed with indignation and horror at this latest German "crime":

The law of the nations and the law of God have been alike trampled on. There is, indeed, puerile talk of "warning" having been given before the Lusitania sailed. But so does the Black Hand send its warnings. So does Jack the Ripper write his defiant letters to the police. Nothing of this prevents us from regarding such miscreants as wild beasts ... (2)

The New York Times demanded an immediate warning to the Germans, "who make war like savages drunk with blood", to cease making such war on the United States. This editor declared that in the history of wars there was no single deed comparable in its inhumanity and its horror to the sinking of this "great steamship". (3) The editor of Outlook wrote:

We do not know the individual who is responsible for this piracy on the high seas ... The time will come ... when the ghosts of his murdered victims, innocent of wrong, will surround with their accusing voices this now exultant assassin. (4)

The editors could not find words strong enough to condemn Germany and her methods of war. The Philadelphia Evening Ledger

(1) Nation, 13 May 1915, p. 527.
(2) Ibid, p. 527.
(4) Outlook, 19 May 1915, p. 104.
rendered this judgment:

The German government is without a leg to stand on, barren of humanity, a monster of monsters, immoral and unmoral, barbarous and savage, a war machine without soul ... a pariah among nations, a composite criminal ... certain sooner or later to languish in the hell of payment and go down in utter ruin. (1)

If this sounds like fairly lurid language for a conservative paper, commented the editor of Current Opinion who quoted the passage, it was no more lurid than that of many other conservative papers. (2) Nor could the writers find words adequate to describe this new crime. It was a "deed for which a Hun would blush, a Turk would be ashamed and a Barbary pirate apologise". (3) It was deliberate slaughter of innocent American citizens who should be free on any ship to go about their business without being murdered. (4) The Germans, it was said, had "devised" this crime of slaughtering innocents so as to outstrip in hideousness "all that had gone before, or that had entered into the imagination of man to conceive". (5) It was an offence against humanity, piracy, a mad defiance of God and man, murder "exultantly avowed". (6)

(2) Ibid, p. 384.
(3) Nation, 13 May 1915, p. 527.
(4) New Republic, 15 May 1915, p. 27.
(5) Nation, 13 May 1915, p. 527.
(6) Outlook, 19 May 1915, p. 103.
Nothing that the "bloody buccaneers" did in the days of "pure and unconcealed piracy" could surpass it in the "fiendishness of the spirit that inspired it" and the "means that carried the terrible plans into direful completion". (1) The sinking of this ship, stated the editor of Life, was just one more example of "frightfulness", a flash of terrorism to scare all "into submission to the Lords of the Earth". (2) There was a great deal more in the same vein. Condemnation of the act, the editor of Literary Digest was forced to admit, seemed to be limited only by the restrictions of the English language. (3) Cartoons reinforced the written condemnations, and carried the same message. Numbers of small children pointed accusingly at the Kaiser from the ocean, crying "Why did you kill us?" (4) while in another a leering Kaiser pushed women and children below the water as a life-belt marked "Lusitania" floated by. The caption reads "God is with us". (5) The pulpit joined in the general chorus of attack against Germany, and preachers used the same terms as the editors. Dr. John Henry Jowett of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York denounced the sinking as "a colossal sin against God, and premeditated murder", and the Reverend Thomas Van Ness, of

(2) Life, 20 May 1915, p. 902.
(3) Literary Digest, 15 May 1915, p. 1133.
(5) Ibid, p. 381. See Appendix III.
the Second Unitarian Church, Brookline, called it "murder and piracy in the name of patriotism." (1) The general mood was one of unrestrained anger, and a number of newspapers that were usually more sober and responsible took the lead in what seemed to be a demand for an immediate declaration of war against Germany. (2) Lansing confirmed this report, stating that most newspapers were demanding at least the breaking off of diplomatic relations, if not war. (3)

Many editorial writers accused the Germans of planning the sinking. The more sensational reports repeated such phrases as "deliberate", "planned", "pre-meditated", while the New York Times, with only a little more restraint, reported that "the evidence of deliberation, of an intent to destroy this particular ship", was too nearly conclusive to be ignored. (4) The impression given is that the crime was thus planned simply because there were Americans aboard. In fact, both the submarine and the Lusitania were off course when the attack occurred. Although the U-boat, commanded by Captain Schwreger, had been instructed to sink all enemy boats, there is no evidence available to suggest it had specific

(1) New York Times, 10 May 1915. The whole page consists of reported sermons on the topic of the sinking.
(3) War Memoirs of Robert Lansing, p. 27.
instructions to sink the *Lusitania*. Captain Schwreger was running low on fuel, and was therefore sailing in a location where he otherwise would not have been. The *Lusitania* was following a route which it had been specifically instructed to avoid, and Captain Turner had just turned the ship eastward on a straight course at eighteen knots for Queenstown. This change of course took the liner directly across the submarine's line of fire, while the captain's reduced speed and his failure to zig-zag as recommended made his ship a fairly easy mark. (1)

But the "warning" in the press on 1 May was used to support the idea of planning. (2) The fact that the German Embassy gave warning before the ship sailed was not, in the view of the *Indiana Tribune*, a mitigation, but an aggravation of this "hellish deed." It was simply a warning that Germany did not propose to heed the laws of civilised warfare; it was an advertisement of a massacre to be enacted on schedule. (3) The agents of the German government, wrote another American, themselves enjoying American hospitality, had been directed to advertise the coming murder of Americans. (4) Bernstorff,


(3) Quoted in *Outlook*, 19 May 1915, p. 111.

who was responsible for the warning, explained in his memoirs that it was to have been printed on 24 April, and on the following Saturdays, but by some mistake it did not appear until 1 May. So its appearance alongside the notice of the sailing of the Lusitania was sheer coincidence. He further explained that he took the step because the American government seemed to him to have underestimated the situation and therefore failed to take sufficient measures of precaution in relation to American citizens travelling abroad. (1) After the sinking the press reported that some of the passengers had been amused by the warning rather than alarmed, and had ridiculed the "silly performance of the Embassy". (2) The German defence, that the ship was carrying munitions of war, was brushed aside by the Americans, who refused to believe that such could be the case. (3) When one of the German diplomatic staff in Washington defended in public the sinking of the ship, American indignation was such that Bernstorff was forced to advise him to leave the country. (4)

Although some timid voices were heard asking whether Americans had the right to endanger the peace of their nation by travelling in declared war zones, (5) most of the press

(1) Bernstorff, My Three Years in America, p. 115.
(2) Washington Post, 8 May 1915.
(3) Nation, 13 May 1915, p. 523.
(4) Bernstorff, op.cit., p. 122.
indignantly upheld the right of United States' citizens to travel where they pleased. After the sinking Bryan suggested to both the President and Lansing that Americans who took passage on a British vessel destined to pass through the restricted zones did so at their own peril, and could not reasonably claim the protection of their government in such a situation. But Lansing insisted that such a decision would cause general public condemnation and criticism throughout the country, and Wilson agreed with him. (1)

The editor of New Republic, voicing the general opinion wrote:

We desire one thing, and that is the concrete assurance that American citizens on any ship shall be free to go about their business without being murdered. (2)

One writer stated that practically none of the American passengers on the Lusitania had any serious reasons for going abroad at the time. Some of the reasons given could be regarded as almost frivolous. (3) Those going for what could indisputably be called "legitimate reasons" could have secured passage on an American boat leaving New York the same day, which (alongside the Lusitania notice) advertised the security of travelling under a neutral flag. (4) As usual the American press made a great deal of "the slaughter of innocent children", and although the actual numbers differed in the various accounts

(2) New Republic, 15 May 1915, p. 27.
(3) Peterson, Propaganda for War, p. 119.
of the sinking, there were at least forty babies under twelve months old and about one hundred less than two years, all of whom were drowned. (1) What reasons could justify risking the lives of so many children travelling in the war zone? Did Americans have no conception of what a state of war meant?

On 13 May the American government sent the first "Lusitania note" to Germany. Most Americans, indignant at Wilson's phrase, "Too proud to fight", in his first public speech after the tragedy, were much better pleased with the harsher tone of the note. It reiterated the view that the right of Americans to travel in European waters, whether in or out of the war zone, could not be abridged. It is reported that when the German Foreign Secretary von Jagow read this he laughed and said, "Why not the right of free travel on land in war territory?" (2) The principal American argument was that the submarine could not be used at all without "an inevitable violation of many sacred principles of justice and humanity". Wilson suggested that it should be abandoned as an instrument of war against merchant ships. (3) The note was a challenge and a threat of war. Secretary of State Bryan, who wanted the administration to take a less belligerent

stand in the controversy, resigned rather than send further such threatening notes to Germany, and the more pro-Ally Lansing was appointed in his place.

Although many Americans were not satisfied with the handling of the whole affair, the first crisis over the Lusitania terminated with the German note of 8 July, and the final American reply of 21 July. Many feared there would be another incident like this one but there was no recurrence of a disaster in which a great many Americans lives were lost. One historian suggests that the limited capacity of the German dockyards, their inability to produce more submarines quickly, was an important factor in the change of policy. (1) Also there was a considerable decrease in the number of Americans travelling to Europe; it took the Lusitania affair to bring home to them the dangers of travel in a world at war. Whatever the reasons, the Germans, quite belatedly, displayed some caution. There were, of course, other sinkings which kept the submarine issue alive. On 30 June 1915, another British ship, the Armenian, carrying a cargo of mules from the United States to England was sunk and several Americans were among those drowned. A White Star Liner, the Arabic, sailing from Liverpool to New York, was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland on 19 August 1915, and the casualty list included two Americans. On 7 November of

(1) Millis, Road to War, p. 192.
the same year an Italian liner, Ancona, sank in the Mediterranean, and this time twenty Americans died. After the crisis brought about by the sinking of the Arabic the Germans promised to give warning before sinking merchant ships, and in November stated that they would sink only those American vessels which were loaded with "absolute contraband, after all possible care was taken for the security of the crew and passengers". (1) The first phase of the controversy between the United States and Germany over the submarine was ended; but the "innocent" victims of German "barbarism" would not be forgotten. For Germany to obtain the goodwill of the American people had now become almost an impossibility.

How real was the threat of war between the two countries over the submarine issue in 1915? The sinking of the Lusitania certainly caused a great tide of anti-German feeling to sweep over the United States, and confirmed all the worst fears of Americans in regard to German "frightfulness". The sinking of ships by this new method and the loss of American lives angered the people, but also alarmed them. Americans had been irritated by the actions of both Britain and Germany in regard to shipping and violation of their neutral rights; in their eyes both countries were acting illegally and unjustifiably. But if the British interfered with their trade, the Germans killed their citizens. The British methods

(1) Quoted in Peterson, Propaganda for War, p. 132
might seem lawless, but the German method was "inhuman". This does not necessarily mean that they were prepared to go to war. Bernstorff, who bore the brunt of the American anger in person, wrote to the German Foreign Office in early 1916 that if a catastrophe similar to the Lusitania case should occur again, war with the United States could not be prevented by any art known to diplomacy. (1) House, dining in London with Ambassador Page on 7 May, said when he heard of the sinking, "We shall be at war with Germany within a month". (2) A first reading of the contemporary press reports gives the same impression, and yet a closer look at the outraged editors conveys a different idea. When it came to what they wanted done about the "crime", there was some confusion. They kept insisting that Americans did not want war, but that if Germany insisted on pursuing her "reckless course" war would come, and Germany would be to blame. The United States, said one of them, had found herself, "in the twinkling of an eye almost, face to face with the grave possibility of war". (3) The overwhelming concensus of editorial opinion seemed to be that the President should instantly compel Germany "to disavow, to make reparation for and to abandon" her submarine war, though taking care not to get the United States into trouble while doing so. There was a general tendency to stand by

Wilson in this, "the most momentous moral crisis since the crucifixion of Christ" (1), and leave the solving of the problem to the President.

When the first Lusitania note, sent to the German government after the sinking, was published in the American press on 14 May, it evoked widespread approval and a greater degree of commendation than anything the President had said or done since his appeal for neutrality in August 1914. The editor of New Republic explained why:

The note is quiet, dignified and firm. It is a model of restraint and understatement. It offers no ultimatum. It utters no threats ... /it/ presents the picture of a nation seeking by all honourable means to avert war, but willing to go even to that extreme in defence of principles of law and humanity. (2)

Political and religious leaders, newspaper editors, even the pro-allied extremists and the German-American spokesmen all joined in the public commendation of the note. (3) What Wilson did, of course, was to threaten Germany with war, which satisfied the national honour, while leaving the way open for negotiations if Germany would accept the offer. Whether Wilson considered what would happen if Germany rejected his

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(2) New Republic, 22 May 1915, p. 57.
(3) For surveys of editorial opinion, see: New York Times, 15 May 1915; Outlook, 19 May 1915, pp. 104-105; Literary Digest, 22 May 1915, pp. 1218-1219.
demands is not clear. Although the President hinted in a private letter that he would be prepared to go against public opinion if the thought war was necessary, (1) Bernstorff was convinced from a conversation he had with Wilson that the latter would never enter on a war with Germany. (2) Bernstorff wrote to the German Foreign Office:

In spite of the fact that the waves of anti-German sentiment caused by the Lusitania incident are still running strong, I can claim this good knowledge, that neither the President nor the American people want a war with Germany ... Mr. Wilson has the best chance to gain public approval for himself if he averts conflict with us honourably, by beginning a peace movement in a grand style. (3)

Thus Wilson satisfied the majority of Americans by avoiding war, while leaving the way open for his cherished dreams of conducting peace negotiations in an effort to end the war.

A great deal of the feeling over the Lusitania sinking was an indignant resentment that America's neutral rights had been violated. Bernstorff's comment is apt in this regard:

Whoever has lived here /America/ for a long time cannot avoid the conviction that the American's aim in life is the peaceful acquisition of wealth. It is only when he believes that a deep injustice has been done him that he allows himself to be carried along in

(2) Bernstorff, My Three Years in America, p. 127.
(3) 2 June 1915, quoted in Link, op.cit., p. 413.
the current of an hysterical war sentiment. (1) The sense of deep injustice seems to have been uppermost in the whole submarine issue, although very strong feeling against Germany was present, too. The incident was officially refrigerated in a succession of diplomatic notes, commented one historian who had personally played a part in the whole affair, and it remained unsettled when the United States finally entered the war. But from the time of the event it continued white-hot in the public memory. (2) From the point of view of preparing a pro-war sentiment in American public opinion, the Lusitania episode was crucial. It added immeasurably to the moral fervour of the Allied cause, alienated a vast amount of sympathy for the Central Powers, caused the almost complete collapse of the already inadequate German propaganda campaign in the United States, and gave a strong impetus to the American preparedness movement. Although not directly responsible for the entrance of the United States into the war, this incident contributed powerfully to the inflamed state of mind which was ready to accept the Congressional declaration of war two years later. (3)

(2) Newton D. Baker, "Why We Went to War", Foreign Affairs, Vol. XV, October 1936, p. 32.
CHAPTER 4

EVENTS WHICH INCREASED ANTI-GERMAN SENTIMENT: DOMESTIC

(i) German-Americans and the Arms Trade

Despite Wilson's plea to all Americans to be impartial in thought as well as in action, he once remarked that Britain was waging "our" war. Although he seemed to have convinced himself that in his official capacity such neutrality guided his decisions, he tacitly agreed with a large number of Americans that an Allied victory was essential. It is easy to see, therefore, that domestic issues in the United States were influenced by the European war. Americans were too involved in the struggle for it to be otherwise. The German-American section of the population, too, made no pretence at neutrality. They seemed to gain new vigour and cohesion in the face of war. Their attempts to influence events politically, and their opposition to the American contribution to the Allied cause, alarmed "unhyphenated" Americans, who saw this as a form of disloyalty. Events and issues at home helped increase significantly anti-German feeling during the neutrality period.

One issue which early became an all-absorbing interest of the German-Americans, and so increased American animosity towards them, was the demand for an embargo on war materials. At the outbreak of war the Central Powers probably had the
advantage over their opponents in the matter of war materials. The Allies turned to the neutrals, and particularly to highly industrialised America, for many of the materials and provisions necessary to carry on war. By the end of 1914 the United States had become an "auxiliary arsenal" for the Allied powers. Millions of dollars worth of war material, in the form of motor lorries, horses, saddles, guns and powder, had already been shipped to England, France and Russia. Many manufacturers, not normally engaged in this type of business, had found it highly profitable to turn their factories to the production of munitions. Large industrial areas, which for some time had stagnated under a general trade depression, suddenly found themselves growing prosperous again with the ever-increasing influx of war orders. (1) Although a certain number of Americans other than those of German origin protested, the loudest and most sustained objections came from the German-Americans. Control of the seas by the Allies had virtually closed the American market to Germany, and by force of circumstances the exportation of war supplies became a very one-sided affair. America's neutral right to sell arms was protested by supporters of the trade, but in this case her neutrality worked solely towards the advantage of the Allies. Besides this unneutral result, the German-Americans saw

armaments being made and sold for the purpose of killing their relatives and friends in Germany. Their protests against this were always countered by the argument that America would sell to both sides if she could, and that it would be unneutral to cease trading with the Allies simply because Germany, through force of circumstances, was excluded from the trade. (1) Bernstorff protested that America's "purely theoretical willingness to furnish Germany as well" in no way modified the actual situation, as they seemed to think it did. (2) One correspondent to the editor of New Republic answered the charge that American bullets were killing German soldiers:

True, every rifle we ship to Liverpool may cause the death of many brave German soldiers; but every rifle we withhold from shipment may just as truly be the cause of the death of many brave British soldiers. (3)

It was apparently more neutral to save the brave British soldiers than to save the Germans.

In October 1914 the campaign for an embargo opened with a letter written by the president of the German-American National Alliance, and addressed to the President, the Cabinet, the judges of the Supreme Court, the members of

(2) Quoted in Independent, 26 April 1915, p. 131.
Congress and many other public leaders, as well as to some 250 newspapers. It protested against the sale of munitions to one group of belligerents while the other group was excluded. Within a few weeks mass meetings were organised in many cities to support the campaign. These were usually sponsored by the local German-American Alliances, but they enlisted the active co-operation of all other groups, including the Irish-Americans, who were willing to support the embargo. (1) Next the German-Americans took their agitation against the arms trade into Congress. Two German-American Congressmen, Barthold and Vollmer, introduced into the House on 7 December 1914, almost identical measures "to prohibit the export of arms, ammunition and munitions from any territory or seaport of the United States. (2) The National German-American Alliance sent a deputation in favour of the embargo to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs to whom the bills had been referred, and numerous telegrams from local Alliances, urging support of the measure, were addressed to Congressmen. (3) According to one witness, huge bundles containing the signatures of two million citizens were wheeled into the Capitol at Washington. (4) Mass meetings were

(2) *Congressional Records*, 63 Cong. 3 sess. LII, (1914) p. 12.
again held in many large cities, sometimes with prominent figures such as state governors on the platform. Efforts were made to enlist the churches in the campaign, for it had been suggested that both the President and Secretary of State Bryan were especially responsive to influence from this quarter. (1) In January 1915, at a meeting in Washington, (2) the American Independence Union was established to help in the campaign. It was suggested that the new organisation should be led entirely by persons of Anglo-Saxon lineage, in order to camouflage its pro-German nature, but in the end Congressman Barthold became its president. Several weeks later he told Congress of German-American agitation over the question of the arms trade:

There is no question but what at the present time the Germans of this country are stirred as they were never stirred before. Their state of mind manifests itself in great mass meetings and in hundreds of thousands of petitions addressed to Congress in favour of an embargo on arms. (3)

Much of the press contemplated with some anxiety the political threat which the Conference had made to all who opposed the embargo. A powerfully organised "German vote" might play a significant part in the 1916 presidential election if the measure was not passed by the present Congress. George

(1) Wittke, op.cit., p. 60.
(2) See above, pp. 108-110.
(3) Congressional Records, 63 Cong. 3 sess., LII, (1915), p. 4125.
Sylvester Viereck wrote in this regard:

One hundred and seventy members of Congress are of Irish extraction, and there is no reason why they should not be joined by one hundred and seventy of German extraction. (1)

It seemed at first that the bills would pass, but official opposition was to defeat them. Wilson, it was rumoured, was considerably annoyed when the bills were presented in December, and he was clearly unmoved by the appeals of the German-Americans. In January he wrote to Bryan that his opinion on the matter was quite clear. Any action which tried to interfere with the right of belligerents to buy arms in the United States would be looked upon as an unneutral act. (2)

It was obvious that the administration would stand by the absolute legality and correctness of the arms trade. While this may have been to a large extent out of sympathy for the Allies, as it is so often interpreted, it was also due to the fact that the administration did not wish to interfere with such a lucrative source of income. House admitted this when he wrote to Wilson:

If it came to a last analysis and we placed an embargo upon munitions of war ... our whole industrial ... machinery would cry out against it. (3)

(1) Fatherland, 10 February 1915.
The two bills were finally pigeon-holed, and the sinking of the Lusitania in May drove all thoughts of the embargo from the press and the public mind. With the violent outbursts of anti-German feeling which followed this event, the forces of the German-Americans were thrown into confusion, and for some time the activities and resources of every German-American organisation were devoted to the task of helping preserve peace between the United States and Germany.

The whole issue was revived again when, in September 1915, representatives of the Allies came to the United States to negotiate a loan of one billion dollars. On the question of loans to belligerents the administration had completely reversed its position. In August 1914, in reply to an inquiry by J. P. Morgan and Company, the Department of State had pronounced loans to belligerents inconsistent with American neutrality. (1) In October of the same year Wilson made a distinction between loans and credit, (2) and American bankers began to extend credits to Allied purchasers. By August 1915, the administration reversed its former decision and sanctioned the floating of an Allied loan. (3) The German-Americans prepared to resist the loan, and Dr. Hexamer issued a memorandum to all state branches of the National Alliance, denouncing the "Money Trust" and the "Anglo-American finance

(2) Ibid, p. 140.
(3) Ibid, pp. 141-47.
German-Americans were warned by the president of the Alliance of a conspiracy to rob them of their savings and insurance, and were exhorted to protest to their bankers and insurance agencies against the appropriation of their money for Allied war purposes. Clearing houses were told to inform all banks to expect a run of German-American depositors if they participated in the loan, and the Alliance withdrew its own funds from a Baltimore bank because it was suspected of favouring the loan. (1) The idea was to promote panic, and there was a good deal of activity and protest, especially in the East and Midwest. The result was that the market for the bonds was not good, and Britain and France had to spend huge sums buying them at par in order to keep up their price.

Meanwhile renewed agitation for an embargo continued, and the American Embargo Conference was organised on 1 August 1915. This organisation is reported to have spent a quarter of a million dollars in its efforts to force the adoption of an embargo resolution. (2) But by the end of 1915 it was clear that the German-Americans' agitation had failed. For what, at another time, might have been regarded as the sincerest expression of patriotism, the German-Americans found themselves denounced and their loyalty once again questioned. Their backing did a great deal to injure the

(2) Peterson, Propaganda for War, p. 178.
whole movement for an embargo on arms. The natural outcome of their participation was that other Americans ceased to give their support, and those favouring England were able to label the entire movement pro-German. The effort to organise this particular section of the population around the issue naturally drew the fire of many editors, who believed the whole movement sought to aid Germany by putting her interests above those of the United States. Many papers and journals refused to support the embargo because, in the words of the editor of Nation, it tended "to inject hatred and bitterness into our treatment of questions relating to our foreign affairs". If circumstances had made the munitions trade favourable to Germany, he continued, not a word would have been heard from the German-Americans. He concluded:

For the first time they have raised the question of the loyalty of foreign-born citizens, not their loyalty in time of war, but that deeper, firmer and nobler allegiance to our institutions which we have a right to expect of true Americans. (1)

By the end of 1915 German-Americans were convinced that Wilson and his administration favoured the Allies. They had flooded Congress persistently with petitions and telegrams supporting their views, and they could see they were not achieving their aims. So they began to look to the election of 1916 as a decisive opportunity of forcing the government to observe strict neutrality as they understood it. This led

(1) Nation, 4 February 1915, p. 134.
to their continual participation in politics during 1916, and to new hostility and accusations of disloyalty against them on the part of Anglo-Americans.

(ii) Spies and Sabotage

The loyalty of German-Americans was to be questioned even more seriously, as evidence came to light early in the war of an official campaign of propaganda in the United States on the part of the German government. This was no more (and indeed, seems to have been considerably less) than the English government was doing. (1) The official German propaganda organisation in the United States was apparently a rather makeshift affair, and worked under serious disadvantages. Its members were cut off quite effectively from Germany, and were always short of funds. The almost unanimous opposition of the American press could not be overcome. The efforts of the German government to purchase an established newspaper were not successful. (2) The German-Americans quickly became identified with this campaign, and anything in the nature of an attempt, even on the part of the most ordinary citizen, to defend Germany or explain her point of view, was condemned as "German propaganda". With the wisdom of hind-

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(1) See Peterson, Propaganda for War, which argues that the main reason for America's entry into war on the side of the Allies was the success of British propaganda.

(2) Ibid, pp. 136-38 for details.
sight many of the "loyal" Americans could trace the beginnings of this German propaganda campaign in the years before the war. The various German societies, especially the National Alliance, were seen as agents of this, as also were the exchange professors and official visitors from Germany to the United States. (1) The influence of these organisations was described by one writer:

At present there are in the United States numerous leagues, associations, societies and what not, with hyphenated names, and devoted largely to the work of keeping alive and potent in the hearts of their members an affection for the old country ... so that they will vote for or against this or that ... because of the interests and welfare of the old country. (2)

Although there was always an immediate outcry in the press when any fresh evidence of the propaganda came to light, most writers continued to insist that the campaign was, in fact, making no headway at all. Typical is this comment from Nation:

The plain truth is that all the efforts put forth in this country by the German government have helped its cause not one whit. During the period when the German ambassador was voluble, he did more harm than good to his own country. (3)


(3) *Nation*, 28 January 1915, p. 95.
The report of the Senate Subcommittee investigating German propaganda linked it with a system of "violence and espionage" during the years of neutrality, (1) and reports of alleged German espionage and sabotage certainly helped keep anti-German sentiment at fever-pitch all through 1915. It is very difficult to discover from contemporary sources just how serious were the various acts of sabotage, "bomb plots" and other disloyal activities attributed to the Germans and German sympathisers during the period of neutrality, and particularly during 1915, when they were related to the efforts to obtain an embargo on arms. The Americans reacted rather hysterically to these events, and for every accident which occurred in any American munitions factory, said Bernstorff, "German agents" were regularly held responsible. He continued:

The anti-German press ... announced the accidents as a "clear manifestation of the notorious German system of frightfulness" ... These papers instilled into their readers that these crimes were an essential part of German propaganda, and in their cartoons, represented the German, more particularly the German-American, as a bearded anarchist with a bomb ready in his hand. (2)

Cartoonist and columnist were certainly kept busy with the almost daily exposures of "German and Austro-Hungarian conspiracies", especially during the latter half of 1915. These reports of so-called conspiracies fill five closely

(1) Brewing and Liquor Interests, p. vi.
(2) Bernstorff, My Three Years in America, p. 88.
printed pages of the New York Times Index for the months of October to December, 1915. The Providence Journal made such exposures its specialty. In 1917 this newspaper published a pamphlet entitled A Few Lines of Recent American History, which the editor described as:

... a chronological record of the most notable outrages perpetrated in America under the direct leadership of the German Ambassador at Washington, and his associates, from the beginning of the European war ... up to the date of our entry into the conflict. (1)

Then followed a long list of alleged German conspiracies and acts of sabotage, culled from the Journal’s own "exposures" through the previous three years. Many writers saw such activities as part of a highly organised propaganda campaign on the part of the German government in the United States. One described it thus:

Someone once said that the three mightiest examples of organisation the world has yet seen were the Church of Rome, the Standard Oil Company and the German army. I venture to add a fourth — men, women and children of German birth and millions of others of German blood in the United States. (2)

Bernstorff scoffed at the ideas of a well organised conspiracy or campaign of sabotage. Nothing ever occurred, in his estimation, to justify the expression "conspiracy". He admitted that there were various actions which were in violation

(1) A Few Lines of Recent American History, (Providence, 1917), no page numbering.
of the laws of the United States, but, he said, they were "individual transactions", with which he and the official German representatives in the country had nothing to do. (1) The sporadic nature of the activities does seem reasonably clear from the available evidence, although it is equally clear that such incidents multiplied during the years of neutrality. A "loyal" German-American wrote in this regard:

I do not ... believe that more than five percent of the sensational plot allegations are based on real facts ... Common sense would indicate that fires, explosions and accidents must inevitably increase in industries of a hazardous nature working under excessive pressure with large numbers of new, inexperienced employees. (2)

Bernstorff agreed, and quoted "one of the most prominent judges in the United States" to the effect that ninety-nine percent of the so-called German conspiracies were simply matters of invention, and that only one percent really existed. (3) But such explanations and excuses did not satisfy patriotic Americans. These people were horrified to find the soil of their nation "infested with representatives of an unscrupulous power", who did not hesitate to "break its most sacred pledges" by using the country as a base for plots to damage France and Britain. (4) According to William H.

(2) Walter V. Woehlke, op.cit., p. 933.
Skaggs, who "revealed" the "vast German conspiracy" in the United States, the whole of the country was "spy ridden"; German spies were everywhere, engaged in every line of business, employment, trade and profession. Chicago, his home city, was, he asserted, the stronghold of the German spy system. He continued:

It is not possible to lodge at the hotels, eat at the restaurants, walk on the streets or ride in cars without being under the surveillance of German spies... They rifle the baggage of travellers, and they have every pro-Ally "spotted"... They threaten public officials and engage in all manner of traitorous acts. The activities of the German spy system have terrorised the whole community. (1)

The administration in Washington also believed, if not quite so fanatically, in the reality of the system. By the beginning of 1915, wrote Secretary of the Treasury William McAdoo, the administration was convinced that German agents were encouraging strikes and sabotage operations in American manufacturing plants in order to prevent supplies from going to England and France. (2) Later the same year Wilson wrote to House that he was sure the country was honeycombed with German intrigue and infested with German spies, and the evidence of these things was multiplying every day. (3)

(2) William G. McAdoo, Crowded Years, (Boston, 1931), p. 323.
In his message to Congress in December 1915, the President spoke with "definite and burning words" of those "creatures of passion, disloyalty and anarchy" who were engaged in "plots and crimes". This must surely imply, commented Nation's editor, that the government was in possession of a great deal more evidence of those "dastardly offences" than the public was aware of; the facts must be blacker than the public knew. (1)

How much of this sort of activity really took place? The accounts are conflicting and it is hard to separate fact from fiction. In order to prevent the United States from being used as a base for supplies, the German government certainly did send Franz Rintelen von Kleist to America in May 1915, to try to check the shipment of munitions to Great Britain and France. One writer credits him (or his agents) with forty seven incidents concerning fires, explosions or attempts to hide bombs in ships and cargoes. (2) There were numerous incidents relating to explosions and fires at munitions plants and railway yards, but it is not clear how far these were directed by "official" German sources. Most Americans were sure they were, and, with the editor of Nation, viewed them as a "revelation of ever-accumulating evidence regarding Teutonic belligerency in this neutral country". He continued:

It is not even pretended that the fires which occurred ... last week in the Bethlehem

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(2) Henry Landau, The Enemy Within, (New York, 1937), The list is given in the appendix.
and Roebling plants ... were of accidental origin. The impression of incendiarism is confirmed by the fact that at the same time three other fires were started in the Bethlehem plant, and that the fire-alarms in the Roebling plant had been tampered with. (1)

The Germans did make a determined effort to corner the materials needed in the manufacture of ammunition. Von Papen described in later years how he planned to establish an American firm, and under cover of this business to buy up the vital supplies and thus push the American manufacturers out of business. So he bought all the hydraulic presses, (absolutely essential equipment), that the United States could produce in two years' time, and all the powder that could be produced in the near future. He made long term contracts with the industries which made essential acid-proof containers, and delayed the establishment of coke factories by persuading many German engineers and firms to sever their relations with these projects. (2) The whole plot was discovered when certain incriminating papers fell into the hands of an enterprising American, and these activities were immediately linked with the efforts of German-Americans to secure an embargo on arms. All shared in the guilt of those who were active. The demands which were repeatedly made that German-Americans should disavow such activities; wrote Kuno Francke, implied the wholly unwarranted accusation of complicity with them. (3)

(1) Nation, 18 November 1915, p. 583.
(3) Letter to the editor, New Republic, 13 May 1916, p. 42.
"spies" or agents were also accused of causing industrial unrest among workers in munitions factories. Von Papen worked to divert workers from these factories to trades "which would be useful for the purposes of peace", and for this he set up bureaux in the industrial cities to find work for those who wanted it. He claimed that these bureaux were successful in withdrawing a great number of German-Americans from the war industries. (1) Although various strikes were attributed to the Germans, these accusations were not always proven. In July 1915, when the iron workers employed on the construction of a new arms plant at Bridgeport went on strike, the company officials declared that it was the work of German sympathisers. (2) But the press reports showed that the men were striking for higher wages and an eight hour day, and that part of the trouble was a dispute as to which union these workers rightly belonged. (3) When the New York World attributed an attempted strike by longshoremen to a German offer of one million dollars, it made headlines. The instigator was a Boston grocer, Matthew Cummings, who proposed to tie up freight shipment by a strike, and the World hinted that Dr. Dernberg was the man behind Cummings. The report continued:

The ostensible purpose of this strike, which was to be engineered under the most secretive

(3) Nation, 29 July 1915, p. 131.
conditions, was to prevent the shipment of munitions to the Allied governments ... the real purpose to bring about a reign of disorder and mob violence on the various waterfronts to provide a curtain which would shield attempts to prevent the shipment of munitions ... (1)

The editor of *New Republic* asserted that there was no real proof of German complicity, but added that none the less the story with its many ugly inferences would doubtless carry. The various activities and revelations of the preceding months, he commented, had created so dense an atmosphere of suspicion that almost anything would be believed. (2) There was general jubilation in the press when any arrests were made in regard to subversive activities; and such occasions were rare enough. In November 1915, a certain Robert Fay was arrested and convicted on charges of planning to disable or destroy ships leaving New York with cargoes of ammunition or other war supplies. Four accomplices were also arrested several days later, and there were urgent demands from the press for an inquiry into the whole matter, especially since Fay said he was employed by the German secret service. (3) The reports were alarming enough, as this one shows:

> These men had in their possession so great a quantity of high explosives, so much destructive apparatus, so large and elaborate an organisation of murder ...

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(2) *New Republic*, 18 September 1915, p. 164.
that the supposition that they are mere amateurs or self-inspired conspirators is precluded. There seems to be a deliberate organisation ... (1)

The further arrest of eight men in New Jersey in April 1916, on charges of placing bombs in ships' cargoes, and the indictment of a number of Germans at the same time by a Federal grand jury in New York for conspiring to blow up the Welland canal, prompted many editors to recall "other offences against America's neutrality, perpetrated by our Teutonic guests since the European war began". (2) These people were seen as trying to carry the war into the United States, and to use the country as the base for a rear attack on the Allies. (3)

There remains the question as to what extent the German-Americans, stirred by affection for the Fatherland and angered by the attitude of the pro-Ally sections of the population, may have become involved in such activity as was obviously subversive. The German-language press insisted that they had no part in it at all, and that their services to the German cause were strictly confined to legal and peaceful means, in conformity with the requirements of real neutrality. The editors repeatedly asserted that not a single case had been proved in which either German spies or American sympathisers with Germany had been responsible for fires or explosions in

(1) Boston Transcript, quoted in Literary Digest, 6 November 1915, p. 994.
(2) Literary Digest, 29 April 1916, p. 1205.
(3) Jones, America Entangled, p. 13.
munitions factories. (1) It is difficult to make a judgment about this matter, because the weight of evidence is from the American point of view. For many Americans the danger was felt as being real enough, as the following writer shows:

If a representative of the Allies suddenly retraced his steps or halted suddenly when around a corner, he was almost sure to bump the shins of a German spy. (2)

German activities in the United States during the period of neutrality were in themselves of no great importance in achieving their objects. The arms trade went on, factories continued to produce large quantities of munitions and ships left the harbours regularly to carry goods to the Allies. The real significance of all these activities lies in the fact that the publicity they received greatly augmented anti-German feeling among the American people. One writer commented in regard to the press reports of German conspiracies and sabotage:

The hooting of the American press in its vicarious effort to increase the anti-German hysteria filled me with disgust ... common sense hies for the tall timber when the American press goes on a yellow rampage. (3)

(1) Wittke, German-Americans and the World War, p. 41.
(2) Jones, op.cit., p. 15.
(3) Woehlke, op.cit., p. 933.
(iii) 1916 Presidential Election.

When eighteen and a half million Americans went to the polls on Tuesday, 7 November 1916, to elect a president, many of them were very unsure of what the results would be. The political situation was confused and uncertain. It was agreed by most political observers that the Middle West would be the battle-ground of the campaign; yet a week before the election date, reported one writer, all through the West and Middle West party lines were sagging, blurred, sometimes blotted out altogether. (1) Some presidential campaigns revolve around one dominant issue, but this one had failed to do so. The only single issue, too large to be one properly so called, was foreign relations. America's treatment of Mexico, neutrality (or the lack of it), the case of the Lusitania, still lingering on twelve months after the event, naval and military preparedness and diplomatic appointments were all stressed in the attacks on the administration by the opposition, and in the counter attacks by the Democrats. The Democratic campaign centered around the claim that Wilson had kept America out of the war, and that the election of his opponent, Charles Evan Hughes, was likely to plunge the country into the European conflict. The Republicans countered this with the claim that it was not a question of peace and war, but of peace with honour or peace without honour. If it could be said

there was any dominant issue, this was it. (1)

Uncertain factors in the situation which clouded the outcome of the election were the labour vote, the effect of female suffrage in those states where it now existed as well as the attitudes of the candidates in regard to its extension, the drift of many Socialists away from their former party alignment, the "homeless" Progressives, (the one and a half million voters who in 1912 had supported Theodore Roosevelt), and the much discussed German-American or "hyphen" vote.

Hughes campaigned vigorously and consistently, but he disappointed many of his followers who looked to him "to fill the cup of American national aspiration with a larger and better content" than it had held under President Wilson. (2)

The Republican party was recovering slowly from the great split of 1912, but the breach had not been completely healed, and the two factions were united only by their joint acceptance of Hughes' leadership and a common distrust of the Democrats. (3)

The Democrat party, too, was rent by conflict over policies. Wilson's administration could point to a creditable record in domestic reforms, but in foreign policy the President's leadership had encountered criticisms which it sometimes found hard to answer. (4)

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(2) New Republic, 20 May 1916, p. 52.
convert the Democratic minority of 1912 into a majority in 1916 by winning over a large number of former Progressives, and both sides were ardently wooing the Progressive vote. (1)

Above all, this was a campaign in time of European war, and the events of the previous two years had already sharply divided the American people. Many were not satisfied with the course taken by the administration in light of American neutrality, nor with its conduct in face of submarine warfare and the resulting death of United States' citizens. There was debate about the necessity for military preparedness and the role of the United States as a peacemaker. And the "hyphen", which since August 1914 had taken its place firmly in the national consciousness, now entered politics and played its part in the 1916 presidential election.

The "German vote", as it soon became known, was hinted at several times in 1915. On 30 January of that year fifty-eight representative German-Americans, with others friendly to their views, met in Washington to make plans to re-establish "genuine American neutrality". Political pressure was to be the weapon they used in their battle. After drafting resolutions on a variety of subjects relating to American neutrality, the conference resolved to support only those candidates for public office who preferred American

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(1) New York Times, 15 July 1916, (Wilson quoted as welcoming the support of the Progressives); 17 July 1916, (Hughes is sure of support from the Progressives); see also Current Opinion, Vol. LXI, August 1916, pp. 73-75.
In early 1916 the German-Americans were active again. On 27 February, the representatives of the German language press met in Chicago, led by the two most important German dailies, the New York Staatszeitung and the Chicago Abenpost. They formed the National Association of German Newspaper Publishers, in order to discuss the problem of their attitude toward the political parties and the government. Among resolutions passed were those of a common front to avoid war, and opposition to the re-election of Wilson, with the regretful proviso that the nomination of Roosevelt might force them to support his opponent. (1) By the summer of 1916 the German-American press was almost unanimous in its opposition to the President, and efforts were made to extend this opposition to Senators and Congressmen who upheld the President's "autocracy". (2) In April, the German-American Alliance of Pennsylvania proposed a meeting of representatives of all German organisations in the United States, to be held at Chicago. Its object would be to create a committee to appear before the national conventions of both political parties, to present the demands and viewpoint of the German-American portion of the population. That there was no real agreement in that part of the population is illustrated by the fact that at least one alternative plan was suggested, that of electing

(1) Frederick L. Paxson, Pre-War Years 1914-1917, (Boston 1936) p. 336.
(2) Wittke, German-Americans and the World War, p. 88.
German-Americans as delegates to the Republican convention, and that a number of prominent German-Americans dissented from the first proposal. (1) On 29 May, the proposed conference opened in Chicago with twenty-five states represented. The New York Times reported that the "German churches, business, social and quasi-social societies, every Bund and Verein, and the German-American press" all claimed to speak through this "council of sages". (2) A long statement of principles, emphasising the various problems of American neutrality as seen through German-American eyes, was adopted. The resolutions closed with a passionate plea for a return to the policy of American isolation, and a strong denunciation of all who had heaped insults upon German-Americans because of their natural sympathy for the Fatherland. The conference made no specific recommendation for the presidential nomination, but it was quite clear that it hoped to exercise influence in the Republican convention. (3) It seemed certain that no candidate in either party would receive the German-American vote unless he pursued a course of strict neutrality in accordance with Washington's farewell address. (4) The editor of the New York Times declared that the German-Americans had influenced many delegates to the Republican convention in Chicago, who had

(1) Ibid, p. 90.  
(2) New York Times, 1 June 1916.  
(3) Ibid, 30 May 1916.  
(4) Ibid, 1 June 1916.
yielded to the "groundless fear of the power that these
clearances (German-Americans) can exert at the polls". (1)

With such activity on the part of a group whose loyalty
was already suspect, it is little wonder that the "hyphen"
issue was part of the campaign from the beginning. The German-
Americans had long been dissatisfied with Wilson's handling
of foreign policy, accusing him of "not carrying out an even-
handed neutrality". (2)  His policy had created in their ranks
a "deep feeling of irritation", and most, if not all of the
German language papers opposed his re-election. In June 1915,
Viereck had conducted a poll of two hundred and eight German-
American newspapers, representing, he said, a total of
2,110,355 votes. The results showed that Wilson had lost
ninety-two percent of the German-American vote, and that less
than six percent of the German-American press believed that he
had succeeded in being neutral. (3)  Lansing attributed most
of the swing away from Wilson to dissatisfaction over the
handling of the Lusitania issue, which had pleased nobody.
He wrote:

I believe the pro-German vote in this
country is irrevocably lost to us, and
that, no matter what we do now, we can
never win back any part of it. It is

(1) Ibid, 9 June 1916.
(3) Fatherland, 10 February 1915, p. 10.
very important, then, to please the rest of the electors. (1)

Because of their opposition to Wilson, discussion among German-Americans on a desirable presidential candidate centered largely upon the probable Republican choice. Their chief task was to make it clear which nominations they would, and which they would not, be prepared to support. With several candidates in the field, it was quite likely that their choice might tip the scales in favour of a suitable man. The Republicans could not ignore their wishes entirely, for in view of their strong opposition to Wilson, it was obvious that, unless they were alienated in some way, the German-Americans would gravitate in large numbers towards the Republican side. Elihu Root, one possibility, was strenuously opposed because of his pro-All sympathetic (2) But the German-Americans were even more bitterly opposed to the other main contestant, Theodore Roosevelt. He was not only pro-All, but he was one of the chief sponsors of the campaign against the "hyphen". His attacks on the German-Americans had become violent even to the point of recklessness. An attempt to reconcile the German-Americans with Roosevelt was a dismal failure. Hugo Munsterberg of Harvard, an old friend of the Colonel, arranged a meeting between Roosevelt and George Viereck of the Fatherland. This came to nothing when the

(2) Wittke, op.cit., p. 92.
former refused to be moved from his anti-German position and continued to argue that the Kaiser was plotting against the United States. Munsterberg also published an appeal for Roosevelt in the press, which was no more helpful. (1) So bitter was the feeling of German-Americans against this "wild man of Oyster Bay" for his denunciations of Germany and hyphenated Americans that many of them would have preferred, were he nominated, to vote for Wilson. (2) The eventual nomination of Hughes as the Republican candidate caused less rejoicing, therefore, than the elimination of Roosevelt. One commentator summed up the general feeling when he declared that Hughes was being used as a respectable negative, to hold as far as possible the Republican vote, and to act as a nucleus for whatever discontent existed among the Germans and the Irish Catholics. (3) On whom is Hughes counting? asked Walter Lippmann, and then answered his own question:

On the Republican organisation, the Roosevelt Republicans, the homeless Progressives, the upper-class pro-Allies, the pro-German vote, the anti-Democratic suffrage vote, the anti-Carranza Catholic vote... Hughes was ... nominated as a drag-net for all possible anti-Wilson votes. (4)

(2) Wittke, op.cit., p. 92
(3) Independent, 2 October 1916, p. 15.
Convention leaders were certainly aware of the German- and Irish-American antagonism towards Wilson. Joseph Tumulty, Wilson's secretary, Henry Campbell, editor of the Milwaukee Journal, and Frank Polk, counsellor of the State Department, agreed not to truckle to the hyphen. Senator Paul Rusting of Wisconsin, whose constituency was heavily German-American, recommended to these men that they accept "the challenge from the German-American Alliance" by including a plank in the Democratic platform on the problem of hyphenism. Tumulty concurred. In the middle of June he brought to Wilson's attention a New York World editorial which called the hyphen vote "a definite factor that cannot be discredited", and suggested that the Democratic party "set forth its position on this vital matter in no uncertain terms". Tumulty urged Wilson to express his views immediately and to reiterate his principles of neutrality, to defy those who were seeking to "debase our politics through the creation of the German vote in the United States as a power". (1) The President's "fighting" telegram concerning hyphenism to the Democratic Committee on Resolutions was incorporated in the plank of the platform entitled "Americanism", which averred that the role of the United States in international relations turned upon national preparation and character. It stated in part:

We therefore condemn as subversive ... the activities and designs of every group or organisation, political or otherwise, that has for its object the advancement of the interests of a foreign power, whether such object is promoted by intimidating the government, a political party or representatives of the people, or which is calculated to divide our people ... (1)

So the German-American vote was in the campaign from the beginning, and remained an issue throughout. The New York World, in an editorial headed "Can the Kaiser Defeat the President?", declared that it was the vital issue of the whole campaign, and this statement found support in the German-American press, which triumphantly declared that the campaign for Hughes had been planned six months before. (2)

One of the most outspoken Democratic papers published in German, the Wachter and Anzeiger of Cleveland, declared:

We are not enamoured of Republican doctrines, but we welcome the fact that the American people have been spared the necessity of choosing between Wilson and Roosevelt. (3)

In the struggle to determine who should, or should not, wear the label as candidate of the hyphenates, Wilson had an undoubted advantage over Hughes. He was already in outspoken opposition to the German-American vote before the campaign

(3) Quoted in ibid, p. 5.
began, whereas Hughes must assert the principle without
driving away those groups whose sympathies in the war turned
them against Wilson. (1) On 15 June 1916, a crowd of
twenty-five thousand at Washington cheered the President for
a speech in which he attacked the hyphen vote as political
blackmail. "There is disloyalty active in the United States,
and it must be absolutely crushed", he declared. (2)
Americanism, or national unity as opposed to such disloyalty of
hyphenated groups, was one of the most prominent points in all
his campaign speeches. The President's other appeal was "He
kept us out of war", one of the most effective slogans ever
used in a campaign. It had a direct bearing on the German-
American vote, since it confirmed by insinuation rather than
by assertion what many Americans believed; that this group
wanted the United States in the war on the side of Germany and
her allies. It did tremendous damage to Hughes away from the
Eastern seabord, particularly in the farming sections with
pacifist and isolationist tendencies, and in the woman suffrage
states of the West. (3) Wilson concentrated on "untainted
Americanism", and made it clear by implication that he scorned
the German-American vote.

Hughes, on the other hand, could hardly escape being

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(2) Ibid, 16 June 1916.
(3) E. H. Roseboom, A History of Presidential Elections,
called the "hyphens' candidate", since he laboured under two disadvantages in this respect. He had been loudly acclaimed by German-Americans as their choice, and so, whatever he might say, he remained the "German candidate" for the Presidency of the United States. (1) He had not encouraged this support, nor was there any evidence that he had solicited it. (2) Secondly, he declared for undiluted Americanism early in the campaign, and did not raise the hyphen issue again. This was a tactical error, for it did nothing to satisfy anti-German opinion, and he was repeatedly called upon to declare his stand on the vital question of the German-American vote. He was expected by many of his supporters to make a strong denunciation of "separatism, disunion and disloyalty" (3), and his early statement in a Flag Day speech, that the "flag means America first, it means an undivided allegiance", was not considered sufficient. (4)

One editor wrote in October:

Mr. Hughes' leading general is Hindenberg
... Everywhere in the country the Germans are out to beat Wilson and elect Hughes, and not for American reasons, for German reasons. (5)

(2) Outlook, 18 October 1916, p. 361.
(4) New Republic, 10 June 1916, p. 130.
(5) Life, 19 October 1916, p. 659.
Hughes' kind of Americanism, wrote the editor of *New York Times*, was "vague, nebulous, ambiguous, evasive, pussy-pawed", and such a negative attitude would not do. (1) Were the German-Americans right in thinking that in a crisis Hughes would show a more conciliatory attitude towards Germany than the President had done? What would he do in the event of a new crisis with Germany? (2) When finally, late in the campaign, events caused Hughes to break his silence on this issue, the press (and presumably the public) were not satisfied. His "disclaimer of a craving for hyphenate support" came too late, reported the *New York Times*, and it was plainly extorted from him by the necessities of the campaign. (3) His early title of the "Kaiser's candidate" continued to hamper his campaign efforts; in his speeches he "made dabs" at the hyphen issue as at all other issues, (4) and satisfied no-one. In this respect, too, Roosevelt's support was an embarrassment to Hughes. As one editor saw it, Hughes must echo Roosevelt's "volleys against the hyphen", or continue to "pussyfoot". The echo would alienate the element which, unjustly or not, he was accused of supporting. On the other hand, if he kept on pussyfooting, away would go the Rooseveltians. (5) The German-Americans bitterly resented Roosevelt's part in the

(2) *Nation*, 7 September 1916, p. 214.
campaign, and the Fatherland went so far as to accuse him of wanting to see Hughes defeated in order to further his own ambitions. (1) If Hughes was beaten, reported Bernstorff, he would have Roosevelt to thank for it. (2)

An interesting feature of the whole controversy is the ambivalent attitude of a large part of the press towards the German-American vote. A good deal of the time the observers were protesting that such a thing really did not exist, (3) or that it would not significantly affect the final result. (4) One journalist could even combine the idea of a strong German-American political party with the assurance that it was a negligible factor in the campaign. He wrote:

The Kaiser's American party includes every sort of German - rich and poor, Catholics, Protestants, and atheists who curse aloud at the clergy every time they pass a church; Republicans, Democrats and Progressives; all, all are joined to help the Kaiser hold Belgium as a subject province and torpedo more Lusitanias.

But, according to this same writer, a breakdown of the figures showed that even if almost all those German-Americans who usually voted Democratic swung to Hughes, Wilson would lose a relatively small number of votes. (5)

(1) Fatherland, 4 October 1916, p. 154.
(3) e.g. Current Opinion, Vol. LXI, July 1916, p. 6.
(4) e.g. Nation, 6 July 1916, p. 6.
In spite of such general discounting of the strength of the vote, the press watched closely for any political activity on the part of German-Americans and reported it in great detail, particularly when it meant support for Hughes. As the campaign progressed there was a good deal of such activity, with its attendant rumours and accusations.

In August, Catholic Week was being celebrated in the United States, and delegates at a meeting in New York of the German Central Catholic Verein adopted a resolution accusing Wilson of furthering division and racial discord "by numerous accusations against one part of the citizens of the country", and expressing disapproval of his foreign policy and the arms trade. (1) Although nothing was said about Hughes, and the meeting's action was quickly condemned by Cardinal O'Connell of Boston, the damage was done, and the Catholic portion of the German-American community now came under fire with all the rest of "that inexhaustibly busy and strident group". (2) Three weeks later the Committee of the German-American Central Bund in Ohio called upon all German-Americans of that state to punish Wilson for his mockery of neutrality. A poll conducted there by the Democratic campaign committee indicated that eighty-five percent of the German-American votes were

(2) Ibid, 26 August 1916.
expected to go to Hughes. (1) In September the results of the primary elections for county offices in Chicago seemed to the watching press to be the result of a deliberate organisation of the German-Americans as a political unit to control the Republican party. Pro-German Republicans won all the places on the ticket except four offices, and even these were filled by Progressives of German descent. (2) The national President of the German-American Alliance, Dr. C. J. Hexamer, sent a memorandum to all branches of the Alliance and to Wilson early in October, stating that no self-respecting American of German birth or extraction could vote for the President. (3) The New York Times reported that five thousand German- and Irish-Americans hissed Wilson and cheered Hughes and O'Leary at a meeting called on behalf of the American Truth Society, (4) while the Democrats gave wide circulation to a report that the German-American Alliance was planning to send out three million letters to German-American voters on Hughes' behalf. And all the while the press continued to lament Hughes' unwillingness to make a definite statement about the whole situation. Why had he never done what was so confidently expected of him, and so positively predicted by the observers - set his heel upon the plan to carry an election by votes

(1) New York Times, 21 October 1916. This prediction was quite incorrect; see below pp. 204, 207.
(2) New Republic, 23 September 1916, p. 177.
based on a predominant loyalty to a foreign nation? (1)
The last sentence, it is to be noted, implied the strength of the German-American vote which the writers, at other times, were loath to admit existed.

One of the most damaging accusations against Hughes in regard to this vital matter of accepting support from the German-Americans came almost at the end of the campaign. The Democratic National Committee asserted that he had concluded a secret understanding with the American Independence Conference. (2) The exact nature of this Conference is difficult to ascertain from the press reports, which, however, are not lacking in descriptions. It was the "O'Leary-Teuto-Celt Committee"; (3) the "secret racial organisation" under which Jeremiah O'Leary and his associates had been making their "furtive and nationwide campaign in the interests of Hughes". (4) Certainly, it contained elements of both Irish and German-Americans, and a committee of five representatives, headed by O'Leary, met Hughes some time in September. Of course, the most explosive element in the whole situation was the presence of O'Leary, who had figured in an earlier clash with Wilson. As president of the American Truth Society, he had sent a telegram to the President on 29 September,

(1) Nation, 26 October 1916, p. 389.
(3) Nation, 26 October 1916, p. 389.
protesting what he termed Wilson's pro-British policy, and criticising his failure "in securing compliance with all American rights, ... his approval of war loans, and the ammunition traffic". (1) The President's "stinging reply" to this "impudent blatherskite", that he would be deeply mortified if O'Leary or anybody like him voted for the Democratic party, brought general acclaim from the press and the people. (2) When it was revealed that O'Leary had visited Hughes and had been received by him, there were immediate cries of alarm and indignation. The reports stated that the delegation demanded from Hughes an explanation of his apparent support of Roosevelt, and that he make some statement about such British activities as aggression on the high seas and the boycotting and blacklisting of American interests, in return for support of members of the American Independent Conference. (3) Hughes admitted receiving the delegation, but said he knew nothing of their activities and merely saw them as he did all other delegations who applied for a meeting with him. O'Leary refused to comment, and the press found new evidence of the validity of the charges by looking back over Hughes' statements since mid-September. It seemed that since then he had been "stately about the protection of American

(2) Nation, 5 October 1916, p. 312.
lives, property and commerce", and that his tone to Great Britain had been firmer. They saw him as thus fulfilling his pact "with a cabal of aliens, to colour his speeches with anti-British and pro-German views in return for anti-British and pro-German votes." (1) Once more Hughes was called upon to denounce in terms as strong as Wilson's, the "disloyal element" among his supporters. One editor wrote:

Nobody wants Mr. Hughes to insult Germany. Nobody asks him to speak ill of the Kaiser ... But his view has been urgently sought, his indignation has been invoked, concerning a group of American citizens who are scheming to elect a President as a triumph for foreign sympathies ... This divided allegiance ... has been flaunting itself in the face of the nation, and not one whisper of rebuke for it has come from Charles E. Hughes. (2)

It seemed that no proof of a "deal" with the Irish and German-Americans was necessary now to convince the public that Hughes relied heavily on the hyphen vote; his silences and his ambiguous speeches convicted him. (3) The storm over this meeting with O'Leary subsided fairly quickly since election day was approaching, and activities of the end of the campaign brought other news to the front page. But the incident probably did considerable harm to Hughes, and strengthened the opposition of many who really saw him as the "hyphen"

(2) Nation, 26 October 1916, p. 390.
candidate.

The fact that no other dominant issue emerged during the campaign also helped to heighten the ethnic issue. The only really distinguishing characteristic of the campaign was that emphasis was laid on foreign relations, as was to be expected in time of war. United States treatment of Mexico, the case of the Lusitania, naval and military preparedness, were all argued at one time or another during the campaign. Of domestic issues, only the labour question (with an eight-hour day as Wilson's solution to the troubles), and the tariff, ranked with foreign affairs in the campaign, (1) so there was plenty of opportunity for such an explosive question as the hyphen to feature so largely. Hughes proved a distinct disappointment as a campaigner, even to his friends. If a curve of enthusiasm were plotted for him it would show high at the Chicago convention in June, level or slightly down through the latter half of June and into July, a sharp break after his notification speech and no sign of an upward movement during the tour which followed. (2) Apparently Hughes did not satisfy his German-American supporters any more than he did other Americans. He refused to commit himself on such (for them) urgent issues as Belgian neutrality,

(2) New Republic, 19 August 1916, p. 56.
the Lusitania controversy and the arms embargo. (1) So for many, the hyphen issue was a welcome scapegoat, one which brought at least a certain amount of interest into an otherwise very mediocre campaign.

The uncertainty which had accompanied the whole campaign continued even after election day, 7 November. Early voting returns on that evening revealed that Hughes had made an almost clean sweep of the East, (with Ohio a notable exception), and by nine p.m. both the New York Times and the New York World had conceded the election to Hughes. It was not until Friday, 10 November, that Wilson's re-election was finally confirmed. Final voting figures revealed that three and a half times the number of voters in 1912 had gone to the polls in this election. So close was the result that without the 24 electoral votes he received from Ohio, Wilson would have lost, and a shift of the popular vote in any of three small states (New Hampshire, North Dakota, and New Mexico) would have defeated him. (2) Historians are still discussing the pros and cons of the election, but the concern here is for any evidence of the effect of the "hyphen vote" in the final result. While the result was still in doubt the Fatherland asserted that whichever way it went, the German-Americans had controlled the election. If Hughes was elected their vote

(1) Wittke, German-Americans and the World War, p. 104.
did it in protest against Wilson, and if Wilson was elected, they did it as a protest against Roosevelt. (1) Other commentators gave their various views as to the part played by the hyphen in the result. An analysis of the voting patterns did seem to confirm the fact that in most places people voted as they wished, with little reference to the campaign propaganda. (2) According to Life there had never been a presidential election in which so many voted for a man they did not want. While thousands had cast their votes for Wilson because the alternative was to vote for Hughes, thousands also voted for Hughes because there was no other way to defeat Wilson. (3) The only clear evidence of repudiation of Wilson on the grounds of foreign policy was seen by another editor to be in certain strong German-American and Irish-American communities of Milwaukee, Illinois, and New York, where, he believed, hyphenism played a distinct role. (4) Both candidates got the hyphen vote, declared the New York Times, and the returns indicated that the German-American vote was nearly evenly divided. A survey of the states, continued the writer, failed to disclose where the hyphen vote threw a single electoral vote to Hughes. (5) In spite of various examples of the influence of the vote, there

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(3) Life, 9 November 1916, p. 808.
(4) New Republic, 11 November 1916, p. 34.
was no "deafening rush of an avalanche" which the German-American spokesmen had been leading some to fear; in fact the sound was one which would almost require a microphone to be detected. (1) The Fatherland blamed Hughes' defeat on lack of effective German-American organisation and the influence of Roosevelt, who had estranged so many German-Americans. (2) Bernstorff agreed. In more picturesque language than Viereck he asserted that Hughes would have won had he shut up his "friend Roosevelt" in a sanitarium for "those afflicted with nervous trouble", or used some other method to render him temporarily harmless. A great many German-Americans, he was sure, had voted for Wilson because Roosevelt's war speeches increased in violence day by day. (3)

It is probably true that the 1916 election proved that there was no such thing as a clearly demarcated German-American vote, at least in such strength as to turn the balance in an election. (4) The conclusion seems inescapable that the hyphenates had, after all, exercised little direct influence. Either German-Americans had refused to follow their leaders and adhered to their old party allegiances, dividing their

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(1) Nation, 9 November 1916, p. 432.
(2) Fatherland, 22 November 1916, p. 255.
vote as in other campaigns, or else the alleged danger of hyphenism had aroused enough voters to support Wilson and thus offset the effect of a consolidated German-American vote. Moreover, the slogan "He kept us out of war" probably was as irresistible to many German-Americans as it was to other Americans, particularly those in the Middle and Far West, whose chief interest lay in maintaining the traditional isolation of the United States from European affairs. (1)

But if the phantom of the hyphen vote had been laid, it had played its part in the campaign. Wilson had capitalised on the hyphen. However sincere his attitude of contempt and disgust for the issue, the fact remains that it was good politics to treat it as he had done, and he suffered no permanent loss of votes by proclaiming himself the champion of an undivided national allegiance. On election day the loyalty manoeuvre left the administration secure in its attitude of patriotism while putting Hughes on the defensive. (2) When the German-Americans lent their support to Hughes they tended to infect his candidature with a good deal of the opprobrium that went with the hyphen. In view of the fact that many of them had been notably pro-German since the beginning of the war, it was hard for them to convince the general public, above the voice of the President, that the

(1) Literary Digest, December 1916, p. 134.
(2) Paxson, op.cit., p. 351.
latter's course of neutrality had been entirely to the detriment of the United States. The German-American element, and especially their leaders, emerged from the campaign discredited. Many Americans were resentful of what they considered as German interference in American politics and deplored the fact that the hyphen had played such a prominent part in a Presidential campaign. (1)

(1) Nation, 9 November 1916, p. 432.
Historians will, no doubt, never agree on the precise state of public opinion in the United States when war was declared in April, 1917. But there can be no uncertainty regarding articulate opinion as it was expressed in newspapers, books, pamphlets, cartoons and public addresses. It was overwhelmingly and wholeheartedly on the side of the Allies and in favour of American intervention. (1) This unanimity dated, however, only from the early days of March of that year. Before then, public opinion certainly favoured a break with Germany but the desire for actual involvement in the war appears to have been much less widespread. In January Lansing wrote:

If our people only realised the insatiable greed of those German aristocrats at Berlin and their sinister purpose to dominate the world, we would be at war today. I am certain that they do not appreciate the danger and I am not sure that the President does ... (2)

However clearly Lansing saw the danger, the public still held back from the idea of full participation, although the year 1916 had seen the crystallisation of public opinion against Germany and for the Allies. This was the result of many

factors, including unsatisfactory negotiations with Germany over the submarine issue, the debates on national preparedness, and the various issues discussed in the preceding pages. To a non-American, war seemed much more possible than Lansing believed. In November 1916, an official of the German embassy in Washington wrote in a letter to Berlin:

The national feeling has risen to such a pitch during the war, and public opinion has become so hysterically sensitive as the result of the continually recurring incidents, exchange of notes, and proddings by the press, that neither one of them will be able to bear any further burdens of this nature. (1)

1917 began on a note of optimism relating to Wilson's renewed efforts to bring about a negotiated peace between the combatants. He was strongly supported by the press and the public in these efforts, which commenced in mid-December, 1916, and continued through January. There would have been less enthusiasm had the Americans known that at the same time the Germans were debating the resumption of unrestricted U-boat warfare in an all-out effort to end the war. Such a decision, the German government was well aware, would mean war with the United States, but many of the German commanders were convinced that the advantages of "an absolutely ruthless U-boat war" were greater than the disadvantages resulting

from the Americans joining the Allies. (1) On January 31 Ambassador Bernstorff delivered to Lansing his government's announcement that unrestricted submarine warfare would begin the next day. When he saw the President later that same day Lansing pleaded for an immediate severance of relations, arguing that Germany's declaration left no alternative, and that failure to take this step would result in the loss of national prestige and honour. Wilson was not sure that it was time for such a decisive break, and declared himself willing to bear "all the criticism and abuse" which he was sure would follow failure to break with Germany if this were his decision. (2)

There was intense reaction in the press when news of Germany's latest move was released. "Germany's answer to President Wilson's address to the Senate, is in effect, a declaration of war", the New York World exclaimed, while demanding immediate severance of diplomatic relations. (3)
The New York Times again displayed large black headlines of several lines in length as it had done for the Lusitania and other crises, and for several days continued to feature only news of the submarine warfare on the front page. Theodore Roosevelt advised seizing all German ships in American harbours,

(1) Letter of the German Chancellor to K. von Lernser, 23 December 1916, ibid, pp. 1202-3.
(3) New York World, 1 February 1917.
and asserted that he would pay no more attention to Germany's note than to a burglar's warning. (1) Many editors (and the public with them) were especially outraged that the announcement came while Wilson was trying to negotiate peace. The editor of Nation was outspoken about the whole matter as usual:

Having begun the European war by an act of perfidy, the German Government now seeks to end it by an act of criminal insanity ... A Malay pirate could not have made the announcement more brutally ... It seems the act of a government gone mad. (2)

Another aspect of the German announcement which angered the Americans was their decision that only one American ship per week would be allowed to travel to Europe. This, and the fear that Germany would not keep her word about anything (had she not earlier made promises about submarine warfare to the United States which she was now breaking?), brought a renewal of all the familiar accusations against her. Thus one editor wrote:

From the rape of Belgium to the sinking of the Lusitania, from the perfidious promises to the United States to the impudent notice to us that our ocean commerce will henceforth be supervised from Berlin on the bread-ticket plan, the German state has added brutality to brutality, ruthlessness to ruthlessness, insanity to insanity. (3)

(2) Nation, 8 February 1917, p. 150.
(3) Independent, 19 February 1917, p. 292.
The *New York Times* might declare that "with one voice" the country proclaimed its will and resolved not to accept the German restrictions, (1) but it was not speaking for the whole country. In the East the feeling was for strong action in keeping with previous pledges. The Middle West was also becoming more belligerent, and such phrases as "Facts must be dealt with"; and "It is inconceivable that the United States should give tacit approval to Germany's course"; featured in the editorials. But there were many dissenting voices, and the majority of editors in the West thought it better to delay action until the United States was "specifically injured". (2) Above all, the President hesitated to take any definite action. Though "deeply incensed at Germany's insolent notice," he still believed that it was for the "good of the world" for the United States to keep out of the war in the present circumstances. (3)

When his hesitations ceased, and Wilson formally severed diplomatic relations with Germany on 4 February, public opinion supported him with a near approach to unanimity. The editor of the *New York Times* rejoiced that the former

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domestic discord, due to a "schism of loyalty", had now ended. In the presence of a common duty and peril there was unity among Americans "no matter of what blood and origin". (1) The majority of editorial comment agreed, and praised the President's handling of this new crisis. (2) In the Senate a resolution approving Wilson's action was adopted by a vote of seventy-five to five. (3) One factor in the increasing unanimity of opinion was increasing anti-German sentiment. The now familiar accusations were renewed as the press reviewed the situation. The United States had no other course open to her, stated the editor of Nation, in view of this "defiant violation of international law"; this new "crime in the eyes of God and man." (4) Another editor declared:

The German state announced at the outset that it would be bound by no law, principle, promise, faith or morality but military necessity... This one promise the German state has kept. (5)

(2) Editorial opinion summarised in Ibid, 8 February 1917.
(3) Ibid.
(4) Nation, 8 February 1917, p. 150.
(5) Independent, 19 February 1917, p. 291.
One cannot doubt the strength of anti-German feeling, at least as evidenced by the press, but the evidence of anti-intervention feeling is almost as strong. Americans did not yet want war. (1) Pacifists, agrarian radicals, Socialists, German-Americans and other leaders of peace forces rushed into action in an attempt to avert American intervention in the war. (2) The "Prussian autocracy" still remained "the common enemy of civilisation," (3) and Prussian policy continued to touch American interests closely, as the lists of ships sunk, displayed prominently each morning on the front page of the New York Times, adequately illustrated. But the general mood seemed to be one of "sober resolution to meet war if it should come", rather than an active desire for participation. (4) The President had spoken of "overt acts" which would be needed to convince him even now that the Germans meant to destroy American ships. Such acts occurred almost immediately, and by mid-February some of the press was demanding a reason for Wilson's seeming inaction. But Wilson was never

(3) Independent, 19 February 1917, p. 291.
(4) Editorial comment, Literary Digest, 17 February 1917, p. 385.
willing to be forced into action by public opinion, (1) believing that he must be guided in all his decisions by the principles of justice and his duty to his country and mankind. On the other hand, he did not neglect public opinion, and it would seem that he was listening to voices other than the growing clamour of the press. These voices indicated to him that Americans generally were not as certain about the situation as many of their self-appointed spokesmen would indicate. The constant demand for war in the press was not without its effect, however, and the development of a war spirit was increasing through the month of February. Germany's next move after the resumption of unrestricted warfare was one which brought the meance of "frightfulness" much closer to home. It rapidly unified public opinion, making intervention almost inevitable, if not yet popular. This new factor was the Zimmermann telegram.

This document, which had been in the possession of the British for some three weeks, having been intercepted by their Naval Intelligence Service on 16 January, was sent to Wilson by Ambassador Page. It was signed by the German

Foreign Minister, Zimmermann, offering, in case of war with the United States, to make an alliance with Mexico. As a reward Mexico was to "reconquer the lost territory of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona." Japan was to be invited by Mexico to join the alliance, and Germany was to give financial support to Mexico. (1) The note was released to the press on 1 March, and, in the words of Lansing:

... profoundly affected public sentiment and ... undoubtedly influenced hundreds of thousands of Americans to demand war against a government which was insidiously plotting to cause war between the United States and Mexico, and intriguing against our territorial integrity. (2)

No other event of the war to this point, states Link, not even the German invasion of Belgium or the sinking of the Lusitania, so stunned the American people. (3) The press reflected the national feeling of outrage and dismay. The New York Times once more reverted to "crisis" headlines and the World extended subheads halfway down the page. The New York Evening Post called the telegram "inconceivable folly", the final proof that the German government had gone

(3) Link, op.cit., p. 354.
"stark mad". (1) Other editors saw the telegram as performing an important work of enlightenment. It had brought home more clearly than anything else the truth of what many Americans had been saying about Germany for over two years; of her "perfidy and mendacity," and the impossibility of any "civilised power" ever being on friendly terms with such a government. It was the most illuminating revelation of the "German method and idea" since the Lusitania massacre. (2)

The authenticity of the note was quickly challenged by German-American spokesmen, including George Viereck, who pronounced it a forgery planted by British agents. (3) But Zimmermann put an end to such doubts by affirming that he had indeed sent the telegram, claiming that the offer to Mexico depended on an American declaration of war against Germany. (4) The German government's "sinister intent" toward the United States could no longer be doubted. (5) Such actions as the sinking of the Lusitania had shocked Americans, but this was different. This was Germany proposing to attack the United States and conspiring with

(1) Quoted in Current Opinion, Vol. LXII, April 1917, p. 234.
(2) Editorial opinion summarised in Literary Digest, 17 March 1917, pp. 687-89.
(3) Fatherland, 7 March 1917.
America's neighbours to claim American territory. Actions such as the torpedoing of merchant ships and the killing of civilians, including Americans, had confirmed American opinion of Germany's "frightfulness". But, wrote Lansing, the people of the Middle West and especially those of the Pacific states, were, as individuals, less affected by the "German lawlessness on the Atlantic" than those of the East. (1) The mass of Americans, although they were concerned about their country's neutral rights, could not be persuaded to go to war over something so remote from their daily life. The "Prussian Invasion Plot", as many of the press reports characterised the telegram, brought the war much closer home. When Germany plotted an invasion of United States territory, there could no longer be any question of neutrality. The proposed German alliance with Mexico, and possibly with Japan, would bring the war right into the interior of the country, to their very doorsteps. Thus the Zimmermann telegram unified public opinion throughout the United States. The press of the Middle West and West now agreed with that of the East in demanding firm action against Germany. The Chicago Daily Tribune declared that the country could no longer expect to keep out of

(1) Ibid.
"active participation in the present conflict", and the Detroit Times said: "It looks like war for this country." (1) The Pacific coast press was especially vehement in its condemnation of the plan, since it so closely concerned their territorial integrity.

Commentators everywhere were unanimous in asserting that this event caused a striking change in public opinion. For the first time since August 1914, war was accepted by the majority of Americans in widely different regions of the country as the only proper response to Germany's actions. Anti-German sentiment had been building up over three years, but it was not by any means consistently intense or nationwide. Now all the various strands of indignation, resentment and fear of this "outlaw nation" were drawn together by one final act of "an international madman" whom it was "becoming increasingly an international duty to place under restraint." (2) The Springfield Republican stated editorially:

Nothing could solidify the American people like the threat of a hostile enterprise which aimed at the dismemberment of the country. (3)

(3) Quoted in Literary Digest, 17 March 1917, p. 687.
According to Lansing, the "cold blooded proposition" of the Germans accomplished in one day a change in sentiment and public opinion which would otherwise have required months to accomplish. He continued:

From the time the telegram was published ... the United States' entry into the war was assured, since it could no longer be doubted that it was desired by the American people from Maine to California and from Michigan to Texas. (1)

Historians are generally agreed that the telegram also had a significant influence on Wilson. He read the note with marked indignation when it was first delivered to him, but withheld its publication until he could discuss the matter with Lansing. (2) He showed "much resentment at the German government" when Lansing explained his theory of how the telegram had been sent through the American State Department, under a general permission granted to Bernstorff to use this means to expedite peace negotiations. (3) This evidence of the intentions and morality of the German government, if it did not convert Wilson to war, at least was instrumental in building up antagonism in him towards Germany.

(2) Foreign Relations 1917, Supplement I, p. 147
The President, in common with many other Americans, could no longer place any faith in Germany or her leaders. (1)

One other event in March 1917 helped prepare public opinion in the United States for war. This was the first Russian revolution, the March Revolution, which led to the abdication of the Tsar and the creation of a democratic republic. This had nothing directly to do with anti-German feeling. Its importance lay in the fact that the revolution "removed the last obstacle to viewing the war as one for democracy and against absolutism". (2) As long as Russia remained a member of the alliance, it had not been possible for many Americans to believe that the Allies were really fighting for democracy. The editor of Nation voiced their doubts:

To the nations engaged in the defence of public law against the power of the mailed fist, and of the right of the little peoples against the ambitions of Weltmacht, it has been from the beginning a pain and a drag that their necessary partner should be the Russia of Polish oppression and Kishineff massacres, the Russia of corrupt and stupid bureaucrats, of witch-doctors and bribe-takers and Black Hundreds. (3)

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(2) Words of Lansing, quoted in Notter, op.cit., p. 634.
(3) Nation, 22 March 1917, p. 330.
Now democracy had overthrown the only autocratic government among the Allies, and the consciences of Americans could be clear. "William of Germany" was the "only living exponent of absolutism that the democracies of the world need fear." (1)

Germany's new submarine campaign was successful during February and March, and the sense of anger against that nation deepened in the United States. A British liner, Laconia, was torpedoed late in February, with three Americans among those killed. The news report of this came only two days before the release of the Zimmermann telegram, and the Literary Digest reported newspapers all over the country to be joining in a clamour for war as a result of these two events. (2) The editor of Outlook declared that if the sinking of the Laconia was not an "overt act" in the sense in which the President used the words when he broke off diplomatic relations with Germany, it would be difficult to say what would meet "any definition of that phrase." (3) Further sinkings followed, and on 12 March Wilson issued a directive that American merchant ships be armed. The following week three unarmed American ships were sunk. (4) By this time the

(1) Springfield Republican, quoted in Literary Digest, 31 March 1917, p. 885.
(2) Literary Digest, 10 March 1917, pp. 605-607.
(3) Outlook, 7 March 1917, p. 397.
dominant feeling throughout the country was for war. The latest sinkings, the Zimmermann note, the discussions regarding the arming of American ships, had all inflamed public opinion and stimulated both anger and fear. On 20 March, Secretary of the Interior Lane spoke at a cabinet meeting of "the intensity of public indignation against the Germans," and said that he felt that the people would force the government to act, even if it were not willing to do so. (1) By this time there was a definite feeling, quite widespread over the nation, that America was in "a state of war with Germany." (2)

So public opinion was ready for a formal declaration of war in April. This represented a very substantial change from the early days of aloofness and distance from this "European" conflict. The change had come slowly but inevitably. To those who argued that the bankers and capitalists had desired, and finally achieved, intervention, the editor of New Republic replied that such was not the case. The decision for intervention, he said, came from the moral verdict reached by the more thoughtful members of the community, who had come to realise that Germany's conduct justified such action. These

(1) Quoted in Link, *op.cit.*, p. 407.
(2) *Literary Digest*, 31 March 1917, pp. 881-882.
people, he continued, were able to impose their will upon a "reluctant or indifferent majority", partly because of the increasingly offensive nature of Germany's policies, but still more because of the overwhelming support for the Allies among the intellectual leaders of the country. He concluded:

"In a referendum the list of college professors would probably have yielded the largest majority in favour of war... A fighting anti-German spirit was more general among physicians, lawyers and clergymen than it was among businessmen... Finally, writers on magazines and in the papers... popularised what the college professors had been thinking. (1)"

Whatever else contributed to the conversion of the "reluctant or indifferent majority", anti-German sentiment played a considerable role. In a pamphlet issued by the Committee on Public Information, (2) detailing reasons for America's part in the war, all the ideas and images of Germany which had been made familiar by the press in the past two and a half years were used as justification. Germany had drowned United States' citizens, sunk her ships and insulted her flag, "contrary to all law and all humanity". She had invaded Belgium, committed numberless atrocities, planned to dominate the Old World and expand into the New. "Mercy and justice through all the world" were at stake. The writer, echoing Wilson's phrases, concluded:

(1) New Republic, 14 April 1917, p. 308.

(2) This was the official propaganda and opinion control agency of the Federal Government during World War I, set up by Executive order on 13 April 1917.
To fight Germany now is the only way to make the World Safe for Democracy; to make sure that little American babies, our little brothers and sons, shall not have to do it; but shall grow up free from the nightmare of militarism, suspicion and fear. (1)

The majority of press editorials reflected the same sentiments. The battle was with the "autocratic German Government", the "greatest criminal", the "enemy of mankind"; with that Germany whose "insatiable ambitions and depravities of mind and heart" meant she could never be a friend of the United States. (2)

All Germany's crimes would be avenged by America's part in the war, said the editor of Outlook:

We will go in with the whole weight and glory of wrath. We will go in with the Sussex, the Lusitania and Belgium as our watchwords. We will go in flying the names of the outraged and the downtrodden and of the little nations like banners from the topmasts of our ships ... With fierceness and solemn pride we will go in, and with the pomp of the sorrows of Belgium. (3)

One of the gravest accusations against the German government had always been that it did not keep promises made, and it was a final broken promise that had forced the United States into war. "Would you rather have Germany's word today than at the time

(3) Outlook, 4 April 1917, p. 610.
Belgium accepted it?" demanded an irate senator. There was, he declared, no treaty or agreement which would bind a country which recognised "no law save the law of necessity" and no force except the "might of military power". (1) Fear of what a German victory might mean was a motive for intervention shared by many Americans. Lansing saw in such a victory the "shattering of all our moral standards", and a real "peril to our independence and institutions". (2) Congressman Barkley echoed his fears:

To submit to such an autocracy or to consent that it shall impose its cruel and inhuman will or its debased standards upon a civilised world in which we are a part would be to repudiate the achievements of a glorious past ... (3)

War against Germany was a war of democracy against absolutism, a war to preserve the "principles for which Jefferson wrote and Washington fought". (4) America could only have one purpose in the war; to "kill and crush beyond all possibility of resurrection the monstrous infamy of blasphemous absolutism". (5)

Americans had many causes for complaint against Germany, and all of them were cited many times as sufficient reason for

(1) Senator Pittman, Congressional Records, 65 Cong. 1 sess., (1917) p. 250.
(3) Congressional Records, loc.cit., p. 375.
(4) Ibid, 64 Cong. 2 sess., (1917) p. 2740.
(5) Independent, 14 April 1917, p. 98.
enmity, and finally, war, between the two nations. But for
the heirs of the Progressives, who had dominated national life
in the first decade of the century, the aspect of the war as a
crusade for humanity was the most compelling:

It is not Germany the invader of
American rights, not Germany the
destroyer of American ships, not
even Germany the slayer of American
citizens ... but Germany the enemy
of humanity, the foe of justice,
the menace to world peace, that we
accept as our enemy. (1)

The President agreed. He knew that opinion was heavily
in favour of war. (2) He was aware of widespread antagonism
towards Germany, and was concerned about what German-Americans
might do in the event of war. However, he "resisted outbursts
of popular passion", because, explained Lansing, he never
considered them to be the "sober thoughts of the people." (3)
He certainly was not pushed into a declaration of war by the
clamour of public opinion. He had undoubtedly lost all
confidence in the German government, and could see no hope
for world peace except among such nations as would "keep faith"
in their dealings with others. (4) Wilson believed that the
highest purposes of mankind were justice, liberty, humanity and

(1) Independent, 2 April 1917, p. 5.
(4) Notter, op.cit., p. 647.
peace. So his purposes in leading the nation into war were
the ultimate peace of the world and the liberation of its
peoples. The world was to be made safe for democracy. The
Americans would fight only "an irresponsible government," that
had "thrown aside all considerations of humanity and of right";
a government which was "running amuck." (1) The President
would not explicitly voice any anti-German feeling. He was,
however, simply reiterating what others were saying more
explicitly. It was a war to preserve civilisation, now being
destroyed by the "uncivilised, barbarous Germans", and Americans
must fight such an enemy to the end. Anti-German sentiment
weighed in the decisions which drew the United States from a
policy of isolationism, to thrust her into the maelstrom of
European, and, finally, world affairs:

We shall wage war on behalf of
civilisation; we must not hold
our hand until civilisation is
made secure ... [We fight] be-
cause we prefer civilisation
to barbarism, humanity to
frightfulness, Christianity
to Kultur. (2)

(1) Congressional Records, 65 Cong. 1 sess. (1917) p. 103.
(2) Independent, 2 April 1917, p. 5.
A German-American wrote in 1917:

Three years ago I believed that I was a full-fledged American, as undistinguishably merged into the stream of American life as one drop of clear water merges with another. (1)

But the experiences of the years 1914 to 1917 had taught him otherwise. He was no longer as wholehearted an American as he had been at the beginning of the period because, he said, America had denied him the full rights of citizenship enjoyed by the native born. (2) Many of his fellow Americans had denied him, and other German-Americans with him, the right to be themselves. They were expected to forget their homeland and all it meant to them, and to subscribe to the view that righteousness in the war was on the side of the Allies. They were denied the right to protest when they heard the incessant attacks upon Germany, her motives, methods, ambitions and aims. They were expected to accept with their naturalisation papers, "an American mind, American sympathies, American ideals, and an American degree of detachment" from European affairs. (3) When it became evident that such a transformation

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(1) Woehlke, op.cit., p. 930.
(2) Ibid, p. 932.
had not, in fact, taken place, the German-Americans became "citizens of the second class". (1) The strong anti-German sentiment which had quickly manifested itself as a force in American life after 1914, uniting with other issues and tendencies of the neutrality period, helped finally to draw the United States into the European War.

Is it possible to explain this anti-German feeling in the United States during the years 1914 to 1917? Was it simply a product of the American view of the war and the resultant pro-Ally tendencies? How could the Anglo-Americans so easily change their attitude towards their fellow-Americans who were of German birth or ancestry? Had not these people been part of the nation for many years, proving themselves good and industrious citizens? Certainly, anti-German feeling did not come out of the blue in 1914. It is surely a manifestation, one aspect, of something much larger and more complex, which shaped the life of Americans early this century.

Historians are still trying to define and explain what happened in the United States between the late 1890's and the second World War, and the definitions and explanations are as varied as their authors. It is called the "Age of Reform", the "Progressive Era", the "End of American Innocence" and "America's Coming of Age". With it are associated the "new radicals", the "liberators", the "social planners" and the

(1) Woehlke, op.cit., p. 930.
"progressives". The era of industrial and continental expansion which followed the terrible experience of the Civil War had closed, and Americans began to look at what had been achieved during those three decades. That they were not entirely happy with the results is evidenced by the long years of reform which followed, while the American house was put in order by the Progressives. The general theme of all the reformers, who came from every part of society, was the effort to restore a type of economic individualism and political democracy which they believed to have existed earlier in the United States, and to have been destroyed by the growth of corporations and the corrupt political machines. With this restoration, they also believed, would come a measure of public morality and civic purity which had been lost. (1)

Americans also began, at the end of the nineteenth century, to look outwards towards the wider world of international affairs. They considered seriously the possibility of exporting the American experience, of giving the rest of the world the benefit of American democracy, American prosperity and security. A crusading fervour, compounded of economic, strategic and humanitarian ideas, emerged as Americans saw an opportunity to remake the world in the American image. (2) The period began with the Spanish-American

war, and then included two world wars, while the United States tried to evolve a foreign policy on the basis of traditional democratic ideals.

By 1914 the progressive movement (or whatever one wishes to call this all-pervasive change in American society) was at its height. The supremacy of rural small-town America was being seriously challenged by the rise of the city, and concern for the consequent political, economic and social problems occupied a large part of the reformers' zeal. The aim of such reformers was to formulate new social and political doctrines for a nation whose wealth and political power had apparently outstripped its ability to cope with the problems these things brought. Progressive programmes varied with leaders and sections. Some were occupied with trust regulation, tax reforms, prohibition of child labour, public health programmes and educational reforms. Others emphasised political reform, proposing the initiative and referendum, direct primary elections, secret ballots, home rule for cities and better election laws. But all the reformers held the same objective, the advancement of the welfare of the majority of the people, and all approached contemporary problems with pragmatic confidence. To the progressives, it seemed clear that every problem would eventually yield to reason and goodness.

When world events thrust Germany into the daily news in the United States, progressive Americans were appalled by
what they heard and read. The autocratic, militaristic regime of that country was far removed from those ideals which occupied their minds and energies. The Germany of philosophy, music and science apparently had been entirely subverted by Prussian militarism. By her conduct in bringing about war Germany had placed herself outside the "civilised world" and threatened to destroy liberty, civilisation, Christianity and all that Americans "as an enlightened people, held dear." (1) The final decision to go to war against this "outlaw" nation was taken by a man who represented the highest aspirations of the Progressive movement, and whose early presidential years were devoted almost wholly to domestic reform. As an ardent progressive, Wilson put the whole question of neutrality and America's relation to the war in moral terms. Thus the argument about intervention rested upon moral and ideological considerations; the defence of international law and freedom of the seas, the rights of small nations, the fight against autocracy and militarism, and the struggle to make the world safe for democracy. (2) In these terms it is not difficult to understand a corresponding execration of Germany as the arch-enemy of democracy, especially American Progressive democracy. Germany disregarded neutrality and the rights of small nations;

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(1) Senator Colt, Congressional Records, 65 Cong. 1 sess. (1917) p. 223.

(2) Hofstadter, op.cit., p. 275.
she ruthlessly murdered Americans on the high seas. Realists like Lansing might urge intervention for practical reasons, but Wilson needed a more compelling motive for such a fateful step; a reason that would transcend the issues of neutral rights and economic reasons. He found it in "a magnanimous devotion to the cause of democracy all over the world". (1) He would make it a holy war, a war of service to mankind. American moral idealism should be extended outward, and American Christian democratic ideals could, and should be, universally applied. (2) The strong anti-German sentiment in the United States was partly the natural outcome of such a view of the struggle then raging in Europe, and of America's final role in it.

A resurgence of nativism, never long dormant in the United States, played its part in the reform movement. It also, as a corollary, contributed to anti-German sentiment. Most modern wars, according to Higham, have tended to calm the waves of nativism born along with the tide of a newly aroused nationalism. (3) But the European war intensified both the nationalism and nativism of Americans during this period. The "unpatriotic" activities of German-Americans in their efforts to stop the arms trade, and the more sporadic

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(1) Nation, 5 April 1917, p. 388.
(3) Higham, Strangers in the Land, p. 195.
attempts of the German agents to sabotage the production of these arms, brought loud accusations of disloyalty from Anglo-Americans. The more the web of international conflict entangled the Americans, the fiercer grew their insistence on national solidarity and the more certain their feeling that the country was dangerously divided. (1) The melting pot had failed, and the German-Americans were largely to blame, according to the nativists, because they were so different from other Americans, and had not allowed themselves to be absorbed into the mass. (2) The excitement over undivided loyalty developed closely with another nationalist movement stemming from the war. Preparedness, (the term used to describe the campaign for national defence in 1915 and 1916), was also an appeal for unity. The preparedness movement aggravated anti-German feeling, partly because its emotional tone suggested dangers of foreign (i.e. German) aggression, and partly because it was easier to play up an internal menace in the form of disloyal citizens, than to show how European armed forces could threaten the United States. (3) Theodore Roosevelt campaigned vigorously for military preparedness from the time of the invasion of Belgium, and at the same time denounced the "hyphenates". It was in 1916, when he too, espoused the preparedness cause, that Wilson began publicly

(3) Higham, op.cit., p. 199.
to denounce "Americans with alien sympathies". The huge preparedness parade on Fifth Avenue, New York, in 1916, headed by the President himself, moved beneath a great electric sign that summarised the principles of the new nationalism and nativism: "Absolute and Unqualified Loyalty to our Country." (1)

In view of the fact that many German-Americans were Catholics, it is surprising to find that the nativist feeling during this period lacked an anti-Catholic strain. Like all sections of the German-American community, the Catholics were well-organised in various societies and charitable organisations. By 1888 there were thirty German Catholic papers published in the United States. (2) It has been suggested that one reason for the absence of anti-Catholicism could be the upward economic swing of 1915, due to the prosperous returns of the Allied purchases. (3) But more importantly, the break-up of Protestant xenophobia reflected a shift of attention from the Pope to the more immediate menace of the Kaiser. Although the two movements of anti-Catholicism and anti-Germanism are similar in their imagery of disloyal citizens acting under orders of a foreign despot, the two could not

(1) Millis, Road to War, pp. 304-5.
(2) Wittke, We Who Built America, pp. 227-9.
be identified since the papacy could not be very readily equated with Prussianised Germany. (1) Whatever the reasons, the literature of the period makes no distinction between the Catholic German-Americans and the rest, whether Protestant or Jewish. They were all "hyphenated Americans", of doubtful loyalty to a large extent, and a threat to the unity of the United States in these troubled times.

The anti-immigrant strain of nativism also helps to explain the strong feeling against German-Americans. This, of course, was a legacy from an earlier period. The new cities, which caused the reformers so much concern, housed many of the immigrants, and it was here that, very often for the first time, the Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans encountered the new Americans. They were horrified by the conditions under which the immigrants lived; the slums, the crowding, the unsanitary misery, the many alien tongues, customs and religions. Above all, the "old" Americans were resentful of the skilful use the local machines made of the immigrant vote. (2) Anti-immigration sentiment increased during the first decade of the 20th century, and its repeated failures between 1910 and 1914 to secure legislative endorsement did not mean that it was lessening in strength. One aspect of anti-German feeling after 1914 was a questioning of the validity of the former policy of unrestricted immigration.

(1) Ibid, pp. 200-201.
(2) Hofstadter, op.cit., p. 176.
which seemed to have failed so significantly in regard to the assimilation of German-Americans. Their "disloyalty" seemed evident proof that such a policy was not in the best interests of the United States. (1) Part of the antipathy was probably generated by confusion over this very point. There was, on one hand, the idea of the nation as the refuge of the oppressed and poor of the "decadent" European civilisation, and on the other, this new awareness of the failure of the democratic process automatically to transform the immigrant into a replica of the Anglo-American.

The German-Americans were blamed, of course. Had they not tended to remain a clearly defined minority within the United States? They had kept their own language, customs and press, and had resisted Americanisation to a significant degree. Certainly, by 1910, over 90 per cent of the German-born inhabitants of the nation had taken out first papers leading to naturalisation, even if they had not proceeded further. (2) But was this enough? Had not these immigrants retained an allegiance to the Fatherland which was incompatible with their citizenship in the United States? This demarcation from the rest of the population had not been criticised before 1914, and the German-Americans apparently had no misgivings about their position in the community. They felt no

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reluctance after the outbreak of war at exercising their right of speech and their freedom as citizens to press for absolute neutrality. They openly opposed the export of arms to the Allies, and protested vigorously when attacks were made upon Germany and Germans. The apparent solidity of German-American unity frightened other Americans, and they responded with manifestations of anti-German feeling. The German-Americans' mistake was to think that the United States was, in fact, a neutral country. There was, as well, a strong enough effort to disseminate German propaganda and enough visible and proven sabotage to confirm all the worst fears of Anglo-Americans as to their active disloyalty. And the whole process was a vicious circle. Feeling against the German-Americans did not encourage them to support the Allies, and thus become more closely identified with the rest of the population. It only increased national feeling amongst them because they felt that "every man's hand was raised against them". (1)

There can be little doubt that British influences and propaganda during the period of neutrality played a considerable role in making Americans pro-Ally and anti-German. Not that they would have accepted the idea that they were being subjected to a very skilful propaganda campaign. The word "propaganda" had become one of opprobrium, because it tended to be applied to the German efforts at publicity rather than

(1) Woehlke, op.cit., p. 934.
the British. It seemed almost as if Americans were unaware that the English propaganda campaign existed at all. They rather seemed to look upon the British-slanted news as the truth and anything coming from Germany as wrong or untrue. In June 1917, Wilson said in his Flag Day address that the Germans had not allowed the United States to be neutral, for several reasons, including the fact that they had "sought to corrupt the opinion" of Americans. (1) Such an accusation was never levelled at the British by anyone except the German-Americans. There is ample evidence to show that the British War Propaganda Bureau worked very effectively in the United States from the beginning of the war. Books, pamphlets, government publications, speeches, production and distribution of special pictorial papers, cartoons, pictures and drawings were all designed and published with a view to influencing public opinion in the United States. (2) There was also personal correspondence with influential Americans, who supplied material for the weekly report on American opinion to the British cabinet. (3) Historians are divided in their opinions as to the extent of the influence of British propaganda on American public opinion during the years of neutrality. If one is to judge by the press it certainly

(2) Peterson, op.cit., p. 17.
did have an effect, if only to confirm the prevailing American view of Germany and Germans. A vital part of the ideas pouring across the Atlantic was the contention that Great Britain and the United States were both democracies. This helped in the creation of the idea that to be pro-Ally was patriotic and to be pro-German was somehow to be un-American. In other words, states Peterson, the British "captured the American flag and waved it in front of themselves". (1) The British efforts at propaganda gradually overshadowed the less successful German attempts, and by 1916 had won the field. Giving evidence a few years later before a Senate sub-committee, an American told how propaganda material came in his mail from British, French and German sources at the beginning of the war. But, he concluded, it seemed after a couple of years that the Germans were not printing so much. (2) Bernstorff went so far as to say that British propaganda in the United States had no other purpose than to bring about war between Germany and the United States. (3) Whatever the purpose, it certainly helped increase anti-German feeling and put the majority of Americans on the side of the Allies.

(1) Peterson, op.cit., p. 35.
(2) Testimony of Mr. Albert Bushnell Hart, Brewing and Liquor Interests, Vol. 2, p. 1638.
To argue that anti-German sentiment in the United States between 1914 and 1917 was caused solely by various forces and attitudes of the previous twenty-five years is not adequate. The United States went into the war period with a legal but not an emotional neutrality. What were the pre-disposing causes for this initial lack of emotional neutrality, which gradually shifted towards a position where the nation was prepared to abandon legal neutrality? Why would the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and the United States "confirm and develop a pre-existing disposition to aid the Allies and to injure Germany"? (1) Why was there a more widespread acceptance of the British point of view rather than the German?

The United States were originally English colonies, and the main stock of the nation had its roots in the British Isles. In the first periods of migration, the immigrants were mostly English and Scottish, who took with them to this new colony English political, religious and social structures and traditions. The Americans fought England in the War of Independence, not because they felt themselves un-English, but because they were English. They did not fight for rights they had never possessed; they were upholding English constitutional rights against the apparent efforts of the English government to suppress those rights.

(1) New Republic, 10 February 1917, p. 37.
After Independence, English influence continued to be decisive through several important channels. One was that of political structures, for while the new nation was now a republic, the ideas and institutions of England were written into its new constitution. The English tradition of liberty and liberties, became, for Americans, under the influence of seventeenth and eighteenth century English ideas, the natural "unalienable Rights" of man, the birthright of mankind. English common law was also the model for American law, and American jurisprudence has its roots in English practice.

A second source of English influence was that of the churches. Almost all the great Protestant churches of the United States, with the significant exception of the Lutherans, had their rise in England. Those churches which are most influential socially in the United States, the American Protestant Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, are historically and emotionally related to English church life. Considering the importance of church membership in American life, this influence can hardly be overestimated.

Intellectuals formed a third and very strong bond between the two countries. The "prestige" institutions in the United States, such as Harvard, Yale and Princeton, (and their products), had a stronger British heritage than a European one. Princeton, the academic home of Wilson, was, in form and content, a deliberate imitation of Oxford. Culture for
many Americans up to the time of the 1914-1918 war meant a particular heritage from the European past, but a heritage that had come via England. In 1834 the editor of North American Review stated in a lecture:

... the two countries [America and England] must always in a literary view be regarded as one great community held together by the indissoluble bond of the same language ... We glory, as Americans, in the literary glory of the land of our fathers. The names of Shakespeare, Milton, Locke, Bacon and Burke are as dear and sacred to us as they can be to any native sone of the fast-anchored isle. (1)

Through the century such sentiments remained strong. For a majority of the American intellectual elite, of the calibre of Henry Adams, Henry James and Woodrow Wilson, the great Victorian writers and statesmen such as Carlyle, Ruskin, Newman, Gladstone and Lord Bryce, were part of their immediate cultural background. Culture drawn from this tradition stood opposed to German Kultur.

Anglo-American friendship, which seemed most improbable at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had become a reality by the close of that century. The ties of language, and of spiritual and political traditions, had held, in spite of Independence and the War of 1812. They held even through the difficult days after 4 August 1914, when Britain's naval policies seriously interfered with United States' trade.

It is possibly true that Germany's primary disadvantage in 1914 was not its record in American opinion, but the absence of a record. So little existed to counteract the natural pull toward Britain. (1)

So, for historical reasons, Americans were allied emotionally to England, and anti-German sentiment stemmed, to a large extent, precisely from this fact. When this historical legacy combined with newer movements and social forces, such as Progressivism, nativism and British propaganda efforts, strong anti-German sentiment, directed against both European Germany and German-Americans, became part of American attitudes during the years 1914 to 1917.

POSTSCRIPT

There had been many dire prophecies as to what German-Americans would do if war finally came between the United States and Germany. For many Anglo-Americans who had doubted their loyalty because of their sympathy with the Fatherland, there was a real possibility that the "hyphenated" part of the population might, in some way, resist American participation in such a war. They asked anxiously what would be the response of German-Americans to a final break between the two countries. All sections of the public, right up to the President, had given the matter thought. Wilson had written to House about a possible outbreak among them in case of war with Germany, and asked for suggestions as to how the government should prepare for such an emergency. House thought that attempts would be made by the German-Americans to blow up waterworks, electric and gas plants, subways and bridges in the cities. He did not think there would be any organised rebellion, but "merely some degree of frightfulness in order to intimidate the country." (1) A journal editor voiced the fears of many regarding these "Germans who have wrapped the American flag about their German souls and bodies":

There are others of German birth, or of German descent, ... who feel and live as Germans, whose American citizenship means only the possession of rights and the neglect of duties. These ... should be eyed askance. Let them be watched; their words and their actions speak louder than their citizenship. (1)

The greater number of German-Americans had refused to comply with frequent demands from Anglo-Americans, that they prove their citizenship by expressing publicly their loyalty to their adopted country. So their reactions to the crises in the early days of 1917 were closely watched.

Alarms about the extent of subversive activities on the part of German-Americans were still being sounded by some sections of the press. Even as early as 2 February the New York Times reported that five thousand persons in the city, "known to be strongly in sympathy with the Teuton cause", were under surveillance. These names had been gathered during the period when the German propaganda organisation was active. The government was also watching places where these people might meet in secret and had five such buildings closely watched. (2)

Again in March the same paper carried a story about a "Teuton propaganda plant" which was circulating "scurrilous attacks" on Wilson:

(1) Outlook, 14 February 1917, pp. 266-7.
United States Secret Service agents are trying to find a large printing plant believed to be in or near New York which is turning out German propaganda material. In every instance the article attacks President Wilson and seeks to create the impression that the administration is under the control of the British. (1)

In fact, when diplomatic relations with Germany were severed in February, there was no sudden action or outcry from this section of the population, except for participation in many of the peace movements. This was no more than thousands of other Americans were doing, and the distinction between German-American efforts and those of other groups was blurred or non-existent. There was, therefore, a good deal of praise in the press for the loyalty of the German-Americans, with some editors assuring the public that they had always known that such would be the case. The Literary Digest summarised press comment:

Editorial observers were keen to note the effects of our break in diplomatic relations with Germany, and they rejoice in the main to find that ... the German-Americans and Austro-Americans bear witness in various demonstrations throughout the country to their unswerving loyalty to the United States. (2)

The Fatherland promptly changed its name to the New World, and numbers of German-Americans applied for naturalisation.

(2) Literary Digest, 17 February 1917, p. 388.
Dr. Hexamer, president of the National German-American Alliance, pledged the loyalty of the association members to the United States, while calling for a referendum to the people before war was declared. (1) When finally a state of war with Germany was declared, Wilson made a tactical appeal to the German-Americans. In his war message to Congress he characterised them "as true and loyal Americans as if they had never known any other fealty or allegiance". (2) Members of Congress added their voices to this declaration, expressing satisfaction once more in the way German-Americans accepted this further blow against their Fatherland. If looked at rightly, argued press commentators, this war was not a struggle between the United States and Germany. It was, according to one of them, a world-wide Civil War between the last strongholds of Feudalism and the rising tide of democracy. (3) Another editor explained:

It is as logical and appropriate for liberty-loving Americans of German birth or relationship to fight Kaiserism now as it was for liberty-loving Americans of English birth or ancestry to fight George-the-Thirdism in the days of the American revolution. (4)

There is, in fact, a good deal of evidence to show that American entry into war was strongly opposed by German-Americans and was

(2) Congressional Records, 65 Cong. 1 sess., p. 104.
(3) Independent, 19 February 1917, p. 292.
(4) Outlook, 28 February 1917, p. 342.
a bitter blow to them. Straw ballots conducted in various mid-western states showed there was an overwhelming opposition to war. (1) Senator La Follette, in his speech against the war resolution, analysed the letters and telegrams he had received, along with numerous straw ballots taken in various parts of the country, many with predominantly German-American populations. They all showed opinion about ten to one against war. (2) But there was little German-Americans could do in face of the unanimity of opinion among other sections of the population, and their opposition was swallowed up in the patriotic enthusiasm with which those others entered the war. Feeling against German-Americans did not vanish with intervention, and the war period proved a bitter time for them. (3) Anti-German sentiment, nurtured during the years of neutrality, was to reach its full strength in the intensive campaign for "One Hundred Per Cent Americanism" which flourished after April 1917.

(1) New York World, 4 April 1917.
(2) Congressional Records, 65 Cong. 1 sess., p. 224.
These four extracts are taken from the Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910 (United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1913). The first page explains the term "foreign white stock", as used by the Bureau of Census, and contains a statistical table of this group as indicated by the 1910 census (Vol. 1, p. 875).

The following three plates are graph representations of the same data, as given in the Statistical Atlas of the United States, which was published as an appendix to the census volumes. They are Plates 211, 212 and 219. This material emphasises the large number of German-Americans in comparison with all other immigrant groups. See above, pages 81-83.
INTRODUCTION.

Interest attaches not only to the statistics regarding persons themselves born in specified foreign countries, but also to the statistics regarding the native children of persons born in those countries, that is, the persons of foreign parentage or of mixed parentage. The number of non-whites in the United States who were born abroad or whose parents were born abroad is so small that it seems desirable in the present chapter to present exclusively statistics for whites.

For brevity, the Census Bureau has adopted the term "foreign white stock" to indicate the combined total of three classes, namely, the foreign-born whites themselves, the native whites of foreign parentage (those having both parents born abroad), and the native whites of mixed parentage (those having one parent native and the other foreign born); in other words, immigrants and the native children of immigrants. It has also adopted the term "country of origin" to express not only the country of birth of the foreign-born persons themselves, but also in the case of the native whites of foreign parentage, the country in which both of the foreign parents were born, and in the case of the native whites of mixed parentage, the country in which the one foreign parent was born. The total of these three classes having a given country of origin is, except when otherwise stated, treated as being the foreign white stock derived from that country. It should be noted, of course, that in the case of some of the native whites of foreign parentage the two parents were not born in the same foreign country. Such persons are separately classified in most of the tables as "of mixed foreign parentage" (a term, of course, entirely different from the term "of mixed parentage" which is generally used, for brevity, to designate persons having one parent native and the other foreign born). In one table (Table 1), however, all native whites having the father born in any given country, regardless of the birthplace of the mother, are grouped together with the persons themselves born in that country and the native persons having either parent born there, the other being native of the United States. Moreover, there is a table (Table 12) classifying persons of mixed foreign parentage according to the birthplace of both father and mother.

UNITED STATES AS A WHOLE.

Summary for 1910.—The total foreign white stock in the United States in 1910 numbered 32,343,382, of whom 13,945,545, or 42.4 per cent, were foreign-born whites; 12,010,311, or 37.1 per cent, were native whites of foreign parentage; and 5,981,526, or 18.5 per cent, were native whites of mixed parentage. The distribution of this foreign white stock by country of origin is shown in Table 1, which distinguishes the three classes of persons just named. The relative importance of the leading countries of origin is shown in the first diagram on the next page.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Foreign-born White</th>
<th>Native White of Foreign or Mixed Parentage</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Foreign Parentage</th>
<th>Mixed Parentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All foreign countries</td>
<td>32,343,382</td>
<td>13,945,545</td>
<td>12,010,311</td>
<td>5,981,526</td>
<td>5,981,526</td>
<td>5,981,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>5,901,950</td>
<td>3,901,950</td>
<td>1,937,085</td>
<td>2,971,500</td>
<td>2,971,500</td>
<td>2,971,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>26,441,432</td>
<td>9,043,592</td>
<td>10,073,226</td>
<td>7,324,614</td>
<td>7,324,614</td>
<td>7,324,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26,441,432</td>
<td>9,043,592</td>
<td>10,073,226</td>
<td>7,324,614</td>
<td>7,324,614</td>
<td>7,324,614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Outside of the United States.
2 Spanish for use.
3 Native whites whose parents were born in different foreign countries; for example, one parent in Ireland and the other in Scotland.

While the countries covered by Table 1 are arranged according to continents and groups, totals are not given for such continents or groups, for the reason that, in the case of the native whites of foreign parentage, the true total is not, of course, the same as the sum of the figures for the separate countries, there being some persons having one parent born in one
1. FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION BY PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES OF BIRTH: 1850-1910

2. FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION BY PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES OF BIRTH: 1910 AND 1900

3. FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH: 1910
1. PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION BY PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES OF BIRTH: 1850, 1870, 1890, AND 1910

TOTAL FOREIGN BORN, 1850: 2,244,692

TOTAL FOREIGN BORN, 1870: 5,367,220

TOTAL FOREIGN BORN, 1890: 9,249,560

TOTAL FOREIGN BORN, 1910: 13,515,886

2. PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION BY PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES OF BIRTH: 1910 AND 1900

TOTAL FOREIGN BORN, 1910: 13,515,886

TOTAL FOREIGN BORN, 1900: 10,241,376
APPENDIX 2

CIRCULATION FIGURES


There are several points to be noted:


   New York: 5,047,221

(ii) The figures for journals are national circulation figures.

(iii) With very few exceptions (including some religious journals), the only journals with larger circulation figures than those listed in the bibliography were women's weekly and monthly journals, and their circulation often ran into millions.
NEWSPAPERS:

New York Times: 336,420 (weekdays)
                 392,535 (Sunday edition)

New York World: 390,000 (morning)
                 431,222 (evening)

Washington Post: 45,808 (weekdays)
                 54,532 (Sunday edition)

Comparative figures for other New York newspapers:

New York Tribune: 102,117

New York Herald: 117,058

New York Sun: 157,379

New York Evening Mail: 154,702.
JOURNALS:

American Review of Reviews (monthly): 242,305
Atlantic Monthly: 69,947
Century Magazine (monthly): 60,159
Current Opinion (monthly): 55,214
Independent (weekly): 94,159
Life (weekly): 137,860
Literary Digest (weekly): 750,000
Nation (weekly): 9,763
New Republic (weekly): 29,560
North American Review (monthly): 22,266
Outlook (weekly): 119,690

Comparative figures for other journals:

Collier's (weekly):
People's Home Journal (monthly): 980,692
McCall's Magazine (fashions, monthly): 970,511
Needlecraft (monthly): 1,310,661
Today's Housewife (monthly): 1,297,084
Messenger of the Sacred Heart (Catholic monthly): 347,075
APPENDIX III

CARTOONS AND ANTI-GERMAN RHETORIC

The following selection of cartoons and anti-German rhetoric is representative of what filled much of the press and many public utterances during the period of neutrality. If the year 1915 seems over-represented, it must be remembered that this was the year when the European war dominated American thinking. It was the year of atrocities, including the "martyrdom" of Edith Cavell; of submarine warfare and the sinking of the Lusitania. 1916 brought other issues to the fore, unrelated to the European war. They included the Mexican problem, industrial and union unrest, and a presidential election. Anti-German sentiment continued to be expressed, of course, but it was not quite so evident in the press. The last months of 1914 and the first months of 1917 are represented by pages 271-73.
"DOGGY, DOGGY, VEM IS DAT DAMNED DOG?"

*Life, Vol. LXV, January, 1915*
"MY PEOPLE"

The Kaiser as seen by Americans
Life, Vol. LXVI, October, 1915
NATIONAL INDIGNATION AND NATIONAL SELF-CONTROL

In the face of the tragedy of the "Lusitania" the heart of the American people burns with indignation. More than one hundred peaceable, unoffending American citizens, proceeding "upon their lawful occasions" are stricken with sudden death. They had offended against no rule of international law. They had violated no legitimate interest of any belligerent. By every principle and custom of what is, by a curious anomaly, known as civilized warfare, they had a right to be as immune from attack as tho they had remained quietly in their American homes. National indignation is inevitable; its expression is a national duty.

But an even higher duty rests upon the American people. We must practise the sternest self-control. In demanding justice we must weigh our every act and word and thought in the scales with even hand. It is easy to be quick to wrath. It is not so easy to deliberate in counsel and wise in action.

The main line of our course is already charted. The world has full reason to know in what direction we are constrained to go. Especially have those upon whom rests the responsibility for the death of the American passengers of the "Lusitania" warrant for knowing what our view of their ruthless act will be. When Germany, in the early days of February, proclaimed a war zone about the British Isles, and warned neutral peoples that they sailed those waters at their peril, our protest was instant and unequivocal. In the note addressed by the American Government to the Imperial German Government on February 10, we said:

If the commanders of German vessels of war should act upon the presumption that the flag of the United States was not being used in good faith, and should destroy on the high seas an American vessel or the lives of American citizens, it would be difficult for the Government of the United States to view the act in any other light than as an indefensible violation of neutral rights, which it would be very hard indeed to reconcile with the friendly relations now happily subsisting between the two governments.

If such a deplorable situation should arise, the Imperial German Government can readily appreciate that the Government of the United States would be constrained to hold the Imperial German Government to a strict accountability for such acts of their naval authorities, and to take any steps it might be necessary to take to safeguard American lives and property and to secure American citizens the full enjoyment of their acknowledged rights on the high seas.

It is true that this warning was concerned more specifically with the German threat that American vessels might be sunk because of the use by British ships for purposes of subterfuge of the American flag. But the principle is precisely the same. American citizens have the same "acknowledged rights" of security and safety of life on merchant ships flying the flag of a belligerent that they have on an American ship.

The contingency foreshadowed in this note has actually arisen. It presents itself in spectacular form. The most famous passenger ship in the world is at the bottom of the Irish Sea. It was sunk without warning, by German torpedoes. It carried down with it more than a hundred American lives.

What we must do is clear. We must hold the Imperial German Government "to a strict accountability." We must consider, calmly, coolly, but with the utmost seriousness, what steps it may be necessary to take to safeguard American lives and property and to secure to American citizens the full enjoyment of their acknowledged rights on the high seas.

How we shall do it is another matter. But on this point one thing also is clear. We must trust the President. In a statement issued from the White House he has struck the right keynote. "Of course, the President feels the distress and the gravity of the situation to the utmost and is considering very earnestly but very calmly the right course of action to pursue. He knows that the people of the country wish and expect him to act with deliberation as well as with firmness."

In the hands of the President of the United States the honor and integrity of the United States are secure. Every American, without distinction of party and with no thought of personal interest, should hold up the President's hands and in calmness of thought and carefulness of speech and with rigid self-restraint do his part to help him in the grave responsibility it is his to bear.

Cartoon Comment on the sinking of the Lusitania.

"GOD IS WITH US"

"BUT WHY DID YOU KILL US?"
—Kirby in N. Y. World.

"IT NEVER WOS A GOOD FIT, ANYWAY"


MURDER ON THE HIGH SEAS

"Well, have you nearly done?"

Raemaekers' Cartoons, New York, 1917.
IT'S FATTENING WORK

Raemaekers' Cartoons, New York, 1917.
General Orders

From Berlin

1. When a town is invaded by Germans, either with or without its consent, a reception committee shall meet them with choice viands and fervent welcoming oratory. If this is neglected, all the schoolchildren will be shot, the town burned and a tax levied.

2. In the event that a German soldier, either while under the influence of alcohol or not, shall playfully stab a citizen with a bayonet, such citizen shall show no sign of displeasure. Otherwise he will be shot, all his goods confiscated and the town burned.

3. In the event that a German soldier, either while under the influence of alcohol or not, shall playfully stab a citizen with a bayonet, such citizen shall show no sign of displeasure. Otherwise he will be shot, all his goods confiscated and the town burned.

4. All ladies of invaded towns shall have a high regard for the personal beauty, high character and general attractiveness of German officers in particular and of German soldiers in general. If any lady demurs at the attentions of a German soldier, her family will be shot, the town burned and a tax levied.

5. All prayers in all cathedrals shall be for the unvarying success of the German forces. If any inhabitant is suspected of praying for the safety of the town from assault, the cathedral will be destroyed, the town burned and a tax levied.

6. The inhabitants of invaded towns shall be held strictly responsible for all suspicions of German officers. Such suspicions will be promptly acted upon by shooting an appropriate number of inhabitants, burning the town and levying a tax.

7. The German officers and soldiers, having a high regard for culture, will aim to be uniformly kind and considerate, provided it is not possible to be otherwise, and in no case will the German soldiery harbor any ill-will against any innocent person who escapes suspicion.

(Signed) GENERAL VON SCHLAUTHER.

German war methods as described by Americans

Life, Vol. LXIV, December, 1914
DESLATED BELGIUM.

It did not require the graphic, yet sober, account of the condition of Belgium given by Mr. Whitehouse to establish the awful truth about the state of that ravaged country. Nobody denies it; nobody even pretends that the tale of woe, to which fresh chapters have been added day after day for two months, is exaggerated. We say nothing about causes; we say nothing about guilt; what we are speaking of is the fearful desolation and ruin, the heartbreaking distress, the unendurable agony of hundreds of thousands of non-combatants who, in a few short weeks ago, were dwellers in quiet and happy homes, and who are now wanderers on the face of the earth—fatherless, perhaps, or widowed; homeless and forlorn and almost hopeless, surely. Concerning their state, there is unfortunately no room for doubt or controversy; with cities and towns and villages given to the flames, and the whole countryside ravaged by the countless hosts of the invaders, no voice can be lifted up to say that the thing is not fully as appalling as it is imagined.

No, the trouble is all the other way. Imagination is all too feeble to doff the truth. The mere extent of the misery defies realization; the individual horrors of the scene are too infinitely varied to permit of any attempt to grasp them; and over and above all this stand those effects of the paralysis of all the activities of the tiny country which we are not apt to think of, but which weigh down the population with a steady pressure of misery. Let a single passage from Mr. Whitehouse’s statement speak to this point:

The whole life of the nation has been arrested. Food supplies which would ordinarily reach the civilian population are being taken by the German troops for their own support. The peasants and poor are without the necessities of life, and conditions of starvation grow moreacute every day. Even where there is a supply of wheat available, the peasants are

HEROIC BELGIUM

Many Americans have made their first approach to Europe along the river Scheldt and will never forget the lovely outlines of the Cathedral tower, which Napoleon compared to Mecklin lace, and the beautiful quality of the stones of the chimneys that raised melody upon the old sky of Antwerp. That city appealed to the eye, and still more to the imagination, for it has had a tragic and heroic history. Many nations have assailed it; a dozen times it has been besieged. It has lived through appalling wars, but it has survived to regain a prosperity portrayed in the charts of all the countries of the world set in tiles along the walls of the beautiful Bourse.

And now Antwerp has fallen again, after a heroic fight against overwhelming odds. Its beauty, like that of Louvain, Malines, and other historic towns stored with the treasures of medieval architecture and art, has been blurred; but it has added a glorious chapter to history. Belgium is a little country but a great nation. It stood in the path of an almost invincible military power; its fields have been ravaged; some of its cities have been almost completely blotted out; its soldiers have been killed by the tens of thousands; it is said that three millions of its people are in exile. But, blurred and all but crushed, it has stood as a heroic protagonist of the principle of nationality—a principle not identified either with extent of territory or magnitude of population. It has illustrated again the indomitable spirit of humanity; unafraid in the presence of almost certain disaster, unconstrained by the approach of almost certain death. Wars are made big by the size of armies and the number of battles; but wars are made great by the human qualities they display. Belgium has struck the highest note that has been heard above the din of these awful conflicts. She had nothing to gain; she had everything to lose. She did not stop to count the cost; she obeyed that instinctive sense of honor which is an absolute standard and imposes an absolute duty. She has not stopped to reason why.

She has been the victim of one of the greatest crimes against any nation in the history of the world. What her immediate fate may be no man can foresee. Those who believe in a divine justice in the world will not hesitate to affirm that such a spirit as hers cannot be buried in the ruins of cities nor crushed by the iron hand of war.

Nation, Vol. XCIX, October 1914.

Outlook, Vol. CVIII, September 1914.
pointedly and grossly violated its treaty obligations to us and
wrongfully broken all solemn assurances given our Govern- 
ment to respect our international rights. He has proven that, by
the ruthless destruction of ships bearing and claiming na-
tion of our mail, without notice and without provocation, by
certain submarine acts under positive direction from the
German Government, that Government has proceeded to
war upon this Nation. He asks authority from Congress to use
the Army and Navy to defend our rights, protect our citizens
and their legitimate commerce, and to give him the means efficiently
to wage this war violently precipitated by Germany.

The question presented to us is the determination is whether we
shall promptly and generously respond to the brave and patriotic
appeal on the President to defend our rights and redress our
wrongs, or whether we shall cowardly submit to these and fur-
ther outrages, and through craven fears to relinquish our
rights, which are vital to us as a great and unopposed
power. The issue at present is war. War has already been wanton-
ly and lawlessly prosecuted against us. The issue is whether we
shall accept war as an object and ensure submission. Before
the recent outrages, had we set already submitted at the hands
of the Imperial Government of Germany to all that could be
expected of a brave and self-respecting people? Have we not
seen, since the beginning of this war, how several years ago the
United States engaged in many improper activities in violation
of the laws of the United States and of our obligations to
officials in a neutral country? Has it not been proven
contradictory that the military and naval attacks of the Ger-
man Embassy in this country by their many and varied activities
sought to use this country as a base for military operations
against nations with which we were at peace? Our
authorities have clearly proved that a scheme was financed and
effected from this country to induce a rebellion in India against
the British Crown, with which we are friendly and in the
peace and stability. Have not officers of the Imperial German
warships violated our laws of honor and accepted? German
officials of necessity to our Government have been the direct
issuing of passports to enable spies to enter and operate
in foreign countries at peace with us. American passports,
transnitent and counterfeited, have been found on German
nations. Persons have been labeled and connived at this
in this country for using our territory as a base for providing
German warships with coal and other supplies. In violation of
the principles of the United States and the neutrality.

It has been disclosed that our territory has been used by Ger-
man officials to organize efforts to wreck bridges and destroy
important industries in Canada, our northern neighbor. We
have been prepared and sought to be placed upon allied ships
lying in our harbors. German officials, in violation of our laws,
have sought to control the employment in the munitions indus-
tries, and thus in effect or destroy these. We have
known of German activities in Mexico prejudicial to our
interests and seeking to embroil us in trouble with that
distracted country. The extent and dangerous character of
such activities, though suspected, were not fully known until the
recent publication of the Zimmermann letter, which proved the
efforts to induce Mexico by the German Government to
make that nation war against us. This letter contains the
lowest depths of national turpitude. The German ambassador
while enjoying our hospitality, was informed of a contemplated
bribery of a national official to undermine our interests,
our Government, promising to respect our international rights
upon the sea, and was told that if we did not timely submit to
this breach of the treaty, and gross violation of our rights, then he
should endeavor to combine Mexico and Japan with Germany
in warfare against the United States, pledges the German Gov-
ernment to dispose of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, which
should be given to Mexico. The absence of the scheme does
not lessen its shameless enormity. The fact that the wicked
proposal fell upon unwary ears does not lessen our right
to the willingness of the German Government, when once
presented, to do as we should have been, and both. This note could
not have been suddenly precipitated without previous careful
consideration and possibly prior intrigue. Large national
interests and considerations are not thus hastily determined.

We have long suspected a disposition on the part of Germany
to dispute with us the great Monroe doctrine when opportunity
presented. We must to extend to extend to extend the
Hemisphere her territorial spoliations. The Zimmermann letter
proves that this suspicion is well founded, and that we must rely
upon our naval and military strength to defend this great doc-
tine from violation. The letter indicates a state of heart
purpose on the part of Germany which demands serious con-
sideration and prompt action on our part. It indicates an
enemy which we cannot lightly reasserted by us puente greater

Extract from the speech of Congressman Swanson in the
debate on Wilson's War Message, Congressional Records,
65 Cong. 1 sess., (1917).
I have been highly pleased that heretofore, and for so long, the President of this country has rendered such great service in keeping this country out of war, and I have been ever ready to accord a high degree of praise for doing so. I believe now in the past he has rendered the people of this country immeasurable service in keeping us out of war as long as he could, and I am glad that he did so. I was with him in it, and I believe that he has gone to the point and that we have gotten to the point where that may no longer be done consistently with the preservation of our honor and of our rights on the seas.

I will not undertake to enumerate the long series of gross outrages to which Germany has her in desperation has subjected the people of this country and our Nation as a nation. They are well known to all of you; they have been detailed in the President's message; they have been reported on the floor of this Chamber today. They have been numerous; and I say that the fact that they are committed on the high seas, that they have the right to be, makes them no less offensive than it committed on the land. I do not believe that Germany has any more right on the high seas than on the land. I believe that one is no less an offense and no less serious than the other. The fact that we are assaulted and murdered on the seas makes it no less wrong than if on land. I do not believe that Germany has any more rights to go to war with her submarines our unarmed or our armed merchant vessels on the high seas, these vessels being engaged in legitimate commerce, than she would have to send a war fleet to the point of this country and bombard and demolish the city of New York.

If we are not equally quick to assert and defend our national rights on land and on sea, then we deserve and we shall receive the moral contempt of all the civilized nations of the earth. If the United States is to maintain its position as one of the great powers of the world—one not only great in material matters, but great in principle, in interest, in justice, in right and in pride, in all that goes to make a nation great in the hearts of its citizens and in the esteem of the world—the time has come for us to stand up for our rights, to protect the lives, the property, the liberties, to protect their property, and protect their rights on the seas as well as on the land. The hour is near. No one denies that German submarines have unnecessarily wounded our citizens, sunk our ships, destroyed our property. It is admitted by all international lawyers, students, experts, statesmen that these things are unlawful. What will we do about it? Will it be to submit further or fight? Which?

Shall we sit still longer and see our rights violated? Shall we not strike back to protect our cherished rights? Germany says she will continue to do these things. She is doing them. Are we helpless? The time has come to say, If we do not in our national capacity accept the challenge which Germany has definitely thrown down to us; then, indeed, in my opinion, the men who fought at Antietam, the men who fought with Washington at Valley Forge, the brave men whom crossed the Delaware with Washington, the men who prevailed over Germany at Ypres, and fought in Ypres, if it should be the case, they established a Nation which is too cowardly and too effeminate to protect the rights of its citizens which it wrested from control across the seas after eight years of toil and deadly war. If we are not now ready to meet the challenge of Germany to stay off the seas; if we are to be driven like curs off the sea, driven into caverns to side retreats, if we are to have our rights up in our homes and homes that we are afraid to go where we have a God-given right to go, then, indeed, the valiant Union soldiers who shed their blood on the battle fields of Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, Antietam, the Wilderness, Seven Pines, Manassas, Chickamauga, and a hundred other hard fought battle fields during the Civil War, shed their blood in vain, because they preserved a Nation which will not protect the rights of its citizens, of its children, its men, or women, or daughters whom they fought to protect in their precious rights. If so, they made a mistake and they died in vain, believing that they were preserving a Nation which would maintain the liberty and the rights of democracy for all time to come, so soon to be unjustly surrendered at the command of a foreign nation. Can your blood stand the thought?

If we are not going to accept the challenge of Germany, who denies us to continue our rights, then the torn and tattered, worn and battle-stained veterans of the gray, 80,000 of them, starved and bedraggled, who surrendered with Lee at Appomattox, deserted, surrendered in vain, because they knew that their Government, which, after their surrender, will not protect them in the rights which were guaranteed to them when they surrendered, and when they were told they were surrendering; the greatest Republic that had ever existed or ever would exist on the face of the earth.

Extract from the speech of Congressman Myers in the debate on Wilson's War Message, Congressional Records, 65 Cong. 1 sess., (1917).
A NOTE ON SOURCES

For reasons explained in Chapter One the press was the most important source for public attitudes during the years 1914 to 1917. In regard to newspapers I may seem to have been somewhat limited by available resources. The only American newspapers for the period 1914-1917 held in Australian libraries are the New York Times, New York World, the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal. These, however, as can be seen from the circulation figures in Appendix II, are papers of major importance. Indications of what residents of the sections of the United States other than the East were absorbing with their breakfast each morning are gleaned from editorial summaries given in such journals as Literary Digest, Current Opinion and the American Review of Reviews. All of these printed generous extracts from a wide sampling of American newspapers. The New York Times and the World also summarised editorial opinion across the nation in times of crisis. Journals and reviews for the period are available in much greater supply, as are contemporary pamphlets and books on a wide variety of subjects relating to the war. The attitude of the German-American press to every vital issue is adequately dealt with by Carl Wittke in German-Americans and the World War (Columbus, 1936). Circulation figures for the newspapers and journals available in Australia are given in Appendix II. These are compared with figures
for some other newspapers and journals which were not available. Although these figures are for 1918 (others are not available in Australia) they are an adequate indication of the popularity of the sources used. Some of my reading was done in the New York Public Library when I visited the city in 1967. At that time I was reading rather generally on the topic, and was not aware of the limited number of American newspapers in Australia. But I did read there all the relevant issues of The Fatherland, the paper founded by George Viereck to counteract anti-German propaganda.

The Foreign Relations Supplements issued by the United States Department of State give many unsuspected insights into the topic. Of particular value are the Official German Documents Relating to the World War, published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. They give the German view of the situation in the United States; and include Bernstorff's periodic assessment of public opinion in that country. The official papers and memoirs of Wilson, Lansing, House and other members of the administration are also indispensable, since these men were sensitive to public opinion and weighed it carefully when making decisions relating to foreign policy.

Secondary works on the topic are few. Anti-German sentiment is treated very briefly in such works as Strangers in the Land by John Higham (New Brunswick, 1955) and The German-Americans by Richard O'Connor (Boston, 1968).
James Child's, *The German-Americans in Politics* (Madison, 1939), is concerned almost exclusively with the activities of the National German-American Alliance, and its dissolution by Congress. He does discuss fully the part played by the German-Americans in the agitation for an embargo on arms to the Allies. Other than these I have found no satisfactory or comprehensive work on this topic of anti-German feeling in the United States during the years of neutrality.
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