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Indiana Looks at the World War, 1914

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The people of the United States, during the World War and for a few years afterward, were confident that their martial efforts had been noble and necessary. But in the early Twenties doubts began to appear, and in the succeeding years they came to view their part in that war in a more cynical light. Shocked at what they read in the "Now It Can Be Told" exposures, many declared that the country had been caught in a diabolically clever web woven by British propagandists.¹ By quoting trade statistics and a letter of Ambassador Walter H. Page, others sought to show that the United States became a belligerent in order to insure the continuance of a foreign loan-fed war prosperity. Some felt that the United States had gone to war to protect the loans of international bankers, and another school attributed the action of the United States to the influence of munition makers seeking more blood money.² A further group believed that the explanation was to be found by a psychological study which would trace the progressive stages of Wilson's mind from 1914 to 1917, with perhaps some atten-

¹ Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York, 1927); Harry E. Barnes, *In Quest of Truth and Justice* (Chicago, 1928); George S. Viereck, *Spreading Germs of Hate* (New York, 1930); Horace C. Peterson, *Propaganda for War, The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914-1917* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1939).

² For discussions of the economic causes see Clinton H. Grattan, *Why We Fought* (New York, 1929); Alexander D. Noyes, *War Period of American Finance, 1908-1925* (New York, 1926); Benjamin H. Williams, *Economic Foreign Policy of the United States* (New York, 1929); Ryllis A. Goslin (ed.), *War Tomorrow—Will We Keep Out* (Headline Books of the Foreign Policy Association, New York, 1935); Charles C. Tansill, *America Goes to War* (Boston, 1938). Journalists, clergymen, lecturers, and teachers were even more emphatic and dogmatic in proclaiming the various economic theses throughout the post-war years than were these professional writers.

tion to Robert Lansing and Colonel Edward M. House.³ It is important to note that no matter which of these interpretations or combination of interpretations was accepted, the average individual was placed in the unhappy and uncomplimentary role of a dupe. The only compensating thought for him was that if he had been tricked into war then the responsibility for that war was not his.

Another *zeitgeist* has come around, however, and a re-evaluation of the cause of American action in 1917 has begun. It is too soon to predict whether this movement will stop at correcting the over simplification and dogmatism of the previous period or will return to the earlier excessive romanticism and chauvinism. Whatever its ultimate fate, the new spirit has already performed one service by placing a large share of the responsibility for participation in the World War on the general public. If that participation was wise the mass of citizens of 1914 to 1917 deserve much of the credit; if it was a grievous mistake they must shoulder a corresponding portion of the blame. In the following pages an attempt is made to trace the attitudes of a somewhat typical group of Middle Westerners through the early months of the War.

The fateful assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, attracted considerable attention throughout Indiana. But no extraordinary significance was attached to the event, and it was generally regarded as just another murder of a foreign aristocrat. By the third day the news was shifted to an inside page of the papers and by July 4 disappeared entirely, to remain so for three weeks. Therefore, the Austrian ultimatum of July 23 came as a surprise and caught the public mentally unprepared for the subsequent developments.

War followed with a rush, and as it leaped from country to country, the Middle Westerners watched its progress in hypnotized horror. Beyond doubt, the first major reaction toward the European strife was one of deep shock that such things could be. Some called it Armageddon while others used Sherman's pithy definition, but practically all agreed

³ Paxton Hibben and Clinton H. Grattan, *Peerless Leader* (New York, 1929); Mark Sullivan, *Our Times, 1900-1925* (6 vols., New York, 1926-1935), V (1933), *Over Here*; Walter Millis, *Road to War* (Boston, 1935); Alex M. Arnett, *Claude Kitchin and the Wilson War Policies* (Boston, 1937); Tansill, *America Goes to War*.

that the war was "the most gigantic, most bloody, and most disastrous" development of modern times.⁴ An "unchristian, barbarous, brutal relic of the dark ages," made more terrible by the use of modern weapons, had been called upon to "settle questions of state on the basis of which side can pile up the dead and wounded the highest."⁵ "Death and disaster, unparalleled, unprecedented, and immeasurable" were certain to result.⁶ "The cry that rang through Egypt will soon be heard in Europe. 'There was not a house where there was not one dead'—So it was of old, so it shall be again. . . . A month ago, no one . . . could in the wildest delirium have dreamed that such a crime against God and man was possible. Now men are asking themselves whether there is after all, such a thing as civilization."⁷ It was all too terrifying to be real. "It's in the picture books. . . . It's a bad dream in the night. It couldn't happen. It is a great illusion. It is impossible."⁸

The war was real enough, however, and some explanation had to be found for the anachronistic happenings. From all parts of the state and from all classes came the simultaneous response—the institution of monarchy with its attendant militarism and secret diplomacy is the culprit. With virtual unanimity it was asserted that the war had not been willed by the people but by their rulers in pursuance of personal policies of revenge or ambition, and that the public went unwillingly to battle or with an enthusiasm which they had been tricked and trained into adopting by present slogans and past schooling.⁹ It was felt that, whereas the souls of emperors and commoners were cast in the same mold, the reasons that made for wrangles between neighbors caused war between princes. But in the latter case, though it was a King's war, it was a peasant's fight. Therein lay the rub. It was a shame—practically every vocal Hoosier vowed—that the rulers couldn't be made to fight their own battles and break their own heads. "Chic" Jackson left a guide for the

⁴ New Albany, Indiana, *Ledger Standard*, August 2, 1914, p. 2.

⁵ North Judson, Indiana, *News*, August 27, 1914, p. 4.

⁶ Evansville, Indiana, *Journal-News*, August 3, 1914, p. 8.

⁷ Indianapolis *News*, August 4, 1914, p. 6.

⁸ Chicago *Tribune*, August 6, 1914, p. 6.

⁹ Madison, Indiana, *Courier*, August 4, 1914, p. 2; Connersville, Indiana, *Evening News*, August 4, 1914, p. 4; Liberty, Indiana, *Herald*, August 6, 1914, p. 4; South Bend, Indiana, *Tribune*, August 6, 1914, p. 6.

future researcher when he recorded the following conversation between two of his comic strip creations:

- (Ira) "And who bears th' brunt of it? Tell me that! Does the King, the Czar, the Kaiser? No!"
- (Roger Bean) "Wope! Just uh minute, Ira. I know what yer gonta' say and please don't say it, 'cause I've heard it eight times since breakfast."¹⁰

This overly simplified view as to the cause of the war was in the prevailing spirit of optimism, for it presumed the essential goodness and perfectibility of the mass of mankind and sheered away from all hints that war might be the incurable result of *homo sapiens'* inherent moral and mental deficiencies. Furthermore, to put so much guilt on monarchy was to praise democracy, and a wave of democratic testifying swept the land.¹¹ A rediscovery of the merits of popular government was made, and much that had come to be taken for granted was clothed with new meaning. Platitudes came to life, and copy book phrases became fighting phrases. Struck by the spirited criticism directed at the reigning monarchs, one observer wrote, "Over night our people have revived all the revolt against the throne which inspired so avidly our war of independence. Even the old phrases of revolutionary days are heard on tongues that have known them only in school books. The man in the street is voicing [pledges to democracy]. . . . They come in the newspapers in every mail. They compose the one clear and strong reaction from the war."¹²

Allied to this resurgence of democracy was a temporary sharp reaction against militarism and "jingoism" at home and abroad. The European strife was widely accepted as proof that large military establishments were detrimental to peace, and former advocates of such in America found themselves severely criticized. "Watchful Waiting" and "grape-juice diplomacy" were probably more popular during this August than at any previous or future time, and the Democrats hastened to compare Wilson's patience toward Mexico with the precipitate action of various European chancellories.¹³

¹⁰ Indianapolis *Star*, August 16 1914, Hoosier and City Life Section, p. 1.

¹¹ Hammond, Indiana, *Lake County News*, August 13, 1914, p. 2; Newcastle, Indiana, *Daily Times*, August 8, 1914, p. 4.

¹² Chicago *Evening Post*, August 7, 1914, p. 6.

¹³ Vincennes, Indiana, *Western Sun*, August 7, 1914, p. 4; Louisville, Kentucky, *Times*, August 15, 1914, p. 6.

To these reactions can be added still another. From the time the Austrian ultimatum was first announced the majority of the people of Indiana gave their sympathy to the Entente powers. There were two outstanding and clearly distinguishable reasons for this attitude. The first was the nature of the governments of Austria and Germany, or at least the local conception of them. The result of the newly accentuated affinity for democracy and antipathy for autocrats described on previous pages created a deep antagonism toward the Central Powers and good will for the Entente nations, Russia excepted. It would have been unnatural and a cause for alarm regarding the virility of the American democratic spirit if it had been otherwise. As a Richmond editor put it, "Americans cannot help but feel that one of the great issues in the struggle is popular government. If Germany is victorious, an attempt will be made to Prussianize Europe which will deter the progress of democracy many years."¹⁴ The New Castle *Daily Times* explained that the strong American sentiment against Germany was "not against the German people or their cause, but because the Kaiser and his royal authority are so foreign to American institutions. The fact that France is a republic and that England's ruler is wholly dependent on the House of Commons for his authority make these governments nearer our own form. That this creates a bond of sympathy is evidenced by the fact that there is no sentiment in this country in favor of Russia and its autocratic government."¹⁵ "Dynasties dared Democracies. There are some strange alliances among the forces of Democracy, but the issue is clear," averred the South Bend *Tribune*.¹⁶ The friends of Germany sometimes objected that the economic and social legislation, inspired by Bismarck, made the German workman a freer man, *de facto*, than was his American brother who had a wider franchise but no old age insurance. But to the Middle Westerners of 1914, freedom meant essentially political freedom, and Monarchical Socialism was but little understood or liked.

Illiberalism was not the only disliked attribute that the

¹⁴ Richmond, Indiana, *Palladium*, August 15, 1914, p. 4.

¹⁵ Newcastle, Indiana, *Daily Times*, August 21, 1914, p. 4.

¹⁶ South Bend, Indiana, *Tribune*, August 6, 1914, p. 6.

contemporaries ascribed to the governments of Austria and Germany. It was believed that they were imbued with an aggressive militarism that manifested itself in periodic saber rattling and a general chip-on-the-shoulder attitude. "Prussian Militarism" and its leader and prototype, Kaiser Wilhelm, came in for special criticism. With his spiked helmet, army cloak, upturned mustache, sword, boots, spurs, and grim visage, the Kaiser became the living incarnation of the American conception of a Prussian War Lord. And worse yet, as one Methodist minister told his flock, many were convinced that he had "a pronounced degree of insanity."¹⁷ His considerable ability was never appreciated in America, and he was known largely for his bombastic warlike utterances and his ostentatious manner of addressing God. The latter point was subject to particular censure in evangelistic Indiana, and there is no more striking example of the resourcefulness of German diplomatic inaptitude than the ability of the Protestant Kaiser to alienate Protestant America by his method of calling on God. In brief, the toast "Hoch! Der Kaiser!" carried approximately the same connotation to that more sensitive generation that "Heil Hitler!" did to a later one. A derogatory poem with this toast as its title was much quoted at the time, the opening stanza of which will serve to indicate its nature.

Der Kaiser of dis Faderland
Und Gott on high all dings command,
Ve two—Ach! Don't you understand?
Myself—und Gott.¹⁸

The second reason for local Allied sympathy was that an examination of the crisis events on their own merits seemed to brand Austria and Germany as initiators of the war. Surface appearances, at least, were against them, for they had issued most of the ultimatums and war declarations. The reactions on this score can best be made clear by a chronological summary of events. The Dual Monarchy, on June 28, had dissolved one aspect of the diplomatic crisis by a declaration of war on Serbia. The local response was instantaneous and definite. Big Austria-Hungary, it was said, had

¹⁷ Rev. Fred M. Stone of Central Avenue M. E. Church, Indianapolis, in Indianapolis, *Indiana Daily Times*, August 10, 1914, p. 5.

¹⁸ Indianapolis *News*, August 4, 1914, p. 6; South Bend, Indiana, *News-Times*, August 6, 1914, p. 4.

"deliberately and wilfully" forced war on little Serbia.¹⁹ Attention swung next to Germany and Russia as they prepared for and then entered the conflict. The governments of both countries were unpopular in Indiana, but the picture of Russia coming to the aid of ill-used "little brother" Serbia caught hold sufficiently to keep opinion leaning slightly, but unmistakably, toward the two Slav states.²⁰ When Germany declared war on France two days later this partisanship was considerably strengthened, and locally prepared headings told of "War-Mad Germany" in conflict with a France in which "Patriotic Spirit Runs High."²¹ The German occupation of Luxemburg and the invasion of Belgium seemed to be but new editions of the spectacle of big Austria against little Serbia plus an open treaty violation, and the public reacted accordingly.²² Because Great Britain's peace efforts had been widely publicized and applauded and because the United States was drawn to her by ties of language, race, and culture patterns, her participation at the close of August 4 brought an added stimulus to the pro-Ally pulse (Irish and Anglophobes excepted).²³

As a matter of fact, public opinion at this point (about August 4) and for the following week or ten days was more pronounced and more united against the Central Powers than it was to be again prior to the sinking of the *Lusitania*. Individuals who were later to become much more circumspect in statement now blurted out their feelings, and even politicians were found who were willing to make a categorical declaration. "No amount of special pleading," a typical summary ran, "can alter the judgment of mankind. Germany and Austria could have prevented this war by refusing to take the first foolish step."²⁴ A usually restrained weekly noted approvingly that the "expression is generally heard that Germany ought to be wiped off the map."²⁵ It should be noted that the effect of British censorship, pro-

¹⁹ Lafayette, Indiana, *Courier*, July 31, 1914, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, July 31, 1914, p. 4; South Bend, Indiana, *News-Times*, August 3, 1914, p. 4.

²¹ South Bend, Indiana, *Tribune*, August 3, 1914, p. 6; Fort Wayne, Indiana, *Journal-Gazette*, August 5, 1914, p. 4.

²² *Ibid.*, August 5, 1914, p. 4; *Chicago Journal*, August 5, 1914, p. 14.

²³ Evansville, Indiana, *Courier*, August 8, 1914, p. 6; Goshen, Indiana, *News-Times*, August 11, 1914, p. 2.

²⁴ Indianapolis *News*, August 5, 1914, p. 6.

²⁵ Waterloo, Indiana, *Press*, August 13, 1914, p. 4.

paganda efforts, and cutting of the German cable (August 5) had not as yet been materially felt. In the main, these first reactions had been undirected and spontaneous individual expressions of belief made by Americans emotionally moved. The brusqueness of German diplomacy, so fatally demonstrated by the "scrap of paper" statement, was putting her case in the worst possible light.

Before leaving this first crest of anti-German feeling, it should be noted that there was no discernible demand that anything be done about it. For all the sympathy for Belgium, there was no suggestion that America join in her protection. Nor did the public expect to be compelled to fight by reason of a direct challenge by one of the combatants, or be drawn in by forces beyond their control, for that age did not recognize any such forces. The vast majority never doubted but that they could will war or peace. They expected to live "strictly and impartially"²⁶ by the rules which international law provided for such times, and watch the big show from an unexposed position. Perhaps these attitudes were in part due to two common predictions of the neighborhood strategists, (1) Germany would be defeated²⁷ and (2) the conflict would be short. As to the latter, modern warfare was expected to be so expensive and voracious that it must come to an early end for sheer lack of anything further on which to feed. The *Salem Democrat* said "three to four weeks"²⁸ while the *Indianapolis Star* judged that it would probably be over before spring.²⁹

As the war rolled deeper into Belgium, however, and the armies half vanished into the mists of censorship, this strong anti-German feeling moderated considerably. From July 24 to August 5 each event had appeared to result solely from the preceding one. But as the crisis receded there was a tendency to dismiss the details and say that the war was a test of strength between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente—that and nothing more. Furthermore, German-Americans, Hungarians, and Irish hastened to present pro-German and anti-English views in the foreign language and

²⁶ *Indianapolis News*, August 5, 1914, p. 6.

²⁷ Marion, Indiana, *Chronicle*, August 15, 1914, p. 4; Crawfordsville, Indiana, *Journal*, August 10, 1914, p. 8.

²⁸ Salem, Indiana, *Democrat*, August 19, 1914, p. 2.

²⁹ *Indianapolis Star*, August 6, 1914, p. 8. Another editorial, however, predicted a long war.

religious press, in individual letters to other editors, and in corporate resolutions. Delegates came in person, and letters came in the mail to the editorial sanctums presenting the cause of the Central Powers and asking that the paper shed its pro-Ally bias. Ministers discovered that some of the congregation did not like those barbs that had been so earnestly cast from the pulpit at the "war mad" Kaiser, and when the politician lowered his eyes from heaven and his ear to the ground, he became disquietingly conscious of the "German vote," the "Irish vote," and the "Hungarian vote."³⁰ What, after all, was a world war when the election of county sheriff was but three months away?

The increasing role of "barbaric" Russia and the entrance of "yellow" Japan on the side of the Allies were still other factors in moderating American opinion. The 1914 generation distrusted Japan as a matter of habit, and her belligerency had, as one writer noted, "arrested the on-sweeping flood of public opinion in this country favorable to the Allies."³¹ Friends of the Central Powers seized their opportunity to picture Germany as the defender of white civilization and publicize the threat of the Yellow Peril to the United States. They declared the Philippines, Hawaii, Mexico, and even California to be in danger, and took special pains to point out that it was England who had loosed the yellow flood. "If there is a just God," proclaimed one of their number, "He will look after England and punish it for the horrible crime it is doing."³² Moreover, the Japanese alliance with England had brought to a focus the traditional anti-English feeling of the general public, and a number of anti-British quips and broadsides appeared at this point.

To summarize, choosing sides in the war, which had seemed such a simple and obvious task in the first week of August, had become more difficult. The sheep and the goats had become inextricably mixed, and although the majority of the people remained pro-Ally they had become less

³⁰ Indianapolis *Telegraph und Tribune*; Evansville, Indiana, *Demokrat*; Fort Wayne, Indiana, *Freie Presse und Staats-Zeitung*; Indianapolis, *Indiana Catholic*, August 21, 1914, p. 4; St. Louis, Missouri, *Lutheran Witness*, August 11, 1914, p. 133; Indianapolis *News*, August 18, 1914, p. 11.

³¹ Richmond, Indiana, *Palladium*, August 21, 1914, p. 4.

³² Indianapolis *Star*, August 21, 1914, p. 6, for letter of A. B. Nelson, Jr.

sure of their feelings. Most papers moderated or ceased their criticisms of Germany and often leaned over backward to be fair to her. A few passed completely out of the pro-Ally orbit never to return until 1917.³³ This period of confused and hesitant opinion demonstrated that the bulk of the people were not hopelessly turned toward one side and that their sympathy would depend largely on the course of events.

But this pro-German swing of public opinion which had begun about the middle of August proved to be only an interlude. The closing days of that month saw a re-assertion of sympathy for the Allies. It became stabilized by September somewhere below the high partisanship of the first week of the war and above the low of the third week of August. At least four factors played a part in this change of sentiment: (1) unpopular Russia and Japan dropped into the background, (2) censorship and colored news accounts favored the Allies, (3) German propaganda was ineffectual, and (4) the German campaign in Belgium stirred the emotions. The last three warrant elaboration.

Since the cutting of the German cables on August 5, virtually all news of events was communicated to the United States over the English cables and was subject to censorship. Consequently, an open-minded person reading his daily paper tended to become pro-Ally. English efforts were all the more effective, for the most part, because they were unobtrusive and thereby contrasted favorably with the frontal assault of the German propaganda offerings that reached America. The newly rich and newly powerful German Empire had many of the unpleasant characteristics generally associated with those attributes, not least of which was a blustering exterior designed to convince themselves and the rest of the world of their excellence. They tried too hard and spoke too loud and succeeded only in arousing suspicion. They had not learned the salesman's trick of selling his product by first selling himself.³⁴

The greatest factor, however, in the revival of pro-Ally

³³ Such was the case of the Richmond, Indiana, *Palladium*, New Albany, Indiana, *Ledger Standard*, the two Chicago Hearst papers (*Chicago Examiner* and *Chicago American*), and to some extent the *Chicago Tribune*.

³⁴ See Peterson, *Propaganda for War*, 32, *et passim*, for elaboration of this theme.

sentiment was the nature and extent of the news that came from Belgium. In this case, as was true of most major developments during the war, it was the impact of the actual course of events presented with a skillful partisanship to a public already distrustful of Germany that was the determining factor. Atrocity stories manufactured from whole cloth had comparatively little effect on the public and were, as a matter of act, far less numerous at this period than is generally remembered. It is true that reports of "boys with both their hands cut off, so that it was impossible for them to carry a gun," of "firing on Red Cross nurses," of "women raped," of "mutilations and killing of the wounded," of "dumdum bullets," etc., were scattered through the papers of the fall and winter of 1914, but apparently their chief effect was to heighten the blood pressure of those who were already irretrievably and intensely pro-Ally. Certain it is that they were discounted editorially by the local editors as not "to be taken with so much as a grain of salt,"³⁵ and if there was a single "artist's conception" of one of these stories in a newspaper in Indiana during 1914, the present writer failed to find it.

Whatever the exact influence of the fictitious atrocity tales may have been, there can be no doubt of the far-reaching effect of actual occurrences in Belgium and northern France. By reason of the instruments, techniques, and numbers involved, the rate of destruction of the World War was much greater than the wars that preceded it. Consequently, when the German forces inundated Belgium, "as the swollen waters of the Connemaugh valley swept through Johnstown,"³⁶ it was doubtful if the world had ever seen so much destruction in so short a time. A land was laid waste and a people scattered in less than a month. Refugees poured along the roads in advance of the German flood, and shattered villages emerged in its wake. In the Indiana papers appeared pictures of Belgian refugee families wearily plodding along crowded roads and of shattered buildings resembling Roman ruins that had been fifteen hundred years in the making. These were the "atrocity" pictures that moved the people in 1914. If both combatants had been judged to be equally guilty, if both had suffered damage, and if they had been

³⁵ Princeton, Indiana, *Clarion-News*, August 21, 1914, p. 2.

³⁶ Indianapolis *News*, August 24, 1914, p. 1.

of approximately equal size and strength American sympathy would not have been stirred. But no part of this was true, and it was natural that compassion should go out to a small country at war through no fault of its own and receiving most of war's damages on its own scant territory. Moreover the stubborn fighting of her soldiers and the effective leadership of her king won unstinted praise for Belgium. "*Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae*," editorialized the *Kokomo Tribune*.³⁷ In view of this sentiment it was a mistake for German propagandists to seek to counteract growing partisanship for the Allies by a campaign of vilification of Belgium.

Thus far, attempts to weigh the influence of the Belgian campaign on Indiana opinion have been confined chiefly to fictional atrocity stories and to inevitable war-time destruction. But there were other German actions that fell in the twilight zone between the legal and the illegal and were more difficult of classification. Furthermore, the answer to the long-standing debate as to whether Germany did or did not commit "atrocities" in Belgium depends largely on how these particular actions are defined. The German government considered them to be legally and morally justified and performed them openly; the people of Indiana classed them as atrocities and were shocked at their occurrence.

Among the most important of these border line cases was the German practice of levying tribute on captured towns and provinces to help defray the cost of occupation. Prosperous Brussels, an open city which had not offered military resistance, was taxed forty million dollars and the smaller cities accordingly. Although James G. McDonald of the department of history of Indiana University justified the levy as a moral and humane method of assessment on a conquered enemy,³⁸ the public felt that Belgium did not deserve to be treated as a conquered enemy and did not hesitate to assail this action as atrocious. Convinced that Belgium was but an innocent bystander who would not have been in the war if it had not constituted the easiest road to Paris, they believed that if military necessity compelled Germany to take this road it behooved her to see that the bystander suffered as little as possible. Consequently, the contempo-

³⁷ Kokomo, Indiana, *Tribune*, September 2, 1914, p. 4.

³⁸ Indianapolis *News*, August 29, 1914, p. 11.

aries felt that these assessments were piling injury upon injury and constituted "a rather high price to pay for the blessings conferred upon Belgium by the Kaiser's troops."³⁹ Also, it should be remembered that the Germans were seeking to collect these levies at the very time that the neutral world was being called upon to sustain life in Belgium by a gratuitous relief program.

Other events which the Germans regarded as permissible and the Hoosiers looked upon as atrocities were the bombings and shellings of cities in Belgium, France, and England. The use of the Zeppelin for this purpose was especially obnoxious, and these long, lean monsters of the air became the epitome of sinister frightfulness. In all probability, the Germans sought to confine their attacks to legitimate military objectives, but because of the nature of the weapon the noncombatants usually suffered more than the target. "It is bad enough that men must face bullets and cold steel and that fortified cities must be shelled to reduce the fortifications, but it is unspeakably shocking that women and children, wounded and noncombatants in the heart of a city should be subjected to bombardment from the sky,"⁴⁰ ran a typical editorial.

Still another German practice that was generally regarded as reprehensible was the severity with which the Belgian civilian population was punished because some of its members took part in the fighting. The Germans, in a desperate hurry to conquer and pacify Belgium and angered at what they considered to be nefarious attacks, struck out savagely against all civilian war activity. Numerous municipalities were in part or wholly destroyed and many of their leading officials and citizens executed because civilian snipers fired on German troops. The university city of Louvain was handled with an especial roughness, as an example to the rest of Belgium, that left the vital parts of the city in charred ruins and many of its inhabitants dead. The Indiana public violently disapproved of these "sample" burnings and killings, feeling that the Germans had carried their reprisals to excess. One contemporary mirrored the common attitude when he stated, "Even if the non-combatants, driven to desperation, had fired on the enemy, the most drastic punish-

³⁹ Muncie, Indiana, *Evening Press*, August 25, 1914, p. 4.

⁴⁰ *Chicago Daily News*, August 27, 1914, p. 8.

ment permissible under the rules of civilized warfare would be the execution of the individual offenders, and the Germans destroy the whole city, commit wholesale murder and drive the population forth penniless, hungry, and homeless."⁴¹ Furthermore, there was a difference in national psychology between Germany and the United States in regard to the civilian sniper. In the eyes of the military-bred German the civilian-soldier was a despicable military private and outlaw who was acting contrary to the rules of the game. Whereas in the non-military (but warlike) United States the citizen-soldier was a person of honor and respect. Part of the success of the American war of independence had been due to the work of just such non-professional fighters as those that the Germans were executing. For these reasons, the American civilians regarded the warring Belgian civilians as heroes who had taken up arms in defense of their country. Many a Hoosier who had gone squirrel hunting, patronized the shooting galleries, or dreamed of playing the hero must have pictured himself with a gun lying in wait for German Uhlans.

An anti-German influence of a different nature that grew out of the Belgian campaign was the two month relief program that was launched about the middle of October. The managers of the drive understood that the extent to which a donor would reach into his pocket depended to a large degree on the depth of his emotions. Therefore, the appeal for funds was so pitched as to highlight Belgium's plight and to personalize and individualize the sufferers. As a result, each dollar or sack of flour donated and each comforter or pair of socks knit for the "starving Belgians" was likely to be a bond that bound the giver to Belgium and its allies. The partisan effect of donating toys to help fill a Christmas Ship for Belgium children must have been tremendous.

To summarize: the Belgian news of anti-German influence can be classified as (1) fictitious atrocity stories which were believed by those who were already anti-German, (2) inevitable wartime destruction which made for Belgian sympathy because it was felt that she was but an innocent bystander, (3) events which the German government considered warranted but which the Americans classed as atrocities (tribute levies, Zeppelin bombings, strong retaliatory action

⁴¹ Kokomo, Indiana, *Tribune*, September 2, 1914, p. 4.

for civilian war activity), (4) courageous fighting of the Belgian nationals which won American respect, and (5) a relief campaign which fanned the emotions. It was indubitably true that the dispatches were biased, the damage to Belgium exaggerated, and that the photographs were carefully selected, but there was truth in the story of Belgian suffering and ill-usage, and without that kernel the whole picture would have collapsed. The citizens of 1914 were a sensitive people, for they had not seen these things before. Actions that their children would regard as mild aroused them to protestations and moralistic indignation. German national psychology and administrative efficiency had been more responsible than any intent to be malicious, but the result was to some extent the same, and the consequent effect on American opinion can scarcely be exaggerated. The strategy which the German General Staff had felt offered the best chance of winning the war had put German diplomacy at a disadvantage in the United States.

On an earlier page it has been pointed out that one of the reasons for the critical attitude toward Germany in the first week of the war was because the public believed her to be military-minded. During the succeeding fall and winter that opinion grew stronger instead of weaker. German activity in Belgium was partly responsible, but in addition, the Americans had become acquainted with a group of German military writers of a chauvinistic nature whom they accepted as representative of German psychology.

Heinrich von Treitschke's doctrine of German racial superiority, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's belief in the superman, and Friedrich von Bernhardi's glorification of the military life became especially well known. Nietzsche was regarded as the "Prophet" of the "Mailed Fist,"⁴² and his name "became almost as familiar . . . as that of the contemporary holder of the highest batting average in professional baseball."⁴³ Bernhardi's *Germany and The Next War* appeared in numerous editions and became for a time the most read non-fiction book in the United States. A paper bound edition was offered for sale at railway news stands and hotel lobbies, and library waiting lists grew dis-

⁴² Henry L. Mencken, "The Mailed Fist and Its Prophet," *Atlantic Monthly*, CXIV (1914), 598-607. The *Readers' Guide* listed nine articles on Nietzsche for the months of October and November, 1914.

⁴³ Sullivan, *Our Times*, V, 138.

courageously long.⁴⁴ It was run in serial form in the papers under such headings as "German View of War and Peace Is Authoritatively Set Forth by a Distinguished Member of the German General Staff,"⁴⁵ and quotations, such as the following, appeared on the editorial pages: "War is in itself a good thing. It is a biological necessity of the first importance." "The state is justified in making conquests whenever its own advantage seems to require additional territories." "The brutal incidents inseparable from every war vanish completely before the idealism of the main result. All the sham reputations which a long spell of peace undoubtedly fosters are unmasked. Great personalities take their proper place; strength, truth and honor come to the front and are put into play." "[Only in war] are nations enabled to do justice to the highest test of civilization by the fullest development of their moral forces."⁴⁶

There were other straws in the wind which convinced the public that "militarism has become the watchword of German advance."⁴⁷ A series of articles by A. K. Graves entitled "Revelations of the Kaiser's Personal Spy" picturing the German government as maintaining an international spy system of frightening efficiency and Machiavellian intent were spread through the state press.⁴⁸ Twenty-nine leading Protestant churchmen of Germany, including Adolf von Harnack, sent an appeal to the "Evangelical Churches Abroad," breathing fire and holy words, and boasting of the German military sword which was "bright and keen."⁴⁹ A continuous stream of utterances came from the German military, the foreign office, and the German-American press glorying in the invincibility of Germany's might. The very war songs seemed to point up the picture. "Die Wacht am Rhein" and "Deutschland über Alles" were as martial as a bugle call and were no match in propaganda value to the nostalgic "Tipperary" of the English troops. It would have been some help if German officers had been photo-

⁴⁴ South Bend, Indiana, *Tribune*, October 31, 1914, p. 24; *New Republic*, I (1914-1915), 6.

⁴⁵ Evansville, Indiana, *Courier*, December 15, 1914, p. 24.

⁴⁶ South Bend, Indiana, *News-Times*, January 1, 1915, p. 6; Indianapolis *News*, October 6, 1914, p. 6.

⁴⁷ Indianapolis *Star*, December 1, 1914, p. 6, "Letter to the Editor."

⁴⁸ Bluffton, Indiana, *Banner*, December 1, 1914, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Evansville, Indiana, *Courier*, September 28, 1914, p. 3.

graphed in hats other than spiked helmets, and a picture of the Kaiser with a smiling countenance might have been worth more than tons of ordinary propaganda pamphlets.

Thus, the Central Powers had come to be rather generally regarded as illiberal and militaristic. This being the case, it was unfortunate, from the standpoint of neutral opinion, that their first ally should have been the "terrible Turk," whose reported treatment of Christian Armenians had made its name synonymous with barbarism in the United States. Turkey's choice of partners seemed to confirm the impression that one side in the war was the side of autocracy. Furthermore, the religious element had been added, and restoration of Christian rule in the Holy Land appeared to depend on the defeat of the Central Powers. It was no accident that when the comic strip characters, Mutt and Jeff, went to war they killed only Turks.

Nineteen hundred fourteen was an election year, and for a time the war dropped into the background as all Indiana played the "election game." The European strife was generally ignored by all parties because it contained too much unpredictable dynamite and because there was little discernible difference in the position of Democrats, Republicans, and Progressives on this matter. No party considered that there had been, or was likely to be, any danger of the United States becoming a combatant. Enough, however, was said to cast a slender shadow of what was to come in 1916.

The shock of the European war had temporarily strengthened the peace sentiment in the United States, and the Democrats sought to convert this reaction into votes by pointing out that if the Administration had been as warlike toward Mexico as its critics had wished, the United States would be at war with that country, and the Western Hemisphere would be like the Eastern. William Jennings Bryan stressed this point in a two-day speaking tour of the state, and Democrat orators, with Mexico in mind, exclaimed "War in the East, Peace in the West—Thank God for Wilson."⁵⁰ The Republicans campaigned, in the words of Will H. Hays, for "a protective tariff and lower taxes." The European war did not play a significant part in their efforts, but two minor developments were of some importance as presaging Republican strategy in 1916. Former Vice-President Charles W.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, October 30, 1914, p. 1.

Fairbanks in a speech at Knightstown asserted, "I venture the opinion that he [an Englishman] thinks that the Democratic party is really a great institution. The fact is it has always been tremendously popular in England; its popularity will never diminish there."⁵¹ Secondly, an anonymous pamphlet written in German and accusing the Administration of being pro-Ally was circulated among the German voters.⁵²

As this singular year came to an end, local opinion toward the war could be analyzed somewhat as follows: not less than two-thirds and not more than three-fourths of the people were clearly pro-Ally in sentiment. Many New Year's celebrations resounded to the tune of "Tipperary" set to dance time, and a joke going the rounds proclaimed, "I'm neutral—I don't care who whips Germany."⁵³ A few of the more determined Entente sympathizers were echoing Theodore Roosevelt in asserting that the United States Government should have entered a strong diplomatic protest against the invasion of Belgium.⁵⁴ Since neither they nor Roosevelt had so spoken in August, a Lilliputian step toward war had been taken! The people of the state, however, were far from any thought of war because there was very little love for England in her own right and positive distrust of Japan and Russia. Moreover, antagonism toward Germany was still almost entirely on an altruistic basis. The nationalistic chord had not been struck, for there had been no clash between the United States and Germany, and as long as the patriotic element was lacking there would be no serious war sentiment in the Middle West. The preparedness movement had not as yet taken hold in Indiana as was shown by the approval given to Wilson's expressed opposition to increased armaments in his message to Congress, December 8.⁵⁵

By the end of this first year opinion had become sufficiently well set that group divisions could be distinguished, and it is the purpose of the following pages to examine the manner in which some of the groups, or at least their professional spokesmen, viewed the war. In order that proper

⁵¹ Indianapolis *News*, October 23, 1914, p. 14.

⁵² Indianapolis *Star*, October 8, 1914, p. 6.

⁵³ Indianapolis, *Indiana Daily Times*, December 17, 1914, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Indianapolis *Star*, December 7, 1914, p. 6.

⁵⁵ Fort Wayne, Indiana, *Sentinel*, December 9, 1914, p. 4; Indianapolis *News*, December 8, 1914, p. 6.

perspective not be lost a word of warning is in order. Group divisions were not as pronounced or significant in Indiana as in many of the states. Class consciousness scarcely existed; foreign groups were small; cities were of moderate size; rural and urban population was almost equally balanced; Middle West culture patterns prevailed. The result was a fairly uniform outlook which was both the strength and weakness of the Hoosier state.

The largest and most influential minority racial group was the German, and the first news of trouble in Europe had brought its members rallying to the cause of the homeland. Practically as a unit they accepted and vigorously as a matter-of-fact defended the official German theses. There was some deviation, but it was so slight that the citizen of 1914 could assume with virtual certainty that every person of German descent whom he met would be a zealous German champion.⁵⁶

In the first days of war the German-American press and spokesmen viewed the struggle as one between Slavic barbarism and German civilization and roundly scolded the general public for not seeing it in that light. The Serbs and Russians, it was said, were a people of "unkultur" against whom Germany was fighting in the interest of all western civilization. "Germany," a local Teuton exclaimed, "stands now as she has for thousands of years on the border of European culture and fights against the half civilized Slavic hordes."⁵⁷ The declaration of war on "decadent and immoral" France was unanimously approved, and the assertions of the German government that it had been forced to take the field because French airplanes had violated German soil were faithfully repeated. As for the invasion of Belgium, all agreed that it was justified by military necessity. It was also generally concluded that France would have occupied Belgium if Germany had not beaten her to it, and some pushed a step further by saying that "Germany invaded Belgium only after French airships had crossed Belgian and Dutch territory."⁵⁸ Later when the German government issued documents seized in

⁵⁶ German liberals and Socialists usually supported Germany, but they sometimes did so with qualifications and with expressed wishes for future German liberalization.

⁵⁷ Indianapolis *Telegraph und Tribune*, August 3, 1914, p. 4.

⁵⁸ Chicago, *Illinois Staats-zeitung* as quoted in Chicago *Tribune*, August 7, 1914, p. 5.

Belgium purporting to prove that that country had a defensive and offensive pre-war alliance with France and England the case of Belgium was considered closed, and the Belgians were thenceforth regarded in the same category as Germany's other enemies. Consequently, the Belgian relief drive received no support from the German-American press, organizations, or individuals.

When England entered the war on August 5 she was immediately placed at the head of the hate list and became the object of an unremittent stream of violent denunciation which was the German-American counterpart of the "Gott Strafe England" outburst in the homeland.⁵⁹ England had become a combatant, it was repeated over and over, because she had become alarmed at the growing success of German commercial rivalry and being unable to meet it in fair competition had greedily decided to destroy it by arms. To accomplish this end, it was asserted, she had consciously plotted and planned the war and had used France, Belgium, and possibly Russia as her dupes.

The intrusion of Japan into the hostilities in mid-August brought an opportunity to heighten the picture of Germany as the protector of western culture and offered a rare chance to appeal to the United States in behalf of one of its strongest prejudices, and full advantage was taken of both. The last development of 1914 to which the local Germans gave special attention was the British violation of neutral rights on the sea. Throughout the first six months of the war the only serious interference to American sea-borne trade was by the Allies, and every German-American spokesman became a voluble champion of the legal rights of that commerce. Strong protective or retaliatory action was demanded of the United States government in the form of warship convoy of shipments to Germany, or an embargo on arms shipments to Britain, or declaration of war on England and an immediate seizure of Canada.⁶⁰ Furthermore, it was ar-

⁵⁹ Indianapolis *Telegraph und Tribune*, August 5, 1914, p. 4; Evansville, Indiana, *Demokrat*, August 5, 1914, p. 4; Fort Wayne, Indiana, *Freie Presse und Staats-Zeitung*, August 6, 1914, p. 1; Indianapolis *Spottvogel*, October 25, 1914, p. 4; La Grange, Indiana, *Standard*, September 10, 1914, p. 2.

⁶⁰ Indianapolis *Telegraph und Tribune*, October 26, 1914, p. 4, and December 30, 1914, p. 4; Evansville, Indiana, *Demokrat*, December 30, 1914, p. 4; Carl Wittke, *German-Americans and the World War* (Columbus, 1936), 50, 53.

gued that whereas Germany was fighting for freedom of the seas—that is, freedom from English rule—the interests of the United States and Germany were parallel, and a German victory would be to America's advantage.

Passing from a discussion of specific developments to general aims, all major activity of the German-Americans can be ascribed to one of four objectives. First, they sought to secure sympathy for Germany and animosity toward her enemies by explaining her version of the war and by emphasizing all unneutral action, real and potential, of the Allies. A second objective was the raising of relief funds for use in Germany, and the extravagantly generous response to this call made all other war relief efforts seem chary. The individual donations of \$5,000 to the "League of 1914" and the liberal response to the "Gold für Eisen" campaign demonstrated that the much talked of love for the Fatherland was clearly more than sound and foam. A third aim was to prevent the floating of war loans in the United States by England and France. Yet German-American papers advertised and German-American banks bought German war securities, particularly in the first two years.⁶¹ The fourth aim was the securing of an American embargo on munition shipments to the warring powers. This, in fact, was the most energetically pursued aim—the grand goal—of all German-American activity. The more sanguine went so far as to press for a similar embargo on food.

That these aims were not attained was due to a number of reasons, most of them outside the control of the local German coterie. Yet it is evident from the vantage point of a later generation that some of the responsibility for failure must be borne on their own shoulders, for, as Carl Wittke has cautiously pointed out, "they occasionally overstepped the bounds of discretion and common sense" in their zeal to defend their beliefs.⁶² The German apologists handicapped themselves and hurt their cause by the raucous manner in which they too often presented their case. They were dogmatic and at times abusive in their arguments, and as though trying to compensate for their fewer numbers they were vociferous to the extreme. Moreover, their words were most

⁶¹ Indianapolis *Spottvogel*, September 5, 1915, p. 8 and December 5, 1915, p. 8.

⁶² Wittke, *German-Americans and the World War*, 4.

often addressed to one another, and although a high degree of internal unity was thus obtained there was little to attract the outsider. In fact, their arguments in too many cases were not so much designed to convert opponents as to hold them to derisive ridicule, and an opponent who has been made angry is a difficult person to convince. The successful merchant sometimes considers it the better part of wisdom to lose the argument and make the sale.

German *Kultur* was an object of much pride and the German-Americans had no hesitation in dubbing it superior to any in the world. Documentation of that thesis was at times excellent, e.g., "A professor in an American college is never content until he gets a Ph.D. from a German university, and he has to work to get it. Germany recognizes no easy path to excellence."⁶³ At other times it was mystical nonsense concerning the superiority of the German race, pure in blood and heir to all past culture, and of "Siegfried Germanikus" fighting a "*Kämpfer der Kultur*" to protect an unappreciative world against barbarous Russia, decadent France, hypocritical England, and yellow Japan.⁶⁴ But the word *Kultur* came to have a sinister meaning in Indiana before many months had passed. The monotonously exaggerated language used and the course of real and fancied events in Belgium were partly responsible. It was also due in part to the wide difference in connotation between the German word, *Kultur* (all aspects of German life, military, scientific, etc.), and the English word, culture (the humanities). Assuming the two words to be identical many Hoosiers could not understand why the German discussions on *Kultur* usually started or ended with references to German military efficiency and might. Consequently, it was sometimes said that when a German talked of *Kultur* he cocked his pistol.

The German language press took on a new significance and became the inspired guide which daily and weekly conducted its readers through the maze of war news giving the "real facts" and "true interpretations." Many editorials were written on "efficiency" but none on the "Rights of Man," and at virtually no time did the editors express regret con-

⁶³ La Grange, Indiana, *Standard*, September 3, 1914, p. 2.

⁶⁴ E. g., Indianapolis *Spottvogel*, September 27, 1914, p. 5, for poem by Rev. J. C. Hansen.

cerning the German form of government. Nor did they criticize the actions of Germany or advise caution on its part. If the Berlin government at times took a compromising and conciliatory course, not so the local German papers. They were more German than the Germans and were as likely to be in advance of the propaganda line laid down in Germany as following it. They were positive that Germany had already won the war, and the fawning adulation which they bestowed on the Kaiser was almost nauseating to the uninitiated.

The war tended to draw those of German descent closer to one another and to set them apart from their neighbors. They came to be regarded, and to regard themselves, as a community within a community having a set of interests peculiar to themselves. Their criticisms of the non-Germans sometimes passed the limits of prudence, and a few of their more vociferous members fell into the habit of criticizing all American action, relevant and irrelevant, domestic and foreign. In such circumstances it is not surprising that some should challenge the loyalty of those of German descent and accuse them of having interests foreign to the rest of the country. They were charged with being more German than American or at best of being part one and part the other—of being literally German-Americans. Before the war was a month old anti-“hyphenate” sentiment and voices appeared locally, and there was much shaking of heads and muttering that “if they don’t like it here why don’t they go back to Germany.”⁶⁵

By keeping in mind this division between the “Deutsch-Americaner” and the remainder of the people it becomes possible to understand why the public was so conscious and disapproving of official German propaganda. The propaganda of the German government was directed chiefly to the German element in the United States, and it sought to persuade them to take a position different from that held by most Americans and for the advantage of a foreign power. It appeared, therefore, to be an appeal for a divided loyalty and a divided country. Consequently, it took on a sinister aspect and, as Johann von Bernstorff noted, the words “German propagandist” early became “a term of abuse in Ameri-

⁶⁵ Louisville, Kentucky, *Courier-Journal*, September 1, 1914, p. 4; Marion, Indiana, *Chronicle*, August 22, 1914, p. 4.

ca."⁶⁶ The Allied disseminations, much more plentiful and more likely to pull the country from its peace moorings, were addressed to the general public. They agreed with the preconceived views of most of the population, and were not intrusive. Therefore, the people were but little conscious of them, and the German efforts received most of the publicity and acrimony.

To their detriment those of German descent said too little concerning the softer and less warlike facets of German civilization. The high standard of living, absence of slums, conservation, lack of lawlessness, scientific and educational standards, old age insurance, and other such German achievements might well have received greater stress. Turner societies, German cooking, German Christmas, comradeship of hikes, and other aspects of "Gemütlichkeit" should have been recounted. There was much that could have been said for the "German Way" but the German-Americans said very little of it. Furthermore, less bombastic optimism would have helped the German standing, because the American people have generally felt that in some way the under-dog is a pretty good dog. All in all, if the Indiana public was inclined to view Germany as glorying in militarism and autocracy, the local Germans were partly to blame.

Second in importance to the Germans among the "foreign" groups were the Irish, and they too desired a victory for the Central Powers. Such an eventuality, it was hoped, would provide England with "an awful beating"⁶⁷ and Ireland with her freedom. Drawing on memories of their own history they refused to view Great Britain as the champion of small nations.

Like the Germans, the Irish favored strong retaliatory measures against English obstruction of American sea traffic, magnified the "Yellow Peril," worked to prevent the sale of Allied war bonds in America, and pressed for embargoes on arms and food. They repetitiously asserted that perfidious Albion was ceaselessly working "to 'reclaim' the United States as a British Colony,"⁶⁸ and before the war was a month old their more extreme spokesmen were demanding

⁶⁶ Johann H. A. H. A. von Bernstorff, *My Three Years in America* (New York, 1920), 259.

⁶⁷ Hartford City, Indiana, *Telegram*, December 23, 1914, p. 1.

⁶⁸ Viereck, *Spreading Germs of Hate*, 215-16.

that the United States take steps that would have meant certain war with the Allied nations.⁶⁹ One of the most successful of their maneuvers was their effort to use their favored position in the Catholic Church to mobilize all Catholics against Great Britain. The *Indiana Catholic*, organ of both the Indianapolis and Fort Wayne dioceses and edited by Joseph Patrick O'Mahony, took the lead in this movement in Indiana and became the most influential pro-German paper in the state.⁷⁰

The Irish pleas were better received in Indiana than were the German-American because they harmonized with the Middle West predilection toward distrust of Britain, because they were presented in English, and because most Hoosiers felt that the Irish had cause for complaint. But like many other groups, the Irish sometimes let their sympathies run away with their judgment, and at such times their language became violent or gibing and their accusations against England passed beyond the bounds of logic. Furthermore, their solicitude for mistreated Ireland lost some of its moral force because they aggressively defended the Austrian and Hungarian rule of their numerous and unwilling minorities and because of their seeming unconcern for the fate of Belgium. Although the Irish joined the Germans in asserting that theirs was the position of "genuine neutrality," they were more partisan and less compromising than those whom they criticized. Subsequent events have tended to obscure the fact that the first demands that America enter the war came from German-American and Irish leaders.

The Hungarians, drawn by a natural sympathy to their warring fellow Magyars of Austria-Hungary, made up a third group that favored the Central Powers. Closely hemmed in on all sides in their native land by their Slavic and German neighbors the Hungarians had developed a virulent national consciousness, and, since the Indiana Hungarians of 1914 were first and second (chiefly first) generation immigrants who were still closely attached to the "Old Country," their patriotism remained very much alive. Therefore, they viewed the war with an intensity of feeling that probably surpassed

⁶⁹ E.g., *Indianapolis Star*, August 21, 1914, p. 6, for letter of Joseph Patrick O'Mahony.

⁷⁰ *Indianapolis, Indiana Catholic*, August 7, 1914, p. 4, and August 21, 1914, p. 4.

even that of the German-Americans. Whereas the Germans and Irish chose England as the major enemy, the Hungarians were chiefly concerned with the "uncivilized" Slavs in general and the Russians in particular.⁷¹

The Poles had a more difficult and less obvious task in choosing sides in the war. Primarily, they hoped and prayed that the conflict would somehow bring a free Poland, but whereas the Irish had only one enemy blocking their way to independence the Poles had three. Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany governed contingents of unwilling Poles, and a national state would not be complete unless it obtained territory from all. Consequently, the local Poles did not hold excited talk about "going home to fight," as did other groups in the first two weeks of the war, because they possessed no home and were not entirely convinced as to where their best interests lay among their enemies. They distrusted Russia. They hated the Germans. They were somewhat inclined toward Austria-Hungary by reason of common religion and because its government had generally favored the Poles as a counter-weight against the other northern Slavic groups in its "divide and rule" policy. In the aggregate, however, the aversion for Germany outweighed the other influences, and a majority of the Indiana Poles were definitely pro-Ally. After all, Editor G. W. J. Kalczynski of the South Bend *Goniec Polski* reasoned at some length, the Poles could not afford to support Austria in the war because that country was dominated by Germany, and as between Teutonic Germany and Slavic Russia, Poland's future was safer in the hands of the latter.⁷²

Among those first affected by the war had been the Belgians and Servians whose homelands were endangered by Germany and Austria-Hungary respectively, and who suddenly discovered that they had become objects of much curiosity and sympathy to their Hoosier neighbors. They closely followed the war news, collected relief funds, exchanged letters and stories of atrocities suffered by those in the Old Country, and the young men spoke rather importantly of plans for going home to take a hand in the war. The Servians displayed an especially zealous patriotism. In Gary,

⁷¹ Gary, Indiana, *Post-Tribune*, August 3, 1914, p. 1; South Bend, Indiana, *Tribune*, September 1, 1914, p. 9.

⁷² South Bend, Indiana, *Goniec Polski*, August 5, 1914, p. 2.

three thousand cabled encouragement to King Peter, and fights between them and the Austro-Hungarians became so frequent that police patrols were increased and simultaneous parades by the different nationalities were banned.⁷³ The Indianapolis Servians held repeated meetings at the Foreigners' House of the Immigrant Aid Association on West Pearl Street where a reporter for the Indianapolis *Star* found them excited and patriotic and wanting to fight.⁷⁴ Significantly, the Croatians of both Gary and Indianapolis sided with the Servians.

In fact one of the most meaningful developments that took place among the immigrant groups was the virtual unanimity with which the representatives of the Austro-Hungarian minority groups supported the Allies and repudiated any claim of the Hapsburgs to their services or sympathy. The Austrian Serbs, Croatians, Rumanians, and Czechs rejoiced at each Allied victory and remained stubbornly and suspiciously aloof from efforts to woo them from that position.⁷⁵ The Austrian Poles came the nearest to being the exception, but they generally fell in line with the others. These Slavic peoples were looking at the much advertised crusade to protect Europe from the "uncultured" and "barbaric" Slavs from the reverse end. Furthermore, they considered the government of Austria-Hungary much as the Irish looked upon the English and for the same reason. In Indiana, far from the Danube, was being demonstrated quite clearly the failure of Hapsburg leadership.

Of all the foreign groups the Italians were probably most ill at ease. The others had Allies to praise and enemies to hate, but they for a long time had neither. Furthermore, the vacillation and bargaining of the Italian government had brought jeering criticism from the pro-Germans without gaining the respect of the pro-Allies. As a result the Indiana Italians were isolated and placed in a difficult psychological position. Although they fully supported Italy when

⁷³ Gary, Indiana, *Post-Tribune*, July 29, 1914, p. 1, and August 3, 1914, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Indianapolis *Star*, August 6, 1914, p. 4.

⁷⁵ Hammond, Indiana, *Lake County News*, August 13, 1914, p. 1; Indianapolis *News*, July 31, 1914, p. 12; Gary, Indiana, *Post-Tribune*, July 31, 1914, p. 1; Indianapolis, *Indiana Daily Times*, July 31, 1914, p. 3; Chicago *Examiner*, August 12, 1914, p. 14.

she joined the Allies, there had been no Italian-American counterpart of the Italian interventionist movement.

A racial stock of a somewhat different character was the Jews, a sizable majority of whom were unmistakably pro-German during the early years of the war. The most anti-Semitic country of that time was Tsarist Russia, and the Jews were not inclined to waste sympathy on a country which had so recently celebrated large scale *pogroms*. The Jewish people, wrote the *Chicago Jewish Daily Courier*, must oppose "a war against Germany, which means to help Russia celebrate a victory over the 'land of philosophers and poets.'"⁷⁶ Moreover, a disproportionate number of the influential Indiana Jews were from Germany and were proud of it. They belonged to the German clubs, could speak German, and thought of Germany as their homeland. Yiddish, it should be remembered, is a combination of the Hebrew and German languages. In the long run probably the most significant influence of the World War on the Jews was the firing of Jewish nationalism and the resultant increase in interest in the Zionist movement.

Although a majority of the Negroes probably took a passive attitude toward the war, their professional spokesmen adopted a more positive line. They praised France because the French considered a colored citizen a man "for a' that an' a' that," and particularly because officers' posts were open to the colored portion of the French army and navy.⁷⁷ They were antagonistic toward Belgium as a result of the exposures of the use of slavery by King Leopold II in the Belgian African colonies,⁷⁸ thereby becoming the only group in the state to be pro-French and anti-Belgian. As between England and Germany they leaned slightly toward the latter for, as one editor explained, the Germans had never been a party to enslavement of the American Negro, whereas England supported the South in the Civil War in order to get "free cotton" at the expense of "free Negroes."⁷⁹ To

⁷⁶ *Chicago Jewish Daily Courier*, as quoted in the *Indianapolis News*, August 6, 1914, p. 13. See also *Shelbyville, Indiana, Democrat*, August 14, 1915, p. 4; *Indianapolis Telegraph and Tribune*, August 18, 1914, p. 4.

⁷⁷ *Indianapolis Recorder*, July 24, 1915, p. 4; *Indianapolis World*, August 15, 1914, p. 4.

⁷⁸ *Indianapolis Recorder*, May 8, 1915, p. 4.

⁷⁹ *Indianapolis World*, June 12, 1915, p. 2. See also *Indianapolis Recorder*, May 6, 1916, p. 6, for anti-British cartoon.

their credit they were not "hyphenates" in any sense of that word.

The most numerous and influential group in Indiana consisted of those persons who were rather vaguely designated as the "Old Stock" and apparently included all whose ancestors had been in the United States more than two generations. They were convinced that Germany had started the war, they disliked German militarism, and they hoped for an Allied victory. But more than partisanship for one foreign power over another would be necessary before they would desire war, for they were inclined to believe that "Europe has always fought and always will." They were a sentimental people, for it was they who raised the Belgian relief funds. Yet their sentimentality was not without a governor, and they would not permit their sympathy for the "starving Belgians" and the "butchered Armenians" to involve them in armed conflict. They had been anti-English for a long time, and it would require more propaganda skill than the British possessed to cause them to fight to save the British Empire. Nor would they go to war to make the world safe for democracy. For although the Middle West "Old Stock" were staunch advocates of democracy, and although this trait was partly responsible for their being anti-German, they were not actively interested in an *International* for the spread of democracy abroad. Theirs was an American Democracy, a fundamental part of their nationalism, and not primarily an international ideology. In short, the later popular picture of Hoosiers being carried away by sentimentality, by English propaganda, by an ideological crusade, by munition makers, and by international bankers to the point where they would rush to war against the greatest military power in the world was drawn by those who had never known these folk. These influences helped to make them pro-Ally, but a different propulsion would be required to make them pro-war. They had their feet surprisingly firm on the ground, so firm in fact that visitors from the eastern states were sometimes so shocked at the locals' failure to "comprehend the deeper issues involved" that they almost despaired of the republic.

There was, however, one motivation that would move them to take up arms against a foreign power, and that was nationalism. For old-fashioned, fervent patriotism inspired

by a feeling of righteous indignation at the action of some power that was challenging or defying the United States they would shoulder arms. It was necessary that the nationalistic element be added to the other factors before Indiana and the Middle West would favor war, but once that condition was met divisions would be put aside and unity quickly achieved. This nationalism, however, would not be fired by loss of property nor by theoretical principles of international law but would require loss of life or what would be considered a direct challenge to the nation.

In the early days of the war, ministerial interpretation generally agreed with the rest of the citizens that the fighting was the result of autocracy. They placed, however, more emphasis on large armaments as a contributing cause than did their parishioners, and in some instances they said that the conflict was due to the "presence of sin and rebellion in God's world,"⁸⁰ or that it was "the Lord's means of chastising the nations"⁸¹ or that, although "God moves in mysterious ways his wonders to perform," He was using the war to achieve some great end that would be manifest in time,⁸² or that it was merely the fulfillment of prophecy and would lead to the Millenium and the second coming of Christ.⁸³ Being the incurable optimists that they were, the clergy stressed the possibility that the terrible war might result in such benefits as a general realization of the futility of war, new brotherhood of man, and the return to the sanctums of religion by a chastised world.

Lutherans, (German) Catholics, the German Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Church of America, and the German Evangelical Church sympathized openly with the Central Powers. They early became centers of pro-German activity, and the clergy gave holy sanction to the partisanship of their members and translated their efforts to secure arms and loan embargoes into religious phraseology. The Lutherans in particular gave valuable support to the German cause. Their leaders pointed out that Luther had sanctioned justified wars, that France was "in the last

⁸⁰ Cincinnati *Christian Standard*, August 15, 1914, p. 12.

⁸¹ St. Louis, Missouri, *Lutheran Witness*, August 11, 1914, p. 133.

⁸² La Porte, Indiana, *Argus*, October 5, 1914, p. 8; Fort Wayne, Indiana, *Journal-Gazette*, August 20, 1914, p. 4.

⁸³ Anderson, Indiana, *Gospel Trumpet*, September 24, 1914, p. 3; Seymour, Indiana, *Baptist Observer*, December 30, 1915, p. 4.

stages of moral decay," and they bade their followers not to be carried away by tears for theocratic Catholic Belgium when Germany was fighting for the freedom of Lutheran Finland.⁸⁴

Whether a member of the Catholic Church found logic in the Allied or German arguments depended primarily on the racial group to which he belonged, for there would be obvious differences in sentiment among the Belgian, Irish, German, Polish, Italian and Hungarian faithful. To the extent that the Church favored one side over another it leaned toward the Central Powers. The Church periodical, *Our Sunday Visitor*, was neutral. But the *Indiana Catholic* and the *Catholic Columbian Record* (combined in 1916 to form the *Indiana Catholic and Record*) were unreservedly pro-German, and others such as the Jesuit weekly, *America*, were officially neutral but carried numerous pro-German articles without balancing them with Allied ones. Not a single openly pro-Ally Church paper reached Indiana in sizable numbers. One reason for this pro-German tendency was that the Irish ranked first in Church leadership and the Germans second. Another was the fact that Austria, at that time the most faithful daughter of the Church, was a member of the Central Powers. A third cause was the opposition toward Orthodox Russia and Anglican England, and a fourth was antagonism toward the anti-clerical government of the French Republic. The French government was described as "infidel,"⁸⁵ "socialist,"⁸⁶ "anti-clerical and inhuman,"⁸⁷ and the Americans were warned that "Our debt to France was from the France of other days. There can be no bond of sympathy between the United States and the present French government. . . . Blush that the necessities of diplomacy force us to recognize the government that finds its duty to blaspheme the God of Nations and whose army is called out to insult and degrade helpless, innocent women."⁸⁸ When Catholic Italy entered the war in 1915 it had the natural influence of rallying the local Italians to the Allied cause, but the pro-Germans re-

⁸⁴ St. Louis, Missouri, *Lutheran Witness*, August 11, 1914, p. 133; St. Louis, Missouri, *Der Lutheraner*, May 25, 1915, p. 209.

⁸⁵ Huntington, Indiana, *Our Sunday Visitor*, May 28, 1916, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Indianapolis, *Indiana Catholic*, July 24, 1914, p. 4.

⁸⁷ New York *America*, November 21, 1914, p. 147.

⁸⁸ Indianapolis, *Indiana Catholic*, August 21, 1914, p. 4; Columbus, Ohio, *Catholic Columbian Record*, August 21, 1914, p. 4.

garded this action by the government that was keeping the Pope a "prisoner in the Vatican" as added justification for their partisanship.⁸⁹

Neither the Lutherans nor Catholics classed all war as sinful, but there were five churches, possibly more, in Indiana which officially and consistently denounced war as being outside the borders of Christianity. They refused to choose sides in the conflict, at least publicly. They stood out solidly against American sale of munitions abroad, opposed efforts to increase the American army and navy, and their young men refused to do combatant service in the army. These were the Friends (Quakers), Church of the Brethren (Dunkard), Mennonite, Amish, and Seventh Day Adventists,⁹⁰ all relatively strong in Indiana. Other churches which denounced war with particular emphasis but did not carry their opposition to this point included the Free Methodist, Pilgrim Holiness, Church of God, Nazarene, and, widely different from the others, the Unitarian. The Christian Scientists also stressed peace on every possible occasion, but unlike some of the others they were clearly, but reservedly, pro-Ally.

The Episcopal Church which played an important role in the eastern and southern portions of the United States was comparatively weak in the Middle West, having but slightly more than 8,000 communicants in the whole of Indiana. To virtually the last member they were for England from the very beginning. Their leaders sometimes chided the general public for its failure to see the great issues involved and lamented the tendency in some quarters to regard the war as "no more than a dog fight in the street." "In the east the conscience of the people seems to be more outspoken—whether you believe they speak out rightly or wrongly—but here it is silent; here we seem to have mistaken moral indifference for political neutrality. We must do nothing, we must say nothing. . . . A good deal of our neutrality, so-called, and a good deal of our so-called pacifism seems to be no more than moral obtuseness and cowardice."⁹¹ Quite clearly the

⁸⁹ Indianapolis, *Indiana Catholic*, June 4, 1915, p. 4.

⁹⁰ See Richmond, Indiana, *American Friend*; Elgin, Illinois, *Gospel Messenger*; Scottdale, Pennsylvania, *Gospel Herald*; Berne, Indiana, *Mennonite*; Washington, D. C., *Review and Herald*; Francis M. Wilcox, *Seventh Day Adventists in Time of War* (Washington, 1936).

⁹¹ Address by the Right Reverend Charles D. Williams, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, at Butler University. See *Butler Alumni Quarterly*, July 1, 1916, pp. 53-67.

bond between England and the Episcopal Church in America had not been completely severed.

The position of the United Brethren Church, one of the stronger in Indiana, is more difficult to determine. It was of Pennsylvania "Dutch" origin and some of the Pennsylvania churches still held part of their services in the German language. Its members, however, were not of recent immigrant stock and did not refer to themselves as German-Americans. The result seems to have been that a majority were pro-Ally but that enough German consciousness remained to cause a few of them to be pro-German and others to be indifferent.⁹² Their attitude toward the preparedness movement was never clearly defined, but Bishop H. H. Fout was more inclined to favor an increase in the army and navy than were many of his ministers.

In each town and community there generally was to be found a Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Christian (Disciples of Christ) church. They occupied the vast middle ground that lay between the Holiness on one end and the Episcopalians on the other, and they were closely representative of the state. They had numerous differences, chiefly traditional and inherited, but they agreed in favoring an Allied victory.⁹³ Furthermore, the ministers were likely to be more partisan than were the lay members, because they possessed more of an emotional antipathy for "Prussian Militarism" and "War Lord" sovereigns. Yet it would be an error to picture these parsons, and those of other denominations, as shouldering arms each Sunday in a crusade for a holy war. The apparent fruits of militarism abroad made them all the more firmly opposed to it at home, and for the first year of the war they adamantly opposed all proposals for major increases in the army and navy (Baptists and Christians were more anti-preparedness than were the Methodists and Presbyterians). It is true that they later fell in line with this program, but (speeches of a few fire eaters to the contrary) they were following and not leading. Their

⁹² Dayton, Ohio, *Religious Telescope*; Warsaw, Indiana, *Northern Indianian*, September 7, 1916, p. 1.

⁹³ Franklin, Indiana, *Hopewell Herald*, January 16, 1915, p. 2, and May 7, 1915, p. 2; Cincinnati *Western Christian Advocate*, February 23, 1916, p. 2; Seymour, Indiana, *Baptist Observer*, September 17, 1914, p. 1 and January 21, 1915, p. 1; Cincinnati *Christian Standard*, August 22, 1914, p. 10.

negative and passive attitude toward the steps that were leading to conflict helped make war possible, but they were not war hawks.

In the political field, in contrast to the religious, notable differences did not exist between the two major parties during 1914 and 1915. An exception was the question of preparedness, which was championed more vigorously by the Republicans than by the Democrats. The parties most directly concerned by the war in its early stages were the Progressive (Bull Moose) and the Socialist, and for both it was a seriously disruptive force.

The Progressives were already ailing by the summer of 1914, but the war materially hastened their end. For one thing, the biggest Bull Moose of them all, Theodore Roosevelt, was strongly anti-German, and the result was an alienation of affection between the leader and party members who were of German blood, a large contingent. Furthermore, the impact of war separated the pacifist and internationalist section of the party, such as Jane Addams, from the "red-blooded" and nationalist faction which controlled most of the party press. The fight over the preparedness movement between these two groups was particularly bitter, because the pacifists saw in the war a gruesome object lesson of the inevitable result of large armies, whereas the nationalists contended that the one major lesson that the conflict offered America was the need for large military forces for protection against aggressors. So deep and wide grew this schism that it is difficult to see how they could have joined forces again under the old leaders.

The first reaction of the Socialists had been a unanimous denunciation of the conflict as one that would be fought by the workers for the benefit of their exploiters. But this initial unity soon dissolved as many of the members came to feel that there was a difference in degree between the combatants, and as the arms embargo question divided the party into two camps. There were two things, however, on which virtually all Socialists did agree. The first was their last ditch opposition to the American preparedness campaign, and the second was an insistence that the United States should not permit its controversies with the belligerents to end in war.

While professing moral shock at the war every major

economic group in the state became optimistic over its dollar and cents effect, a result that was doubly welcomed because 1914 was a depression year. On August 8 the *Farmer's Guide* predicted agricultural prosperity and noted that "In one day ninety millions of dollars were added to the value of the wheat held by farmers in this country."⁹⁴ Labor anticipated more and superior jobs, and business men hopefully awaited better times. "Even th' loafer is figurin' on bein' benefited by th' European War," Abe Martin observed.⁹⁵ Trade with Europe was expected to boom, and the American opportunity in South America was likened to that of a merchant whose competitors had "burned down in one night."⁹⁶ War also was expected to eliminate importing rivals from the domestic market, and a "Made in America" campaign was launched to educate the public on the superior qualities of American wines, dyes, toys, dishes, and numerous other items. If, asserted the business men, the government would only refrain from further socialistic, Wilsonian legislation that was impairing confidence and "making private enterprise timid"⁹⁷ the war would pull the country out of the depression.

When an attempt is made to differentiate between the war sympathies and reactions of those in different occupations and on various economic levels serious difficulty is encountered because regardless of the size of their income most of the Hoosiers insisted upon thinking of themselves as middle-class. But if hard and fast divisions must be eschewed, a few tendencies and inclinations can be recorded. Those in the middle income group and above were more vocally pro-Ally than were the others. The farmers were less moved by the war than were the city dwellers and the laborers less than their employers. Yet it would be a gross misapprehension to assume from this that the merchants and industrialists were seeking war. They were immersed in their purchases and sales, were not convinced that the United States involvement would be to their individual advantage, and were not particularly inclined to respond to "world saving" appeals. Only on one score were they taking the lead in action that

⁹⁴ Huntington, Indiana, *Farmer's Guide*, August 8, 1914, p. 866.

⁹⁵ Indianapolis *News*, February 25, 1915, p. 20. "Abe Martin" was the pseudonym of Ken Hubbard, local humorist.

⁹⁶ Chicago *American*, August 24, 1914, p. 10.

⁹⁷ Indianapolis *Commercial*, January 4, 1915, p. 4.

would help put the country at war, and that was in the preparedness movement. Their desire, however, for an increased army represented a state of mind and not the presence of a plan for its use abroad. The farmers and laborers were in agreement in their opposition to any far reaching armament program, but economically each thought the other was seeking to profit unduly from the war by high prices or high wages. Organized labor was slightly less pro-Ally than were the rest of the workers due to its intense aversion to labor-baiting Russia, the strength of the trade union movement in Germany, and the large numbers of German-Americans in the local unions.

That part of the public included in the rather vague designations, professional, intellectual, and cultural, constituted the most actively pro-Ally coterie in the state. In this group were the men of letters such as James Whitcomb Riley, William Dudley Foulke, Meredith Nicholson, and Booth Tarkington who wrote in 1915 that, "I begin to shake, shriek, and dribble at the mouth whenever there is a pro-German whisper."⁹⁸ Along with the *litterati* went their hangers-on in the persons of librarians, book reviewers, English teachers, and readers of "good" literature. The newspaper editors were less a unit in their stand, but men like Henry Watterson of the Louisville *Courier Journal*, Victor Lawson of the Chicago *Daily News*, and F. T. McCain of the Crawfordsville *Journal* cast a wide pro-Ally influence. Likewise in this pro-Ally group were many lawyers such as Leo Rappaport, Lucius B. Swift, W. H. H. Miller, and Enoch S. Hogate. An educational contingent was made up of college presidents, George R. Grose of DePauw University, George L. Mackintosh of Wabash College, William Lowe Bryan of Indiana University, and others—college professors such as Amos S. Hershey, James A. Woodburn, and Christopher B. Coleman—and the educational proletariat, the Hoosier schoolmasters.⁹⁹ Those physicians whose interests ranged beyond their vocation generally belonged to this band as did also some of the clergymen who administered to the larger congrega-

⁹⁸ Claude G. Bowers, *Beveridge and the Progressive Era* (New York, 1932), 481-83.

⁹⁹ William W. Sweet, *Indiana Asbury-DePauw University, 1837-1937* (Indianapolis, 1937), 215; James I. Osborne and Theodore G. Gronert, *Wabash College, The First Hundred Years* (Crawfordsville, 1932), 317; *Indiana University Alumni Quarterly*, IV (Bloomington, 1917), 347-61; *Indianapolis News*, April 17, 1916, p. 9.

tions. A last group was composed of women who were possessed of enough leisure and inclination to take part in club discussions, attend lectures, read rather widely, and help collect kits for Belgium and France.¹⁰⁰ The time would come when the rest of the Indiana people would go to war in a surge of patriotic anger, but those enumerated above would welcome battle "not only for the vindication of American rights and for the honor of the American name, but for the preservation of those ideals of justice and humanity upon which the security of the world must rest."¹⁰¹ Stated differently, these professional and articulate groups were more war-willing than were the business men, farmers, laborers, or politicians. Their only rivals were the nationalistically inspired members of the patriotic societies, who likewise were strongly pro-Ally despite the historical distrust of Britain held by some of them. It should be noted that those who would reap the greatest economic profit from United States' belligerency were far less war-like than were the professional and patriotic groups who would suffer a loss in purchasing power as prices and taxes mounted faster than their salaries and fees.

This analysis of sentiment in 1914 reveals an initial pro-Ally sympathy at the outbreak of the war. In the last half of August, however, hesitation, confusion, and doubts lessened this sympathy. This was followed by a stabilization of sentiment during September that was pro-Ally but not overwhelmingly so, and by the end of the year from two-thirds to three-fourths of the people seemed to favor the Allies. This crystalization of attitude was produced by the partiality of Middle Westerners for democratic methods, opposition to militarism, the superior effectiveness of English propaganda, unfavorable reaction to German conduct in Belgium (not atrocity stories) and to the writings of German militarists.

Various groups played their part in the formation of opinion. The most numerous minority group, the Germans, attained a high degree of internal unity in support of the Fatherland, but were too dogmatic and abusive to attract

¹⁰⁰ Indianapolis, *Indiana Daily Times*, November 17, 1914, p. 1; *Indianapolis News*, November 9, 1914, p. 7.

¹⁰¹ *Indiana University News-Letter* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1913-), V, May, 1917, pp. 1-2.

many native Hoosiers. They were supported, however, by the Irish, who were the first to demand American entrance into the war, the Hungarians, who were anti-Russian, and the Jews, who were largely from Germany. They were opposed by the Belgians, the minority groups from Austria-Hungary, and eventually by the Italians. The native "Old Stock" Hoosiers were determined not to be involved and only their patriotism and the loss of lives were sufficient to move them after 1914 had passed.

National origins divided the churches: Lutherans were pro-German, Episcopalians were pro-English, and the Catholics were divided. Politicians were much alike regardless of party lines, but the Socialists were vigorously opposed to preparedness and involvement in the war. Generally the professional classes were less opposed to American entrance than were businessmen, laborers, or the farmers. The last two were more opposed than businessmen, but economic profits were not the key to the development of sentiment in favor of aiding the Allies.