

Book Reviews

Indiana Public Opinion and the World War, 1914-1917. By Cedric C. Cummins. (Volume XXVIII of the *Indiana Historical Collections*, Indiana Historical Bureau, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1945, pp. xvii, 292. \$2.00.)

Accepting the theses that Indiana is an average state and that the general public was responsible in part for the participation of the United States in World War I, Professor Cummins undertakes "to trace the changing attitudes of the 'average' group, the Indiana citizens, as they traveled the road to war." The monograph, which is exceptionally well documented, includes a bibliography consisting of 119 Hoosier newspapers, 11 Chicago and Louisville newspapers, some 90 periodicals, and an assortment of books, articles, pamphlets, public documents, and some manuscripts. The author has succeeded admirably in attaining his objective, scholars will not find his conclusions startling, since they tend to substantiate and supplement the published views of specialists in this field. On the other hand, the author discounts one theory which has been advanced in recent years—the imminence of a rupture with Great Britain in 1916. He gives Wilson's foreign policy more praise than it is accorded by some writers, e.g., C. Hartley Grattan, Alice M. Morrissey, and Thomas A. Bailey. Professor Cummins has done an excellent piece of research and he gives promise of becoming one of the best writers among the younger historians.

The outbreak of hostilities came as a surprise to Hoosiers. Editors contrasted unfavorably the jingoism and "precipitate action of various European chancelories" with Bryan's "grape-fruit diplomacy" and the policy toward Mexico of "watchful waiting." In the ten-day period following the entrance of Great Britain into the struggle, "public opinion . . . was more pronounced and more united against the Central Powers than it was to be again until the sinking of the *Lusitania*." There was "unstinted sympathy for Belgium" but no suggestion of American intervention, it being commonly assumed that the war would be short and result in an Allied victory.

Propaganda activities of German-Americans, Hungarians, and Irish, along with the entry of Russia and Japan on the side of the Allies and the reappearance of old-time

antipathy toward Great Britain, started a short-lived swing in favor of Germany which reached its apex the third week of August. Gradually, however, public opinion became stabilized in favor of the Allies. The author lists four factors which brought about this situation: attention was focused on Western Europe; German sympathizers proved poor apologists (this point is emphasized repeatedly); the bulk of the foreign news reached the United States on cables subjected to British censorship; and the justification of German treatment of Belgium on the basis of military necessity did not square with the belief that the Central Powers had not started the war. By the end of 1914, "not less than two-thirds and not more than three-fourths of the people favored the Allied nations." Only one "Lilliputian step toward war" had been taken—the support which some Hoosiers gave Theodore Roosevelt's criticism of the Administration for failing to enter a strong diplomatic protest against the invasion of Belgium. Professor Cummins concludes that as long as antagonism toward Germany rested on humanitarian, rather than patriotic, grounds, "there would be no serious war sentiment in the Midwest."

The author delineates skillfully the part played by minority groups in influencing the opinion of the "old stock" Hoosiers, who "tended to be Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, nativistic, and positive; they voted a straight ticket and took calomel in man-sized quantities." They might be swayed by sentiment, propaganda, and ideological arguments, "but a direct challenge to their nationalism would be necessary to make them prowar." Indiana churches took divergent positions, only five remaining consistently pacifist, as national origins greatly influenced the others. The Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Christians took a middle position between the peace churches and the pro-English Episcopalians. Although the ministers ordinarily were "more partisan than the lay members," they worked against whiskey, Sunday movies, dancing, and card playing rather than crusading for a holy war.

During the early stages there was little difference in the attitudes of the Democratic and Republican politicians, but the war proved a disruptive force for the Progressives and Socialists. The former split into two wings, the nationalists echoing Roosevelt's bellicose strictures, while the

internationalists followed Jane Addams. The Socialists likewise had internal difficulties but united on a program of opposition to American preparedness and involvement as a belligerent. It is a "gross misapprehension to assume that merchants and industrialists were seeking war," although they did take the lead in advocating preparedness. Farmers and laborers were less positive in their support of the Allies than were the professional classes. Many newspapers and practically all magazines and books read by Hoosiers "carried a pro-Allied message."

In the early months of 1915, a movement to place an embargo on the shipment of arms was sponsored by German sympathizers and given at least passive support by the Socialists and the peace groups. Hoosiers in general, however, saw no reason for changing the rules during hostilities, the net results of which would have been an unneutral act favoring the Central Powers and financial loss to manufacturers, retail merchants, laborers and farmers. The controversy served mainly to place hyphenates who advocated the embargo under suspicion of being anti-American. British Orders in Council aroused resentment, but there was a general attitude of tolerance toward illegal commercial practices of all belligerents as long as there was no loss of life. By opposing an embargo and by failing to insist on a reasonable adherence to international law from the traditional American viewpoint, "honest testimonials for peace" could not obscure the fact, however, that "the people of Indiana had helped to lay the foundation for conflict with Germany."

The sinking of the "Lusitania" and the "Arabic" became the most consequential factor in "conditioning America's relation to the European war in 1915," deepening humanitarian antipathy toward Germany and adding a nationalistic antagonism as well. The majority of Indianans favored neither the pugnacious methods urged by Roosevelt nor the concessions advocated by Bryan which led to his resignation from the cabinet. "Despite . . . jests concerning illimitable note writing, the Administration's handling of the submarine issue reflected the sentiments of the people with singular accuracy."

In a chapter entitled "Factors for War and Peace," such subjects are discussed as the status of Armenian Christians, the execution of Edith Cavell, sabotage incidents, the floating

of foreign war loans in the United States, and war prosperity. Next the author deals with "Pacifism and Nationalism," being concerned with the activities of David Starr Jordan, May Wright Sewall, William Dudley Foulke, *et al.*, and the influence of such books as Maxim's *Defenseless America*. In commenting upon the contradictory aspects of prewar opinion, Professor Cummins raises the query as to which type of newspaper was more responsible for final American belligerency—one like the *Indianapolis News*, which was pro-Allied but against excessive preparedness and jingoism; or one like the *Chicago Tribune*, which "advocated concessions to Germany but preached universal military training and chauvinism." Quoting from a militaristic sermon delivered by Billy Sunday in the spring of 1916, the author remarks that "at some indiscernible point back along the road public opinion had crossed a watershed."

As the German note of May 4, 1916, eased the tension resulting from the "Sussex" incident, more attention was now given to British and French irregularities and the depredations of Francisco Villa. The rising spirit of nationalism and the military inadequacies which the Mexican imbroglio demonstrated "added material support to the preparedness movement, which in turn had its effect on the state of mind with which Americans would view the European belligerents." The author classifies Hoosiers into seven groups about the middle of 1916 as regards the "country's exact mission with respect to the great war." Recognizing many shades of opinion between the extremists, he declares that on one point there was essential agreement—"the nation's rights and honor must be upheld." Although the war was more of an issue in the election of 1916 than it had been two years previously, the Republicans carried Indiana by a narrow margin "for reasons of local origin, as was demonstrated by the fact that their state and local candidates ran ahead of those on the Federal ticket."

The severing of diplomatic relations in February, 1917, as a result of the initiation of unrestricted submarine warfare was soon followed by overt acts resulting in a declaration of war which had the unanimous support of Indiana Congressmen, all but four of whom were Republicans. Thus two and one-half years of uncertainty came to an end. Professor Cummins concludes that the submarine dispute was

the most important of six factors in bringing about the decision. He asserts that Allied propaganda accentuated many of these factors, but that it would not have borne fruit without receptive soil. Unfortunately, except for the defense of neutral rights, the majority of Hoosiers gave little thought to the relation of belligerency and American foreign policy. "Their failure was of little consequence in the prosecution of the war, for they agreed well enough on the immediate target. But what was unessential in war might be crucial in making peace."

Max P. Allen.

The Farmer's Last Frontier, Agriculture, 1860-1897. By Fred A. Shannon (Volume V of *The Economic History of the United States*, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York, c. 1945, pp. xii, 434. Text edition, \$3.75, trade edition, \$5.00.)

With the appearance of this volume a new co-operative economic history is introduced. The series is to contain nine volumes. The period before 1815 will be described in two general volumes, the years from 1815 to 1860 will be treated in a volume devoted to agriculture and another to industry, the period from 1860 to 1897 will also be covered in this manner, while the present century will be described in three general volumes. If the others meet the high standards set by this one, history will be enriched by a significant and thorough treatment of the economic development of the United States. The absence of a work of this type has been a notable defect of historical literature.

This volume is first of all a comprehensive account of agricultural developments from the beginning of the Civil War to the end of the century. It also summarizes in the excellent footnote citations and in the final bibliographical chapter the scholarly literature and much of the source material concerning the subject. Occasionally one fails to find an important work included, but that is rarely true. It sets forth conclusions and interpretations at variance with older works particularly in relation to the national land policy.

After noting that the fundamental basis of the farmers' difficulties on the Last Frontier were the differences of soil, climate, and distance, the author described the rapid settlement which was often influenced by artificial stimulants