



World War I and Propaganda

Edited by Troy R.E. Paddock

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World War I and Propaganda

History of Warfare

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T.R.E.P., August 2013

INTRODUCTION

In order to describe Russian conduct correctly, our rich German language must invent new words, our stock is not sufficient to describe the vulgarity and bestiality. We Europeans and Germans could not imagine these things until now.

—Rolf Brandt, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 September 1914

The reports from the frontlines by the war correspondent, in this case by Rolf Brandt, had become a standard part of conflict since the Crimean War. During the First World War reports from the front became crucial for incorporating atrocity stories into a narrative for propaganda. The Anglophone world is familiar with acts, both real and fabricated, of the barbaric German “Huns” on the Western Front. Less familiar to the same people are tales of atrocities, both real and exaggerated, by the Russian “Cossacks” on the Eastern Front. Stories of atrocities on both sides sparked immediate denials on the part of the accused and were the subject of intense scrutiny immediately after the war. The scholarly examination of the concept of “public opinion” in the 1920s coincided with reassessment of the content of propaganda with a focus on its veracity, or lack thereof.¹ The techniques employed by various propagandists were also the subject of study on both sides immediately after the war.²

The scale and bloodiness of World War I led many historians and other intellectuals to conclude that propaganda was, unfortunately, extraordinarily effective. In his post-war study of propaganda, Harold Lasswell summed up the feeling of many who had felt victimized: “Fooled by propaganda? If so, they writhe in the knowledge that they were blind pawns in plans which they did not incubate, and which they neither devised nor

¹ For the exploration of the notion of “public opinion,” see Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, 1922). On the fabrication of atrocity stories, see Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in War-time. Containing an assortment of lies circulated throughout the nations during the Great War* (1928, reprint New York, Garland Press, 1971).

² Some of the early important works include Kurt Baschwitz, *Der Massenwahn*, (München, 1924), Edgar Stern-Rubarth, *Die Propaganda als politisches Instrument*, (Berlin, 1921), Georges Démartial, *Le geurre de 1914. Comment on mobilisa les consciences* (Paris 1922), Ferdinand Tönnies, *Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung* (Berlin, 1922) and Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927, reprint, New York, Garland Press, 1972). Included among the early analysts of the importance of propaganda is Adolf Hitler. Chapter 6 of *Mein Kampf*, “War and Propaganda,” is unexpectedly lucid.

comprehended nor approved.”³ This view of propaganda and its pernicious effect is a bit exaggerated. That propaganda was effective is beyond doubt; but that the people were little more than “blind pawns” in plans that they did not “comprehend nor approve” understates both the understanding of the public and the importance of public opinion and public support for the war.

The conclusion that the Entente had exaggerated atrocity reports coincided with the negative reassessment of the Versailles Treaty and the reparations imposed upon Germany.⁴ One unfortunate consequence of this view was that many officials greeted with skepticism stories of Nazi atrocities during the Second World War; stories that were, tragically, all too true.⁵ Since then, historians have reassessed the reassessment, with the conclusion that there was more to the atrocity stories than had been previously accepted.⁶ However, what is significant here is not the veracity or lack thereof regarding atrocity stories, but rather their central role in the study of propaganda narratives in the Great War. For example, Great Britain used German conduct during the invasion of Belgium as justification for entering the war and as a tool to recruit soldiers. Furthermore, the barbaric actions of the Russians on the Eastern front were proof that Germans were fighting a defensive war and were the true representatives and defenders of civilized humanity. Unfortunately, the sensational nature of atrocity reports has often resulted in the focus on gruesome incidents rather than understanding how the reports fit into a larger narrative that was the basis of war propaganda. Two examples point to the connection

³ Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927, reprint, New York, Garland Press, 1972), 2-3.

⁴ The most famous example of this reassessment was John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919). For the latest reassessment of Versailles, see Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2003).

⁵ For a contemporary example of skepticism that can be tied to the consequences of World War I propaganda see, Charles Clayton Morrison, “Horror Stories from Poland,” *Christian Century*, Dec. 9, 1942, 1518–1519. Part of Morrison’s piece is reprinted in *American Views the Holocaust 1933–1945: A Brief Documentary History*, ed. Robert H. Abzug (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1999) 136–137. For an example of the effect of World War I propaganda in World War II see Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth About Hitler’s Final Solution* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1981). See also, Philip Taylor, *Munitions of the mind: a history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present era* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1995), 197.

⁶ See John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914. A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

(and overemphasis) between propaganda and atrocity stories in both the scholarship and public perception. The entry for “Propaganda, Use in War” in *The European Powers in the First World War* has only one cross-reference: “See also Atrocities.”⁷ Similarly, A.G.S. Enser’s *A Subject bibliography of the First World War: Books in English 1914–1987*, 2nd edition, has one page devoted to propaganda, with the vast majority of the seventeen entries concerning atrocity stories and espionage.⁸ Even granting that the above examples are intended for general audiences, they highlight the focus on atrocity stories to the detriment of the role propaganda played in virtually every aspect of the war. This volume will demonstrate the myriad of ways that propaganda was employed to serve the war effort. The Great War may have highlighted the role of propaganda and its connection to warfare; but this link existed long before both the First World War and the coining of the term ‘propaganda.’

Propaganda before ‘Propaganda’

In *Munitions of the Mind*, Philip Taylor, arguably the leading scholar of propaganda in the Anglophone world, traces its use in the Western world from Antiquity to the end of the Cold War. Taylor associates the use of propaganda with rulers and the military. He identifies a variety of purposes and forms for what he deems as propaganda. For example, the stelae of Mesopotamia were an “after-the-event standard” of propaganda praising victories.⁹ With such monuments, symbolism was more important than accuracy. The stelae of King Ennatum or Sargon I served the dual purpose of commemorating victory and potentially deterring a future attack. Themistocles’ deception, what we might now call ‘disinformation,’ of Xerxes during the Persian War was another kind of ancient propaganda.¹⁰ Pericles’ funeral oration is example of civilian propaganda during war. Finally, Taylor identifies the use of speeches to rouse the troops before battle as another form of propaganda in warfare.

⁷ See Clayton D. Laurie, “Propaganda, Use in War”, *The European Powers in the First World War* ed. Spencer C. Tucker (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1996) 574–77.

⁸ A.G.S. Enser, *A Subject bibliography of the First World War. Books in English 1914–1987*, 2nd edition (Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing, Inc., 1990), 227.

⁹ Taylor, 21.

¹⁰ Taylor, 28. See W. Kendrick Pritchett, “Herodotus and the Themistokles Decree” *American Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 66:1 (Jan. 1962) 45, for a reference to Themistocles’ deception.

Within the realm of politics, Taylor points to the use of power to promote rulers as a form of propaganda. Alexander and Julius Ceasar are two examples mentioned. The numerous cities named for Alexander and scattered across the middle and near east are Hellenistic propaganda in practice. Similarly, *The Conquest of Gaul* detailing Caesar's military successes provided imperial propaganda. The use of symbols and art for propaganda to promote power was a basic weapon in the arsenal of the medieval Church and received considerable secular attention during the Renaissance and early modern European era.¹¹ The kind of propaganda that Taylor discusses in these sections share two traits: 1. the propaganda is directed from the top down; 2. the propaganda was an attempt at social control and a display of power. In Taylor's words, "Propaganda provided cohesion, a set of answers in a confusing world."¹² Taylor's examination of propaganda provides a number of interesting insights, but suffers from the paradox of being both too broad and too limited. It is too broad because virtually every word uttered in association with warfare or politics could be deemed propaganda. Such a view may appeal to post-modern sensibilities, but it is not a particularly useful approach to the study of propaganda. The examination is too limited because by focusing only on the initiators of propaganda, it assumes effectiveness and treats the subjects of propaganda as susceptible to virtually all claims of authority. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that due to the social structure of the civilizations considered, the recipient of this propaganda did not have many options to voice either approval or disapproval at their disposal.

The Origins of Modern Propaganda

The development of moveable type and the printing press deserve to be considered the catalysts for the development of modern propaganda. The printing press made it possible to disseminate information relatively quickly and on larger scale than had been imagined earlier. Moreover, it provides a tool that can be used to challenge authority. Martin Luther's use of the printing press to promote the Reformation may well make him the

¹¹ See Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957) for a discussion of medieval symbolism and Jacob Burkhardt *The Civilization of Renaissance Italy*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1958).

¹² Taylor 52.

first modern propagandist.¹³ It is fitting that the term ‘propaganda’ is coined in the seventeenth century by the Catholic Church in its efforts to defend the faith. The use of the term propaganda dates back to the Vatican’s creation of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith). Henry VIII, the erstwhile “defender of faith”, took advantage of the printing press to defend his break with the Catholic Church and sway public opinion. Lois Schwoerer notes, “Since the Reformation the English Crown and its counselors had used printed tracts to shape public opinion, and people outside the government had done likewise. During the seventeenth century, pamphlet warfare was a part of every major political crisis.”¹⁴ Henry VIII was not the only British monarch to recognize the power of the printing press. During the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89, William of Orange, soon to be William III, brought a printing press along with his Dutch forces to ensure that his message came out in the way that he wanted.¹⁵ Across the channel, Louis XIV and his government were engaged in efforts to control his image and message to his subjects.¹⁶ Napoleon spent considerable effort on propaganda, in an effort to mold public opinion.¹⁷ What the above efforts have in common is a desire to control the flow of real information and the occasional fabrication of information to suit the interests of the people in power. The actions also reveal the awareness of what can be considered “public opinion,” although that term was not employed, as a factor to be considered.¹⁸

The rise in literacy rates and the emergence of a print culture played a key role in the development of public opinion.¹⁹ Early modern European officials were aware that the literate public made judgments on what they read. It was not a big step to move from literary or aesthetic judgments to political ones. There was certainly a link between what people read and

¹³ See Robert Scribner, *For the sake of simple folk: popular propaganda for the German reformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

¹⁴ Lois G. Schwoerer, “Propaganda in the Revolution of 1688–89” *American Historical Review* Vol. 82:4 (Oct. 1977), 847–8.

¹⁵ Schwoerer, 856.

¹⁶ See Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992) for the shaping of Louis XIV’s image, and Joseph Klaitz, *Printed Propaganda under Louis XIV: Absolute Monarchy and Public Opinion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976) for the shaping of his message.

¹⁷ See Robert B. Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969).

¹⁸ See Thomas E. Kaiser, “Rhetoric in the service of the King: The Abbe Dubos and the Concept of Public Judgment,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol 23:2 (Winter 1989–90), 182–199.

¹⁹ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Social Change: Communications and Social Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (2. Vols, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) is the foundational work on this subject.

how they thought about the world, including government policies.²⁰ This is the motivation behind government attempts to control the dissemination of information in newspapers and other printed matter. The efforts were not always successful; but in the eighteenth century, newspapers were not as seditious a force as is sometimes imagined.²¹ Readers of newspapers, especially licensed papers, were aware of the fact that they were often receiving information that was filtered to suit government interests. As Robert Darnton noted in the case of Paris in the late eighteenth century, newspapers and other printed materials were only a part of the way that information was disseminated among the interested citizenry.²² During the French Revolution, interested foreign observers did not rely solely on newspapers or government reports, but also consulted contacts in France whom they believed would have more reliable information. To borrow Peter Howell's phrase, interested observers created an "archeology of knowledge" that framed their understanding of events.²³ The challenge for effective propaganda is to work within this 'archeology' to create a message that will resonate with its intended audience.

The challenging of official reports by a discerning or skeptical citizenry is a characteristic of Jürgen Habermas's public sphere. Habermas defines the public sphere as:

The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor.²⁴

In this fashion, Habermas asserts, the public sphere takes on a political function as a forum where private persons, individuals not involved in governing, can challenge public officials and force them to legitimize their claims.

²⁰ See Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998).

²¹ See Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

²² Robert Darnton, "An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris" *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 105:1 (Feb. 2000), 1-35.

²³ Peter Howell, "Burke, Paine, and the Newspapers: An 'Archaeology' of Political Knowledge 1789-93," *Studies in Romanticism* Vol. 43:3 (Fall 2004), 357-398.

²⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 27.

The creation of the public sphere impacts the construction of propaganda. Mona Ozuf contends, “The [French] Revolution was indeed, as its partisans described it, the moment at which obedience to external necessity stopped and obedience to the presence of reason in itself and to the realization of the universal ideal by means of the opinion of reasonable men—public opinion—began.”²⁵ Ozuf’s claim supports Robert Holtman’s conclusion that Napoleon’s propaganda failed in part because people knew that the press was controlled by the government and spotted articles written by officials.²⁶ The importance of the public sphere as a space where the public could confront the government was highlighted during the Crimean War. Reports from the East by William Howard Russell, the “Special Correspondent” for *The Times* shaped public discussion of the war and were a contributing factor in the fall of the Aberdeen government.²⁷ Russell’s scathing criticism of the British management of the war marks a turning point in the role that newspapers could claim as a voice for public opinion.²⁸ Newspapers at the time certainly made this claim; *The Times* dubbed the conflict “the people’s war” in a lead editorial on 5 May 1854.²⁹ The freedom of journalists and the advances in technology made the Crimean War rather unique. Reports from the front could get back to France or England relatively quickly, thus making their impact more immediate. While the press practiced a form of self-censorship with regards to the publishing of sensitive military information, it was seldom enough to satisfy military leaders. After experiencing the impact of newspapers in the Crimean War and the American Civil War, military authorities would attempt to increase control over the flow of information during wartime in order to maintain public support. During the First World War, this would most often take the form of censorship.

²⁵ Mona Ozuf, “Public Opinion’ at the End of the Old Regime,” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 60 Supplement: Rethinking French Politics in 1788 (Sept. 1988), S21.

²⁶ Holtman, 244.

²⁷ See Alan Hankison, *Man of Wars: William Howard Russell of the Times* (London: Heinemann, 1982). For a sample of his war writings, see *Russell’s Despatches from the Crimea, 1854–1856 by William Howard Russell*, edited by Nicolas Bentley (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

²⁸ Stefanie Markovits, “Participatory Journalism’ during the Crimean War,” *Victorian Studies* Vol 50:4 (Summer 2008), 559–586.

²⁹ Markovits, 561.

Public Opinion, Mobilization, and Propaganda in the Great War

Regarding the war, it is fair to say that the central government played a far more active role in determining what could not be printed, rather than what could be printed. This was certainly the case in Germany where according to the *Gesetz über den Belagerungszustand vom 4. Juni 1851* (Law on the state of siege from June 4, 1851), the government had the right to censor the press if it was in the interest of public security.³⁰ Along with Kaiser Wilhelm II's declaration of a "state of war" (*Kriegszustand*) on July 31, 1914, the German government released a catalogue containing twenty-six points relating what the press could not print about the impending war effort.³¹ There would be no central propaganda office until 1916.³² In Great Britain the "Defense of the Realm Act" (DORA) potentially gave the government great authority to censor or ban publications.³³ In France, all prefects were notified on August 4, 1914 that the press bureau had to approve all news of a military nature before it could be published. Shortly thereafter (August 13) the minister of war appointed a French Press Commission.³⁴ As many of the contributions to this volume illustrate, the national government may have determined goals for certain propaganda efforts, but how those goals were achieved were left to local officials and individuals who could adapt or discard material supplied to them for propaganda purposes.

For all of the belligerent powers, the relationship between the government and the press was a tense one. Regarding France, Becker writes, "no one at any level wanted the press to have too much latitude less so as even by their excess of zeal the papers could produce untoward results."³⁵ Major Walter Nicolai, the man in charge of press policy in the military, expressed the German military's perspective as follows: "We will not always be able

³⁰ Kurt Kosyzk, *Deutsche Pressepolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1968), 20-1.

³¹ On the same day Bavaria, through Royal Decree, also declared a state of war in accordance with Art. 1 of the "Gesetz über den Kriegszustand vom 5. November 1912."

³² See David Welch, *Germany, Propaganda, and Total War, 1914-1918* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000) for the best overview of Germany's propaganda efforts.

³³ For a brief overview of the censorship policies of the Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia see Troy R.E. Paddock, ed. *A Call to Arms. Propaganda, Public Opinion, and Newspapers in the Great War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004).

³⁴ Jean Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, trans. Arnold Pomerans (Dover, NH: Berg, 1985), 49. (Originally published as *Les français dans la grande-guerre.*)

³⁵ Becker, 45.

to say everything, but what we will say is true.”³⁶ But trying to decide where to draw the line was a difficult problem. Becker suggests that the official French attitude changed and censors attempted “to make sure that the population fell into line.”³⁷

The quotes above indicate that military and civilian officials realized that newspapers were crucial for mobilization and the maintaining of civilian morale. Nicolai considered the press to be “indispensable” in conducting warfare.³⁸ Newspapers were an ideal vehicle for the dissemination of propaganda for important reasons. As Otto Groth noted, newspapers were “the unrecognized cultural power.”³⁹ It was the most effective means of reaching a wide audience quickly. Just as important, newspapers related information to people in a fashion that they could understand and, in the case of newspapers with a clear political perspective, in a manner that the reader was pre-disposed to agree with. In order to successfully mobilize people, propaganda had to speak to the values and ideals of its audience. Before the war began left-wing and socialist newspapers were against a war. The fact that these same newspapers supported the war effort once it began was more than the result of a sudden change of heart. Progressive factions on both sides hoped that the war might serve as a catalyst for reform. The French *Union Sacree* and the German *Burgfrieden* were symbols of citizens supporting a successful war effort. Neither represented a people who were in agreement on all issues. One of the important contributions of this volume is to illustrate how in various nations newspapers and other tools of propaganda attempted to negotiate the minefields of domestic and international politics.

During the war, censorship limited how much newspapers could challenge government authority. However, newspapers’ support for the war effort was not unequivocal. Support for the war, in the form of propaganda, took an appearance that bore a closer resemblance to negotiation rather than manipulation. Whether it was the values that the nation was fighting to defend or the war aims that it hoped to achieve, newspaper attempts to

³⁶ Walter Nicolai, “Nachrichtswesen und Aufklärung,” in *Der Grosse Krieg 1914–1918*, Hrsg. M. Schwarte, Bd. 8: Die Organisationen der Kriegsführung, (Leipzig: J.A. Barth, 1923), 489. Quoted in Paddock, *A Call to Arms*, 118. It should be noted that Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz had also set up press bureau for the Imperial Navy.

³⁷ Becker, 47.

³⁸ Paddock, 117.

³⁹ Otto Groth, *Die unerkannte Kulturmacht. Grundlegung der Zeitungswissenschaft*, 7 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1960–1972).

mobilize citizens through propaganda navigated domestic differences among competing groups.

The importance of public support was not just a matter of justifying participation in the war. The fact that the First World War was indeed a total war meant that everyone had to participate in the war effort. Tammy Proctor has noted that the Great War helped to define the notion “civilian” and “home front.”⁴⁰ Propaganda used images of women and children as a motivator for men to enlist. Conversely, men of fighting age who were not in uniform were often viewed with suspicion or were the subject of public derision. It is highly doubtful that any young Englishman was pleased to receive a white feather (a symbol of cowardice) from a young English woman.⁴¹ The handing out of such a symbol was more than an attempt at emotional blackmail or public humiliation. It revealed that the dichotomy between the battle front and the home front was in some ways a false one. The home front and its civilians may have needed protection, but they were also crucial for the prosecution of a modern industrial war. Moreover, it is fair to assert that there was a general consensus, at least initially, that non-combatants also had a vital role to play in supporting the war effort. How to encourage people to alter their conventional habits and contribute to the war effort in a way that was needed (i.e. producing more or conserving certain types of food or working in a factory or on a farm) was a problem that all governments faced. This problem became especially keen for the British Empire, and to a lesser extent for France, where getting support from colonies far away from the fighting was a necessity. Garnering support for the Metropole and rallying the home front for the war economy were two areas where propaganda played an important role.

In this respect, propaganda is closely tied to the mobilization of the citizenry of the belligerent powers, not only in the martial sense. John Horne characterized mobilization as: “...the engagement of the different belligerent nations in their war efforts both imaginatively, organizationally, through state and civil society.”⁴² Governments certainly had an interest in mobilizing the public, but could not always direct efforts from the top down. Jay Winter’s suggestion that it may be fairer to characterize propa-

⁴⁰ Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914–1918* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2010), 10.

⁴¹ Nicoletta Gullace, “White Feathers and Wounded Men: Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War,” *Journal of British Studies* 36 (April 1997): 178–206.

⁴² John Horne, ed. *State Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 1.

ganda as “state-dominated” rather than “state-directed” is an apt one.⁴³ However, even this characterization deserves a qualifier: the idea of ‘state directed’ must be employed in the most general sense possible. Governments had basic goals they needed to meet, but local officials and private volunteers often determined how to achieve goals. Stéphane Audion-Rouzeau and Annette Becker posit that patriotic objects illustrate that “propaganda was not just a vertical process, but also a horizontal one, even to some extent a great upsurge from below, sustained by a huge number of individuals.”⁴⁴

The fact that governments felt the need to provide justification for the war highlighted the importance of public opinion. In 1931, E. Malcolm Carroll, the first historian to address the role of public opinion and foreign affairs as it related to World War I, noted that it was difficult to nail down a definition of what public opinion means, never mind the problem of trying to figure out exactly (or even approximately) what the opinion of the public was or may have been. Too often, historians took the opinion of leaders as the opinion of the masses, when there was often little evidence to support that position.⁴⁵ Almost a century later, the problem has not become any easier to tackle. In spite of claims to the contrary, most elites, by definition, are not “one of the people.” Carroll’s focus was on foreign relations where the opinion of generals, diplomats, and other government officials, even if they do not represent public opinion, carry more weight because they directly impact decisions. In spite of the temptation to equate the two, published opinion is not the same as public opinion.⁴⁶ One difficulty is that in the past historians too often have viewed propaganda as effective without offering evidence. For example, Fritz Fischer maintained that a press war between Germany and Russia was part of the government’s plan to prepare the German public for war.⁴⁷ Fischer offers no evidence that the press wars, which were real, were initiated on behalf of the govern-

⁴³ Jay M. Winter, “Propaganda and the Mobilization of Consent,” *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, Hew Strachan, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 217.

⁴⁴ Stéphane Audion-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, 14–18. *Understanding the Great War*, trans. Catherine Temerson (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 109.

⁴⁵ E. Malcom Carroll, *French Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs 1870–1914* (1931, reprint Hamden, CT, Archon Books, 1964), 4–5.

⁴⁶ Troy R.E. Paddock, ed. *A Call to Arms. Propaganda, Public Opinion, and Newspapers in the Great War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 3.

⁴⁷ Fritz Fischer, *War of Illusions: German Politics from 1911 to 1914*, trans. Marion Jackson (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975, published in German as *Krieg der Illusion*, Munich, 1969).

ment⁴⁸ yet his view is still cited approvingly.⁴⁹ The position assumes that the “public” is entirely malleable and can be manipulated at will by governments. Such a position also ignores the content of propaganda. If propaganda is going to be effective, it needs to speak in a fashion that its intended audience can understand.

As noted earlier, the term propaganda dates back to the creation of the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* or the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. The link between propaganda and propagation sparks Philip Taylor to suggest that scholars of propaganda borrow a “leaf from the botanists.”⁵⁰ Propaganda then becomes a process “for the sowing, germination and cultivation of ideas and as such, is –or at least should be– neutral as a concept.”⁵¹ From this point Taylor defines propaganda as “the deliberate attempt to persuade people to think and behave in a desired way....the conscious methodical and planned decisions to employ techniques of persuasion designed to achieve specific goals that are intended to benefit those organizing the process.”⁵²

Taylor’s insight about propaganda being a process is an interesting and potentially useful; however, the application of that insight to his definition is, perhaps unintentionally, limited. The definition of propaganda as a deliberate attempt to persuade people to think and act in a certain way that benefits those organizing the process is problematic because of the stakes of modern warfare and the structure of modern society. If the purpose of propaganda during war is to help get citizens to act in a fashion that furthers the war effort, then it is not just for the benefit of those orga-

⁴⁸ In fact, the most famous of these wars, “The Kölnische Zeitung Affair,” resulted in the severing of ties between the government and the Rhenish daily, which up to that point had been considered the mouthpiece for the government on foreign affairs.

⁴⁹ See Martin Gilbert, *The First World War. A Complete History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1994) 8-9. Gilbert notes that his colleague Immanuel Geiss (a student of Fischer’s) has published a document collection including a note from Admiral Müller which includes the discussion from December 1912 of the need to use newspapers to prepare German public opinion for a war with Russia. Müller’s note does not, contrary to Fischer, Geiss, and Gilbert’s opinion, constitute proof that the government organized a press war against Russia. At most, it shows that the government was interested in swaying public opinion in a certain direction. There is no evidence of a government inspired press war against Russia as a result of this meeting and there is no evidence within opposition newspapers in Imperial Germany that the government was organizing such a campaign. Fischer’s work has generated a considerable amount of attention. For an introduction see J. A. Moses, *The Politics of Illusion: The Fischer Controversy in German Historiography* (New York, 1975).

⁵⁰ Taylor, 2.

⁵¹ Taylor, 2.

⁵² Taylor, 6.

nizing the propaganda. The recipients of the propaganda will also benefit more if they are on the victorious side rather than on the losing side. One consequence of this situation is that the targets of propaganda in World War I were often aware of what was directed at them and responded accordingly. As a result, it makes more sense to think of propaganda as a process of negotiation rather than straight manipulation. David Monger provides the clearest example of this kind of negotiation in the first chapter of this collection. Local meetings were a textbook example of Habermas's public sphere in action; government officials had to respond to the concerns of citizens and negotiate with citizens for sacrifices.

Fundamentally, propaganda is an attempt to persuade. Implicit in Taylor's definition is the understanding that the propagandist must speak in a language that the audience can understand and, ideally, respond to in the desired manner. In order to be effective, propaganda must work within a social context. Every society has its own particular manner of expressing values or conduct. Propagandists will employ what Pierre Bourdieu, in another context, called cultural codes.⁵³ Consequently, effective propaganda often focuses more on content with emotional impact rather than rational arguments. This is a feature of propaganda that Hitler noticed as well. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler writes, "The more modest its [propaganda] intellectual ballast, the more exclusively it takes into consideration the emotions of the masses, the more effective it will be."⁵⁴ There is certainly an element of truth to this observation. One misplaced symbol can result in an ineffective piece of propaganda. For example, in her chapter, Catriona Pennell notes that for English recruitment propaganda to have any effect in Ireland, it had to replace English symbols with Irish ones. Similarly, Mourad Djebabla discusses the differences between the Canadian government's approach to its Anglophone and Francophone citizens.

Effective propaganda needs to meet its target audience halfway if it wants to be effective. Appealing to the emotions of the intended audience is certainly one approach. David Welch argues that the German government had constructed an apparatus that could effectively read the mood of the German people, but it failed to act upon it.⁵⁵ Christopher Fischer's chapter on propaganda in the Alsace-Lorraine confirms Welch's analysis.

⁵³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

⁵⁴ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 180.

⁵⁵ Welch, 1.

German propaganda asserting the “Germanness” of the two provinces was betrayed by actions indicating that the government did not trust the locals. The French propaganda was more effective in part because the words were matched by deeds. The contrast that Fischer demonstrates reveals important limitations to Hitler’s claim that effective propaganda cannot have intellectual ballast.

Effective propaganda cannot be overly complicated in its line of argumentation, but that is not the same as lacking intellectual content altogether. The intellectual content has a moral component and is tied to tradition and traditional values. David Monger’s chapter demonstrates the emotional pull of values such as pride, duty, and patriotism. The sense that the war was protecting and preserving the values of civilization is a key component in British propaganda. In this regard, propaganda is backward looking in the sense that it is seeking cooperation for preservation of a traditional way of life. Lisa Todd’s chapter is a clear example of how the gendered nature of some propaganda drew upon the moral and cultural values of tradition. British propaganda utilized atrocity stories within the context of traditional gender roles. Ironically, the call to make the world safe for women in their homes was made at a time when an increasing number of women were needed outside of their traditional roles in order to successfully prosecute the war effort. Robert and Donota Bloebaum show that propaganda did not have to be backward looking in order to be successful. For Polish women, propaganda was a tool for change rather than preservation.

Complete coverage of the use of propaganda and how it contributed to mobilization is beyond the scope of a single volume. The contributions included here do provide a good representation of the richness of the topic and many areas of recent scholarship. The book is divided into four sections that highlight the different kinds of negotiations that were involved in the propaganda efforts: negotiating imperial identity; propaganda and the proper conduct of war; negotiating with occupied peoples, and negotiating with neutral nations. The divisions are not hard and fast. Chapters across the sections share various characteristics.

The phrase the British Empire implies a monolithic entity that in no way reflected the reality. Both Britain and its empire were a myriad of smaller communities with interests that could be common, competing, or conflicting. The first section highlights some of the various approaches to propaganda employed within Great Britain and its empire as well as some of the obstacles that arose in the face of competing needs with limited

manpower. David Monger examines the work of the National War Aims Committee (NWAC), exploring how the committee's local organization was critical to its success and its ability to create a sense of patriotism that was both local and supranational. In analyzing how the war was presented in Ireland, Catriona Pennell argues that Irish support for the war was a product of negotiated persuasion that had to consider the unique and potentially volatile circumstances in Ireland. Moving away from the British Isles, Mourad Djebabla explores the Canadian government's propaganda efforts in the realm of food production and consumption. Djebabla notes how officials had to negotiate the competing interests of food production vs. consumption and the manpower needed to help Great Britain fight the war and for Canada to grow and harvest the food that Britain needed. Richard Smith notes how propaganda and the experience of the war played a role in the formation of a Jamaican national identity. Smith identifies the various sentiments behind the pro-imperial propaganda that sometimes masked conflicting interests. Jamaican hopes for post-war reform and a better future were ideals shared by many on both sides of the fighting. Anne Samson examines the presentation of the war in South Africa and contends that what was reported and how it was reported was heavily influenced by domestic political considerations in which neither side wanted to make the war an issue for fear of not being able to control public response. All of the chapters in this section share a common thread: domestic politics dictated how the war and the needs of the Entente powers were presented. The various constituents did appear to genuinely support the war, for the most part, but it was not simply out of fondness for Great Britain and imperial rule. A domestic agenda and ambitions within the empire, or hopes of leaving the empire, played a role in how the war was presented and how people supported it.

The chapters in section two explore how propaganda tried to define and depict conduct, both civilian and military, during the war as well as the competing desires and expectations that were in play. Lisa Todd examines the image of women as potential victims of sexual violence, thus in need of protection, or as sexual threats passing on disease or betraying men who were fighting on the front on their behalf. Todd demonstrates how atrocity stories related to sexual misconduct were part of a larger propaganda narrative. The possibility of female fraternization with prisoners of war is also one of the topics that Kenneth Steuer explores in his chapter on propaganda in POW camps. Steuer analyzes both how the treatment of prisoners was a subject of propaganda and how the Germans attempted to win the

hearts and minds of certain groups fighting on the side of the Entente (the Irish and Muslims). The next chapter provides different views of the use of colonial troops in the war. Andrew Jarboe looks at how the British, French, and German press represented the use and conduct of colonial troops to a domestic audience. Jarboe touches upon some of the same German concerns that Todd discusses with the use of black soldiers in occupied Germany after the war. Propaganda about colonial soldiers served to intensify existing notions about racial differences and helped reinforce Europe's commitment to imperialism.

Section three examines various forms of propaganda in occupied lands. All three chapters examine cases where there was a real opportunity for success if the propaganda (and actions) met the needs of target audience. The three chapters illustrated instances where propaganda that pointed forward to a different future was more likely to be success than propaganda that pointed to the past and tradition. Some might suggest that the inclusion of Alsace-Lorraine may be stretching the notion of occupied land; however, the status of Alsace-Lorraine was unique; it was annexed from France as a result of the Franco-Prussian War but with a special status (*Reichsland*) in Germany that set it apart from all other German states. Christopher Fischer explores French and German propaganda in Alsace-Lorraine and is able to demonstrate why the French were ultimately more successful. The French propaganda was able to promise a better future for the citizens of the two provinces than the German status quo. On the Eastern Front, Christopher Barthel explores the German occupation of Lithuania and the propaganda efforts to win over Lithuanians to the German cause by emphasizing the superiority of German culture and administration over the previous Russian sovereigns. The Germans had an opportunity that they did not capitalize upon because they were not clear on their own goals in the east and simply appealing to German *Kultur* was not effective with non-Germans. In the next chapter Robert and Donata Blobaum examine how Polish women use "social propaganda" during the war and occupation to discuss the expanding role of women in Poland. Polish women had to negotiate a complicated path through Russian, German and, finally, Polish authority as the war was used to redefine traditional gender roles. The three chapters in this section highlight how propaganda needed to have something positive to offer and could be used to negotiate change.

In section four, attention turns to neutral nations. With fighting on three continents, it is perhaps only natural for non-combatants to have sympathies for one side or another. Newspapers played a key role in neutral

nations. Both sides sought out allies in the press either through natural sympathy or financial support. However, such sentiments, whether based on cultural affinities or personal ties, did not necessarily mean that the neutral nation wanted to take sides. Both belligerent sides tried to sway neutral nations with all of the means at their disposal. Elli Lemonidou's chapter on propaganda and mobilization in Greece demonstrates that not even blood ties were enough to ensure support for a particular side. King Constantine was related to Kaiser Wilhelm II and was sympathetic to the German cause, but he believed it was in Greece's national interest to stay neutral. Interestingly, Greek domestic politics and Entente demands would reluctantly draw Greece into the war.

Javier Pounce's chapter on German propaganda efforts in Spain documents the efforts of the German government to keep Spain out of the war. The German government sponsored papers and publications and relied on German émigrés in Spain to get their position out. There were also vague promises of post-war territorial compensation if the Central Powers were successful. Mariá Inéz Tato examines the efforts of both sides to sway public opinion in Argentina. Many Argentine elites had sympathy for France based on their fondness of French culture and supported efforts to translate English and French propaganda into Spanish for the general public. As in Spain, the German émigré population in Argentina tried hard to get the Central Power's perspective to the people.

In terms of propaganda goals, the German's started from a favorable position in all three cases. The Germans recognized that Greece, Spain, Argentina were not going to become military allies. The best that Germany could hope for was benevolent neutrality, which was also the position that the Greek, Spanish, and Argentine governments wanted to maintain. German propaganda drew on that sentiment and where possible tried to foster anti-British or anti-imperial sentiment. Ultimately, external forces drew Greece and Argentina to the Entente, but it was not due to the ineffectiveness of German propaganda.

Inevitably, as with any compilation, there are lacunae that the editor is well aware of. Space and construction limitations meant that choices had to be made. Unforeseen circumstances forced three contributors to drop out, leaving unanticipated gaps in the volume. Hopefully, the bibliography at the end, which all of the contributors have been kind enough to offer their efforts in constructing, will help in pointing interested parties to topics not addressed in this volume. More importantly, I hope that this volume inspires others to further explore the nature of propaganda and its impact on society in both war and peace.

SECTION ONE

PROPAGANDA AND NEGOTIATING IMPERIAL IDENTITY

CHAPTER ONE

TRANSCENDING THE NATION: DOMESTIC PROPAGANDA AND SUPRANATIONAL PATRIOTISM IN BRITAIN, 1917–18*

David Monger

Introduction

In July 1917, a small committee of MPs was formed to organize propaganda in Britain to maintain civilian morale and resolve. Germany's reintroduction of unrestricted submarine warfare, the February revolution in Russia, and a wave of strikes in Britain in April and May convinced the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, that more systematic work was needed than that done by the press and voluntary organizations.¹ The National War Aims Committee (NWAC) was thus formed with representatives of Lloyd George and Asquith's factions of the Liberal party, the Conservatives and Labour. From November 1917 it received Treasury funding for its operations.² Over fifteen months to November 1918, it arranged thousands of meetings in local communities, and distributed more than one hundred million publications.³ It is commonly assumed that pre-war patriotism was invalidated by the massive casualties suffered by the New Armies at Loos

* Earlier versions of this chapter were presented at the *Cultivating Britons: Culture and Identity in Britain, 1901–1936* conference at Oxford Brookes University, and at the History Programme research seminar at the University of Canterbury. I am grateful to the organisers of both events and to the participants for helpful comments. This topic emerged from research towards my PhD, which was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, to which I am also grateful. Finally, my thanks to Paul Readman for insightful supervision of the work.

¹ The National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew (TNA:PRO), CAB24/13, GT774: 'Propaganda at Home. Memorandum by the Director, Department of Information', 18 May 1917; CAB 23/2/1365–142: War Cabinet 142, 22/5/17; CAB23/3/1365–154: War Cabinet 154, 5/6/17.

² Fuller discussion of the establishment of the NWAC is available in David Monger, *Patriotism and propaganda in First World War Britain: the National War Aims Committee and civilian morale* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), ch. 1, and in M.L. Sanders and P.M. Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914–18* (London: MacMillan, 1982), pp. 55–70.

³ TNA:PRO T102/13, letter, unsigned (probably Thomas Cox) to W.H. Smith & Sons, 14 November 1918.

and the Somme.⁴ However, the NWAC's late-war propaganda used many familiar patriotic themes. It was in no sense a new "language of patriotism",⁵ but rather adapted the patriotism of pre-war Britain to address the experiences of a war-weary civilian population. Moreover, its attempted cultivation of Britishness did not rely upon a narrow interpretation of the nation. Instead it recognized both that Britain was a collection of smaller communities, and that it was one component of a larger community of "civilized" powers. Historians often recognize the importance of local or supranational identities, but less regularly are their interconnections with national identity considered.⁶ This chapter examines some aspects of the NWAC's work and propaganda. It demonstrates that the Committee's local organizational structure was essential to its operations, enabling both a sense of local agency and participation, and more responsive and appropriate propaganda. Further, the propaganda produced by the Committee contained an underlying narrative of patriotism, which rendered British national identity as a product of both local experience and supranational environment.

Localized Propaganda

In *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, Jose Harris contends that in the years before the war Britain had experienced "a subterranean shift in the balance of social life away from the locality to the metropolis and the nation." While local ties remained important, the nation was now "the centre of gravity".⁷ However, it would be wrong to imagine that locality had ceased to matter at either an organizational level or as a locus of identity.⁸ The NWAC's organizational structure reflects the continuing primacy of locality. The

⁴ See, e.g., W.J. Reader, *'At Duty's Call': A Study in Obsolete Patriotism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

⁵ Hugh Cunningham, "The Language of Patriotism, 1750–1914," *History Workshop Journal* 12 (1981).

⁶ One approach which addresses similar issues in different ways to my own is Pierre Purseigle, "Beyond and Below the Nations: Towards a Comparative History of Local Communities at War" in *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies*, ed. Jenny Macleod and Pierre Purseigle (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

⁷ Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History of Britain, 1870–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 19–20.

⁸ See, respectively, Philip Harling, "The Centrality of Locality: The Local State, Local Democracy, and Local Consciousness in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 9 (2004); Paul Readman, "The Place of the Past in English Culture c. 1890–1914," *Past and Present*, 186 (2005).

central Committee in London employed forty-six members of staff, including a Publications Department which produced two weekly newspapers; pamphlets; leaflets; calendars; posters and articles to be placed in local newspapers.⁹ Most of its distribution was carried out free of charge by the news and book vendor W.H. Smith & Son, through its nationwide distribution network.¹⁰ Yet the most important form of propaganda, in the opinion of the Members of Parliament (MPs) who sat on the executive Committee, remained the public meeting. Until 1914, political legitimacy resided substantially in the ability to speak openly with the public and, if necessary, deal forcefully with opposing views from the audience, and such preoccupations were clearly still evident in the organization of NWAC propaganda.¹¹ This should not be surprising, since the central executive included several Whips, while the central day-to-day organization was undertaken by major figures in the national party machinery of the Conservatives, Liberals and (at least until December 1917) Labour.¹²

While the central organization played a coordinating role in the organization of meetings, it could not effectively make arrangements from Westminster to address civilians nationwide. It could have only limited knowledge of local conditions and attitudes and so would most likely have produced generic propaganda campaigns, wasted in some areas and insufficient in others. A national campaign could only be organized effectively

⁹ For full discussion, see Monger, *Patriotism and propaganda*, ch. 2.

¹⁰ TNA:PRO T102/14, George Tyler to 'The Director of National Information, St. Stephen's Chambers', 22 October 1917; see also Stephen Colclough, "No such bookselling has ever before taken place in this country.' Propaganda and the Wartime Distribution Practices of W.H. Smith & Son." in *Publishing in the First World War: Essays in Book History*, ed. Mary Hammond and Shafquat Towheed (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

¹¹ Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For continuation of public politics in wartime, see Jon Lawrence, "Public Space, Political Space", in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919*, 2, *A Cultural History*, ed. Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). For initial ideas about the NWAC's role, see Robert Sanders' diary, 15 June and 20 July 1917 in *Real Old Tory Politics: The Political Diaries of Sir Robert Sanders, Lord Bayford, 1910-35*, ed. John Ramsden (London: The Historians' Press, 1984), pp. 87-88.

¹² For full details of the central executive and administrative personnel of the Committee, see Monger, *Patriotism and propaganda*, chs.1-2. Labour's National Agent, Arthur Peters, played an important administrative role in the NWAC until his resignation following the Labour Party's decision to pursue a more independent policy after its declaration of appropriate war aims in December 1917: John N. Horne, *Labour at War: France and Britain, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 309-11; "Political Notes", *The Times*, 29 January 1918, p. 7.

at the local level.¹³ As such, following the previous example of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, which had arranged both for local committees and local variations on centrally-produced recruitment propaganda,¹⁴ the NWAC encouraged every constituency in England and Wales to form a local War Aims Committee (WAC).¹⁵ Different arrangements were made in Scotland, while Ireland was excluded from the Committee's remit until very late in the war.¹⁶ Initially, contact was usually made with local representatives of the various parties—the professional political agents of the Liberal and Conservative parties, and perhaps a local Trades and Labour council representative. They were encouraged to arrange a meeting with prominent local figures to try to establish a WAC, of which the agents usually became joint honorary secretaries. This could sometimes prove problematic, if there were insufficient local activists remaining in the area to assist, if those activists could not see any value in propaganda in their area, or, in the case of Labour representatives, because of disapproval of the NWAC's purposes. One Trades and Labour council went to the trouble of burning the letter it was sent and returning the ashes to the Committee while, at the other end of the spectrum, constituencies in East Anglia frequently rejected the need for propaganda because of the salutary effects of German air raids.¹⁷

Despite such reservations, however, 344 out of 528 English and Welsh constituencies established a WAC, according to a card-index in the NWAC's papers, amounting to around 65 per cent. However, these figures are distorted by the 1918 redistribution of constituencies. Many of the cards for the new constituencies contain no further information, and in many cases existing WACs apparently continued as before. If analysis is restricted to

¹³ For much larger discussion of these points, see Monger, *Patriotism and propaganda*, ch. 3; Purseigle, "Beyond and Below"; John Horne, "Remobilizing for 'Total War': France and Britain, 1917–1918," in *State, society and mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, ed. John Horne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁴ TNA:PRO WO106/367, 'Parliamentary Recruiting Committee. Meetings Sub-Department. Report'; for a thorough recent analysis of the PRC's activities, see James Aulich and John Hewitt, *Seduction or Instruction? First World War Posters in Britain and Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

¹⁵ TNA:PRO T102/16, Meetings Department Report, 25 September 1917.

¹⁶ TNA:PRO T102/16, NWAC: Statement of Estimated Expenditure for 6 months ending March 31st, 1918, 16 October 1917. For details of the barely connected Irish War Aims Committee, see Parliamentary Archives, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/69/2, and for limited evidence of NWAC efforts in Ireland in October, see the list of mobile cinema tours in TNA:PRO T102/6, folder 'I'.

¹⁷ TNA:PRO T102/12, G. Rayner (Brighton Trades and Labour Council) to "Secretary of NWAC", 18 August 1917; T102/11, G. Wallace Carter to Major G.H. Putnam, 7 June 1918.

the 428 constituencies in the card-index that existed both before and after the 1918 redistribution, 304 formed WACs, or just over 71 per cent.¹⁸

There were four major advantages to the use of party agents and local WACs to organize local propaganda. First, there was an issue of political expediency. Before the war, the Liberal and Conservative parties had established an increasingly comprehensive network of local agents, responsible for things like voter registration and the arrangement of local political meetings.¹⁹ Upon the outbreak of war, the parties had agreed a political truce, so the usual work of agents had ceased. Consequently, some enlisted, while others took on other war work, like recruiting or War Savings.²⁰ However, with the increasingly difficult manpower situation by 1917,²¹ it was probable that agents would be removed from their constituencies for work of national importance, either in the armed forces or elsewhere. By becoming a WAC secretary, party agents could assert that they were doing work of national importance locally and, therefore, remain in their place.²² The central party organizations could thus maintain their pre-war political networks reasonably undisturbed in readiness for future electoral work, a concern that remained central at least to the Conservative leader Andrew Bonar Law.²³ Such self-serving motivations did not automatically mean that the work undertaken by political agents was not valued by their local communities, however. The editor of the *Wakefield Advertiser and Gazette*, reflecting in August 1918 on the likelihood of a forthcoming election, noted, perhaps a little over-generously, that:

On the day that war was declared the political agents for Wakefield, Messrs. Mills and Craven, with a fine appreciation of the national interest, and the

¹⁸ These statistics are derived from a database constructed by the author, and available via David Monger, "The National War Aims Committee and British patriotism during the First World War," (PhD diss., King's College London, 2009). For much more detailed commentary on the statistics, including regional and social variations, see Monger, *Patriotism and propaganda*, ch. 3.

¹⁹ Kathryn Rix, "The Party Agent and English Electoral Culture, 1880–1906," PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2001.

²⁰ For discussion of political agents' enlistment, and of the range of other tasks of national importance some undertook, see, e.g., *Conservative Agents' Journal*, 46 (October 1917), p. 139; 47 (January 1918), p. 14.

²¹ See, e.g., Keith Grieves, *The Politics of Manpower, 1914–1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), ch. 7.

²² See, e.g., TNA:PRO T102/3, Capt. G.R. Donald to Thomas Cox, 31 July 1917, concerning the request of Coventry's Liberal agent, Karl Spencer, to be exempted from military service in recognition of his anticipated work with Coventry WAC.

²³ Nigel Keohane, *The Party of Patriotism: The Conservative Party and the First World War* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 61.

relative littleness of things appertaining to party politics, concluded an armistice, and in a joint letter to the Mayor tendered their services as organisers. The period since then... has been one of strenuous and successful effort on the part of both gentlemen... in the national interest. Many hundreds of recruiting meetings have been addressed, and Wakefield's proud record is largely due to their skilled and experienced work... The Organisation for Soldiers and Sailors' Comforts, the War Aim's [*sic*] Committee, and the Y.M.C.A., have also had the benefit of one or other or both gentlemen's devotion, and it must be confessed that both have deserved well of their fellows.²⁴

These remarks feed into the second benefit the NWAC obtained from its local organization. Prolonged periods in the same local community enabled agents to develop relationships with influential citizens. Their efforts in national campaigns like recruiting brought credit to their local community and, as such, helped to validate appeals to national support. Although they were acting in national and partisan interests they were also, to some extent, locals—somewhat familiar and welcome faces rather than complete strangers. The local expertise of these agents was crucial to NWAC campaigns. Agents who had been in their constituencies for a while knew the best places and times of day to hold meetings, and were familiar to proprietors of indoor places essential to winter work, making it easier for propagandists to operate locally. Third, agents had become increasingly professional before the war.²⁵ This meant the central committee could expect a relatively consistent standard of work in each constituency, and would not need to monitor local committees as closely as if they dealt with unfamiliar local figures. This may have been particularly important since the Committee's Treasury funding depended upon the provision of detailed estimates for each local campaign. The central committee was "not allowed to make grants without a previous estimate having been sent in for our approval."²⁶ Party agents knew what was expected and could ensure that work was not hindered by bureaucratic mistakes.

There was also, however, an ideological element to the establishment of local WACs. While the party agents performed the secretarial work, local committees were usually composed of between twelve and thirty local

²⁴ 'Notes and Comments', *Wakefield Advertiser and Gazette*, 13 August 1918, p. 2.

²⁵ Rix, "Party Agent", pp. 98–103.

²⁶ TNA:PRO T102/5, Sidney Vesey to Sir J.W. Greenwood (Stalybridge Conservative Association), 29 October 1917.

citizens,²⁷ often chaired by a prominent figure like the mayor. By leaving the organization of local propaganda events largely in the hands of representatives of the local community, the presence of the state was reduced. The central committee provided speakers when asked by local WACs; they did not just show up. Communities could therefore feel they were “self-mobilising”.²⁸ Instead of a feeling of subordinate manipulation by NWAC propaganda, communities were offered a sense of autonomous involvement. Furthermore, NWAC events usually included local figures, who would act as chairmen or offer a vote of thanks. A local inflection could thus be added to the more general comments of centrally-provided speakers, making the messages more resonant. The structure of NWAC meetings meant that, ideally, the novelty of an out-of-town speaker was combined with the reliability of someone familiar to local citizens.²⁹

Alongside this, propagandists often modified their speeches to local interests. In particular, they would often dwell on the achievements of a local regiment, even though, by 1917, these regiments were no longer drawn very extensively from the communities to which they were attached. In the rural market town of Malmesbury, in south-west England, a speaker said that civilians “knew what their own Wiltshire regiment had done”. He assured his audience that by reducing food consumption, civilians could save the lives of servicemen by reducing the need for naval protection of imported food, thus shortening the war by allowing the Navy to carry out other tasks.³⁰ Associating a locality with a regiment enabled propagandists to do two things. Praise for a regiment was reflected back onto civilians, who could feel proud that their military representatives were upholding their reputation. Moreover, it assisted efforts to tie civilian contributions with those of servicemen. By working harder and accepting unpleasant limitations on their normal lives, civilians could feel that they were part of a shared community of sacrifice with servicemen. At another Wiltshire meeting the same speaker, the barrister Bromhead Mathews, asserted that:

Economics had been practised and must still further be practised. They had greater sacrifices going on not far off, lives were being laid down... They must economise a little more, they must make sacrifices in such things as

²⁷ See, e.g., the report listing the 28 local citizens, unusually headed by the local MP, Sir Swire Smith, who formed Keighley’s WAC: “Local News. Keighley. Formation of a War Aims Committee For Keighley”, *Keighley News*, 11 August 1917, p. 6.

²⁸ Horne, “Remobilizing”, p. 195.

²⁹ For similar occurrences in different contexts, see Purseigle, “Beyond and Below”.

³⁰ “National War Aims Campaign. Meeting at Malmesbury”, *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard*, 3 November 1917, p. 2.

Tea and Sugar. Let them remember what the Wiltshire Regiment had already done and they were going to do more...³¹

It was reasonable to demand further civilian self-sacrifice because servicemen, ostensibly drawn from within the local community, were making far greater sacrifices.

Local pride could also be used by propagandists in other ways. Civilians were sometimes encouraged to view other localities as rivals. At Ipswich, in eastern England, referring to recent reports of strikes in the industrial West Midlands, the local Conservative MP, Captain F.J.C. Ganzoni, remarked that "in East Anglia, in Suffolk, and in Ipswich, they could look with gratitude on their record in the past. They had not been losing time in Ipswich as they had in Coventry."³² Local identity could be used as a means of praising civilians and encouraging them to feel that their particular community was superior to the rest of the nation. However, they were also reminded of wider loyalties. In rural Devon, in the south-west of England, speakers reminded audiences that, although there was no shortage of food locally, civilians should exercise restraint in consumption so that hungry civilians in industrial centres could be supported.³³

It could also be used as an exhortation to good conduct. Towns considered not to be living up to their obligations were incited to rid themselves of stains on their reputation. In Leicester, a centre of clothing production in the East Midlands, where the critic of the war and future Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald served as MP, the NWAC began an extended campaign in April 1918, after several months of inaction.³⁴ Between mid-April and the end of September, possibly inspired by the broader concerns raised for propagandists by Germany's offensive in late March,³⁵ 116 separate meetings were held—a number far higher than was usual for NWAC campaigns.³⁶ The mayor, Jonathan North, demanded that Leicester citizens demonstrate to MacDonald that his attitude towards the war did not represent local

³¹ 'War Aims Meeting. Autocracy Must be Smashed.', *North Wilts Guardian*, 2 November 1917, p. 2.

³² 'War Aims of the Allies', *East Anglian Daily Times*, 3 December, 1917, p. 6.

³³ "War Aims. Mr Lambert Addresses Okehampton Meeting.", *North Devon Herald*, 10 January 1918, p. 6.

³⁴ See the multiple complaints about inactivity by the Conservative MP for neighbouring Melton, C.E. Yate, in TNA:PRO HO45/10743/263275, nos. 300, 301, 304, 307 and 310.

³⁵ Horne, "Remobilizing", p. 210.

³⁶ Figures based on analysis of Speakers' Daily Reports for Leicester in TNA:PRO T102/16, 22–26.

sentiments. Speaking at the NWAC's first meeting in the town, North asserted that:

he demanded the right of exercising the functions of a patriot... He was sorry to say that in some quarters Leicester had a doubtful reputation. Some had called it the "Pacifists' Paradise."... Perhaps they had made a mistake in Leicester in not counteracting the insidious attacks of the Pacifists... Some people had an erroneous idea as to Leicester's loyalty. The fact that certain people were allowed to meet at Leicester entirely misrepresented the attitude of the vast majority of Leicester people on the war.³⁷

North's lamentation for Leicester's reputation demonstrates a concern for a dual identity where local pride required national recognition and patriotic national sentiment needed to be proved first at a local level. The implications of North's speech, and subsequent press commentary on MacDonald,³⁸ were that the preservation of *local* prestige was equally as important as national identity, and that MacDonald's criticism of national policy was a betrayal of the local community. Those hostile to "pacifists" (a catch-all description that encompassed critical voices of all kinds, rather than just those who opposed and rejected war in any situation) in Leicester apparently rejected any conception of MacDonald's actions as a continuation of forms of 'oppositional patriotism'—a moral defence of the nation from its governors—which had been an important part of patriotism at least since the eighteenth century and had been maintained more recently by the emergent Labour party, and by critics of the war since 1914.³⁹ Such opponents of dissent were not prepared to simply dissociate themselves from Leicester's perceived poor reputation and proclaim themselves patriotic Britons, regardless of their particular locality. Rather, they sought to rehabilitate the town's reputation by asserting the strength of local patriotic sentiments. Similar sentiments were expressed in other venues. For instance, in Keighley, West Yorkshire, a local Conservative councillor was at pains to explain that those Keighley men who had not enlisted before conscription had made their decision based on unavoidable commitments at home; "it was not that they "funked" or were disloyal... One thing that had struck him in his work at Keighley was the magnificent fellow-feeling

³⁷ "Our War Aims", *Leicester Daily Mercury*, 13 April 1918, p. 7.

³⁸ E.g., the editorial commentary of the *Leicester Daily Mercury*: "The War Aims Meeting", *Leicester Daily Mercury*, 13 April 1918, p. 4.

³⁹ Cunningham, "Language of patriotism"; J.H. Grainger, *Patriotisms: Britain, 1900–1939* (London, 1986), pp. 24–5; Paul Ward, *Red Flag and Union Jack: Englishness, Patriotism and the British Left, 1881–1924* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), esp. pp. 131–3.

which filled all hearts. (Applause.)”⁴⁰ A town’s national reputation ostensibly depended on the conduct of all citizens. “Unpatriotic” behaviour, had to be either explained and excused, as in Keighley, or “corrected”, as in Leicester.

In early May a significant disturbance occurred. On one side of the market square the Leicester Labour party’s annual May Day demonstration was to be addressed by MacDonald and Alderman George Banton, an experienced local councillor and prospective parliamentary candidate. Across the square, a rival meeting had been arranged by the Leicester WAC. MacDonald spoke briefly but found it difficult to be heard as the chairman of the NWAC meeting led his audience in loud renditions of the national anthem and ‘Rule Britannia’.⁴¹ As Banton stood to replace MacDonald, ‘preliminary raids’ began against their meeting, led in some cases by discharged soldiers, and policemen intervened to try to prevent them reaching the Labour platform. Banton, losing his temper, blamed North for inciting the violence and accused the raiders of being class traitors. A much larger rush succeeded in almost reaching the platform, its leaders intent upon placing a French flag there, presumably to remind the speakers of Britain’s debt to its allies. Fighting broke out in the crowd, prompting the police to intervene further, arresting at least three men. A man was taken to hospital with abdominal injuries after being crushed, while MacDonald left early under police protection. Following this, general public opinion became openly hostile to MacDonald. Although some correspondents objected to the intrusion on free speech represented by the crowd’s actions,⁴² several more wrote endorsing the actions, on the grounds that

⁴⁰ “Mr Will Thorne, M.P., on War Aims. Making Germany Pay. A Successful Keighley Meeting. Mr. J.W. Morkill’s Fine Tribute to Keighley.”, *Keighley News*, 15 December 1917, p. 5. For wider discussion of the difficulties for conscripted men of the ‘rigid’ connection between patriotism and voluntarism, see Ilana R. Bet-El, ‘Men and Soldiers: British Conscripts, Concept of Masculinity, and the Great War, *Borderlines: Genders and Identities in War and Peace, 1870–1930*, ed. Billie Melman (New York: Routledge, 1998).

⁴¹ The account presented here is composed from reports in the Leicester press. See “Labour and May Day. Disorderly Meeting in the Market Place,” *Leicester Daily Mercury*, 6 May 1918, p. 2; “Pandemonium. May Day Demonstration in Leicester Wrecked.”, *Leicester Daily Post*, 6 May 1918, pp. 1 and 4; “Pacifists Routed. Market Place Scenes. ‘Mac’ Escapes in Taxi. Ald. Banton Attacks Mayor.”, *The Leicester Mail*, 6 May 1918, p. 1; “May Day Demonstration,” *The Leicester Pioneer*, 10 May 1918, p. 7. For broader, though somewhat flawed, accounts of the significance of “patriotic” violence, see Brock Millman, *Managing Domestic Dissent in First World War Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); idem, ‘HMG and the War Against Dissent, 1914–1918’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40 (2005).

⁴² See, e.g., the letters of F.S. Rimington, “A Woman With a Vote”, and “Justice”, *Leicester Daily Mercury*, 8 May 1918, p. 6; 10 May 1918, p. 2; 14 May 1918, p. 3.

MacDonald had ceased to represent his constituents' views and had refused requests and demands to resign. Discharged serviceman Charles Nutting wrote that:

... I much regret that Mr. MacDonald should so persistently cling to views so strongly opposed to those of the great majority of the people he claims to represent, and I cannot but feel thankful that we in Leicester have made an attempt to demonstrate to the rest of England that we are not pacifists of the most objectionable variety because we allow our senior member to exercise the right of free speech.⁴³

For Nutting, as for North, it was not enough for individual citizens of Leicester to demonstrate patriotic conduct. Their local community as a whole had to be beyond reproach. The event received little attention outside Leicester,⁴⁴ whereas inside the town debate rumbled on for several weeks, suggesting the importance of such concerns for local citizens. Although there was little evidence of national/metropolitan concern about Leicester's conduct, this did not prevent locals from thinking and worrying about their national standing. Individuals both experienced and understood the nation in a local context, and understood their locality in a national one.

The appeal to demonstrate local patriotism by censuring MacDonald contributed to his heavy defeat by a "patriotic Labour" candidate for the National Democratic Party in the December election, despite twelve years' service as an MP.⁴⁵ North's call to rid the town of its reputation as a so-called 'Pacifist's Paradise' was probably as important as the NWAC's involvement in discrediting MacDonald. The NWAC's campaign effectively acted as a stimulus to local action, and their continuing presence perhaps helped to keep the issue alive in the public mind. Ministry of Labour reports noted that NWAC activities helped to reassure what the Ministry called 'the loyal majority' in difficult areas like Barrow and the Clyde river—heavy

⁴³ *Leicester Daily Mercury*, 8 May 1918, p. 6.

⁴⁴ 'May Day Meetings Fiasco', *The Times*, 6 May 1918, 5; 'Mr. MacDonald's May-Day Meeting', *The Times*, 16 May 1918, 3. For other examples, see, e.g. 'Mr. J.R. MacDonald, M.P. Meeting Broken Up.', *The Manchester Guardian*, 6 May 1918, 6; 'Leicester and Pacifism. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald Howled Down.', *The Morning Post*, 6 May 1918, 7; 'Mr. MacDonald's Escape.', *The Daily News*, 6 May 1918, 5. None of these examples contains more than the *Guardian's* 226 words.

⁴⁵ F.W.S. Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1918–1949* (revised ed., Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1977), p. 168. For varied accounts of the growth of "patriotic labour", see Roy Douglas, "The National Democratic Party and the British Workers' League," *Historical Journal* 15 (1972); J.O. Stubbs, "Lord Milner and Patriotic Labour, 1914–1918," *English Historical Review* 87 (1972); Millman, *Managing*; Ward, *Red Flag*.

industrial sites on the north-west coast of England and around the Scottish city, Glasgow.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, the public stance of so prominent and trusted a figure as North offered a clear lead to civilians. In condemning the events of May Day, the Leicester labour movement's newspaper, the *Pioneer* mocked the "open boasting of one of the speakers recently imported into the town",⁴⁷ implying that the views of an outsider were unwelcome and unrepresentative. Had speakers sought to provoke condemnation of MacDonald without local support, they might have risked alienating those who preferred not to be told what to do by strangers thrust into their midst.

Supranational Patriotism

The NWAC's focus on locality assisted its propaganda by making its messages more comprehensible and reliable. To paraphrase Joseph Roth, while civilians might not be able to comprehend the whole nation, 'something from the same part of the world' was something they could 'see and grasp'.⁴⁸ However, this was only one part of the NWAC's narrative of patriotic identity. Propagandists were also concerned to illustrate Britain's relationship with its empire and allies, particularly those which were considered to be equally as "civilized" as Britain itself. Discussion of the supranational element of British identity was not confined solely to similarities. Propagandists emphasized lessons which British civilians could learn from their French and US counterparts. The renunciation of strikes for the war's duration by US trade unionists was a pointed example to British workers of the "correct" attitude.⁴⁹ In Sheffield, the centre of the British steel industry in South Yorkshire and an area of industrial unrest, a US trade unionist attended a meeting at which the local union representative announced his members' objection to "the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, the suppression of free speech, profiteering, 'a corrupt Press, or, at least, a Government-controlled Press.'" In response, W.H. Shortt replied bluntly that if the same objections had been made in Germany, the critic would have been impris-

⁴⁶ TNA:PRO CAB24/35, GT2952, Ministry of Labour report, 12 December 1917; CAB24/42, GT3606, Ministry of Labour report, 13 February 1918.

⁴⁷ "The May Day Demonstration", *Leicester Pioneer*, 10 May 1918, p. 4.

⁴⁸ Joseph Roth, *The Emperor's Tomb* [1938], trans. John Hoare [1984] (London: Granta, 1999), p. 27.

⁴⁹ "Time to Do and Dare", *Reality* 140, 19 September 1918, p. 1. *Reality* was a weekly newspaper for civilians edited by the NWAC, containing clippings from other newspapers and significant new material from NWAC propagandists.

oned, before proceeding to outline US motivations for entering the war.⁵⁰ The USA also played a strong vindicating role in British propaganda. In particular, the President, Woodrow Wilson, was held up as a beacon of democratic principle. The USA's late entry into the war and Wilson's previous attempts to mediate between Britain and Germany were presented as impartial judgements on the justice of Britain's cause, and the iniquity of its enemies.⁵¹

While discussion of the USA and its President addressed its power, impartiality and supposed civil harmony, France was useful as a 'front-line' nation. The plight of French civilians near to the battle-zone was used to convince Britons that they should not complain too much about their own hardships. One MP, who had served in France for two years earlier in the war insisted that: 'The best that we can do... will not outrival the commonplace of French life I saw in wartime'.⁵² British civilians should therefore seek to emulate the uncomplaining toil of French peasant farming families, conscious that they worked in less difficult conditions than their French counterparts. Such arguments extended the idea of comparative sacrifice in another direction, away from the more common comparison with soldiers and the 'blood tax',⁵³ and towards other civilians in a harder situation than people in Britain, but without resorting to an emphasis on atrocities.⁵⁴ Though much atrocity propaganda still continued under the NWAC's direction, many other forms of persuasion were also deployed, partly because of a recognition that, as the former Labour MP and permanent secretary at the Ministry of Labour, David Shackleton, observed during the period immediately before the establishment of the NWAC, "not only has the significance of the German atrocities been to some extent forgotten, but

⁵⁰ "American's Plain Talk. No Sympathy with Sheffield Malcontents.", *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 16 May 1918, p. 2.

⁵¹ See, e.g., the speech of the nonconformist minister, P. Campbell Morgan, in Cheltenham (rural western England) and ex-Prime Minister Herbert Asquith's speech in Liverpool (industrial north-western England): "America's Part in the Great War.", *The Looker-On. A Social, Political and Fashionable Review for Cheltenham and County*, 6 April 1918, p. 4. "Picton Hall. Mr. Asquith & Unruly Women," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, 12 October 1917, p. 6.

⁵² Capt. D.D. Sheehan, MP, "The Homes of France. Their Glory and Their Grandeur", *Cornish Times War Supplement*, week ending 24 August 1918, p. 2

⁵³ John Horne, "L'impôt du sang": Republican Rhetoric and Industrial Warfare in France, 1914-18", *Social History*, 14:2 (1989); Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. ch. 4.

⁵⁴ On atrocities in British propaganda, see especially Nicoletta Gullace, "Sexual Violence and Family Honor: British Propaganda and International Law during the First World War," *American Historical Review* 102 (1997); Cate Haste, *Keep the Home Fires Burning: Propaganda in the First World War* (London: Allen Lane, 1977).

their very heinousness has been palliated by the blunting of susceptibilities due to their constant repetition.”⁵⁵ Thus, formulations that gave people other points of comparison with foreign civilians helped to refresh discussion.

If references to the USA and France performed a motivational function by demonstrating the hard work and difficult conditions endured by Britain’s allies, the British empire, and particularly its dominions, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, were used to demonstrate Britain’s worldwide standing and the justice of its cause. The participation of the empire was celebrated by propagandists as evidence of Britain’s benevolent rule, the gratitude and loyalty of its imperial subjects and the common principles and sacrifices of Britons from the British Isles or further afield. The Liberal MP T.J. Macnamara, at a meeting in the industrial city Wigan, in Lancashire, stressed the affinity between local and supranational servicemen. “For all your brave regiments, all the Empire over, we have the most profound admiration and respect. We know”, Macnamara continued, “how the sons of Lancashire have acquitted themselves”, a point he claimed particular pride in, given his father’s service in a Lancashire regiment. Macnamara stressed that the soldiers of Lancashire fought side by side with imperial troops, both mutually ennobling each other’s “great sacrifice” while implicitly reassuring his audience that their loved ones were part of a much larger and stronger collective effort.⁵⁶ Moreover, the empire demonstrated Britain’s moral superiority to its annexationist enemy, whose brutal treatment of the 1904 Herero uprising was repeatedly noted.⁵⁷ In a pamphlet unusual for its partial acknowledgement of Britain’s imperial injustices, the Congregationalist theologian, P.T. Forsyth, argued that Britain’s imperial conduct was still superior to Germany’s:

Even at the worst we were not out for militarist world-empire. And at the best we have been recognised as trustees of justice over the world, and apostles of constitutional liberty... We are trying to do belated justice to Ireland, hindered chiefly by the temper which produced the wars of religion in the seventeenth century. We have changed our treatment of peasantry and poverty everywhere. We have totally changed our attitude to India, which we hold for the Indians when they are ripe. We have given our fran-

⁵⁵ TNA:PRO CAB24/14, GT832: “Labour situation,” week ending 24 May 1917.

⁵⁶ ‘War Aims Meeting at Wigan.’, *Wigan Examiner*, 17 November 1917, p. 2.

⁵⁷ E.g. ‘The Kaiser as a Colonist. How “Kultur” was Practised in South-West Africa’, *Reality*, 140, 19 September 1918, p. 4; ‘The Kaiser as a Colonist’, *Reality*, 142, 8 October 1918, pp. 2-3; Frank Weston, D.D., Bishop of Zanzibar, *The Black Slaves of Prussia: An Open Letter Addressed to General Smuts* (London, 1918), p. 12.

chise and opened our Constitution to our foes the Boers of South Africa and made them valuable friends. We can win the peoples we conquer, and neither carries malice.⁵⁸

If Britain's imperial conduct was not perfect, Forsyth suggested, it was, nevertheless, vindicated by the participation of imperial servicemen, not least those from South Africa, a point regularly driven home by the prominent involvement of the South African War Cabinet member, and Boer War veteran, Jan Christiaan Smuts in NWAC propaganda. The Committee published a speech by Smuts from May 1917, in which he emphasised the special status of the Dominions:

We are not an Empire. Germany is an Empire, so was Rome, and so is India, but we are a system of nations, a community of states and of nations far greater than any empire which has ever existed...

These younger communities, the offspring of the Mother Country, or territories like that of my own people, which have been annexed after various vicissitudes of war—all these you want not to mould on any common pattern, but... to develop according to the principles of self-government and freedom and liberty.⁵⁹

For Smuts, as for other commentators, the involvement of the empire represented the surest demonstration that Britain's war was conducted in the service of civilization. Britain's empire, even those parts that had been recently fought over and "annexed", shared a commitment to key civilizational principles that made the war more than simply a question of the European power balance.

Civilizational Principles

Throughout its propaganda, the NWAC constantly referred to four key civilizational principles, for which it claimed the "great" allies were fighting. These were democracy, liberty, justice and honour. Propagandists attempted to show that the "civilized" nations held these principles in common, and acknowledged special associations between certain nations and principles. Wilsonian democracy, for instance, meant that the USA was commonly presented as a staunch defender of the democratic rights

⁵⁸ P.T. Forsyth, M.A., D.D., *The Root of a World-Commonwealth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918), p. 8.

⁵⁹ General Smuts, *The British Commonwealth of Nations: A Speech made by General Smuts On May 15th, 1917* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917), pp. 5-7.

of the world. One propagandist even went so far as to celebrate the US victory over Britain in its war of independence, since the 'American Colonists fought for English ideals while we fought against them'.⁶⁰ Similarly, France, with its familiar revolutionary motto – *Liberté! Égalité! Fraternité!*—was regularly associated with principles of liberty.⁶¹ However, propagandists also suggested that Britain had been primarily responsible for developing these principles, and that it was, therefore, *primus inter pares*. A speech by Wilson, comparing the actions of the US Revolutionary hero and President George Washington with the Barons who imposed Magna Carta on King John, was reprinted more than once.⁶² Wilson himself, the icon of democracy, was described as having 'blood in his veins of English stock'.⁶³

Honour was particularly heralded as a British virtue. Propagandists stressed Britain's debt of honour to defend Belgium. At a meeting in the rural south-western town Barnstaple (North Devon), a Liberal speaker asserted that over the last millennium Britain had 'built up a record for rectitude, honour and integrity'. This would have been lost forever if it had refused to help a nation it was treaty-bound to defend.⁶⁴ The publication of a private memorandum by the former German ambassador to London, Prince Lichnowsky, was extensively, if not subtly, used to demonstrate Britain's honourable conduct in 1914.⁶⁵ This was especially important in rebutting claims that Britain could have avoided war if the government had wished. Propagandists used the civilizational principles as a means to invalidate critical commentary by organizations like the Union of Democratic Control (UDC). By attempting to demonstrate British and allied moral rectitude, propagandists sought to 'counteract and... render nugatory

⁶⁰ "Thought-Reader" (E.W. Record), "A Letter from London," *North Devon Herald*, 18 July 1918, p. 3. Record was the deputy-editor of the NWAC's Publicity Department, as well as a senior figure in the Liberal Publications Department.

⁶¹ "France's Day. Ipswich Celebrations," *East Anglian Daily Times*, 13 July 1918, p. 5.

⁶² E.g. "What are the Conditions of Peace? President Wilson's Answer," *Reality* 130, 11 July 1918, p. 4; Woodrow Wilson, *Wilson's Message: The Conditions of Peace* (Message series 3, n.p. d. [1918]).

⁶³ Speech of Sir Mark Sykes, reported in "What Britain has Done," *Reality* 101, 18 December 1917, p. 4.

⁶⁴ Speech of Lt. J.T. Tudor Rees in "War Aims Campaign in North Devon. Meetings at Barnstaple," *North Devon Journal*, 1 November 1917, p. 2.

⁶⁵ E.g., C.A. McCurdy, MP, *Guilty! Prince Lichnowsky's Disclosures* (n.p. d., [1918]); *Germany Condemned by her own Ambassador* (Searchlight series, 18 [1918]).

the specious and insidious publications' supposedly put out by critical groups like the UDC.⁶⁶

These civilizational principles were not only used at the national or international level, however. Local discussion was also infused with them. At Evesham, a local vicar recalled the Battle of Evesham of 1265, at which Simon de Montfort's rebellion largely ended with his death. Rev. Dr. Walker labelled De Montfort 'the father of the English parliament, the champion of liberty' and Walker's rhetoric implied that this local event, seven hundred and fifty years previously, was partly responsible for Britain's current status, as what he assumed to be the foremost defender of liberty.⁶⁷ In this instance, therefore, not only was Britain responsible for spreading civilization to other parts of the world, but the people of Evesham themselves could take a part of the credit for this achievement. When they admired Wilson's moral leadership, therefore, the more imaginative and self-regarding could congratulate themselves that he had learnt his ethos from their medieval forebears.

Thus, NWAC propaganda identified patriotism and national identity at a range of levels from the local to the supranational. Its patriotic narrative was held together by a concerted interest in the idea of community. Concepts of community, developed particularly by Idealists like Sir Henry Jones (who spoke at several NWAC meetings) remained a strong feature of public discussion in pre-war Britain.⁶⁸ K.D.M. Snell suggests that "community" was "largely applicable to a bounded area within which almost everybody knew each other".⁶⁹ However, the representation of community within NWAC propaganda was a much more widespread one. Propagandists identified a number of interactive communities. Civilians and servicemen formed a community of service—British soldiers and sailors fought to protect their loved ones at home, who simultaneously worked to supply the material needed for this defence. Both supposedly acted willingly,

⁶⁶ TNA:PRO T102/16 "(Confidential) Aims of Home Publicity," n.d.

⁶⁷ "Evesham. Remembrance Day at Evesham," *Evesham Journal*, 10 August 1918, p. 6.

⁶⁸ On the development of the British Idealist interpretation of community, see esp. Sandra den Otter, "Thinking in Communities: Late Nineteenth-Century Liberals, Idealists, and the Retrieval of Community," in *An Age of Transition: British Politics 1880–1914*, ed. E.H.H. Green (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997); Jose Harris, "English Ideas about Community: Another Case of 'Made in Germany'?", *Aneignung und Abwehr: Interkultureller Transfer zwischen Deutschland und Großbritannien im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rudolf Muhs et al. (Bodenheim: Philo, 1998). Sir Henry Jones spoke at NWAC events on at least 22 days according to the NWAC's incomplete meetings register: TNA:PRO T102/17.

⁶⁹ K.D.M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 496.

recognising the great civilizational principles involved in the war. Within Britain, propagandists were careful to emphasize the national significance of local actions, as with the demand that rural Devonians eat less.⁷⁰ Moreover, Britain was part of a community of “civilized” nations, working together to maintain democracy, liberty, justice and honour. At all levels, NWAC propaganda posited a sense of what I have elsewhere called a “con-crescent community;” that is, a community growing together through shared wartime experience and acceptance of duty.⁷¹ In pre-war Britain, the Conservative speaker A.H. Coulter argued in a typical passage, “the country was engaged in petty strife” and had been racked with dissention and factionalism. Since the war’s outbreak, however, “people were full of selflessness, charity, brotherliness and self-sacrifice”, and society had consequently become more harmonious.⁷² Internationally, British rivalry with “great”, “civilized”, powers like France and the US was declared a thing of the past. France had changed from what Liberal writer E.W. Record called “our once sweet enemy” to “our truest and noblest friend”, and the mayor of the West Yorkshire wool and mining city, Wakefield, maintained to cheers that Britain and France should become after the war “as of one race and one nation”.⁷³

The NWAC’s rhetoric of a concrescent community suggested concrete links at all levels of community. In this, probably by coincidence, they echoed the suggestions of the Idealist sociologist R.M. MacIver, whose study, *Community*, first appeared in 1917. It is extremely unlikely that the small army of professional party speakers who made up the NWAC’s everyday speaking staff had pored over MacIver’s musings before striding out to declaim their messages to the public but, nonetheless, the broader patriotic narrative to which individual propagandists contributed demonstrated considered resemblance to his ideas about the multiple communities affecting individuals’ lives. MacIver asserted that:

The service of the larger community is to fulfil and not to destroy the smaller. Our life is realised within not one but many communities, circling us round, grade beyond grade. The near community demands intimate loyalties and personal relationships, the concrete traditions and memories of everyday

⁷⁰ See n. 33 above.

⁷¹ Monger, *Patriotism and propaganda*, esp. ch. 7; David Monger, “Soldiers, propaganda, and ideas of home and community in First World War Britain,” *Cultural and Social History*, 8 (2011).

⁷² “Evesham. Remembrance Day at Evesham,” *Evesham Journal*, 10 August 1918, p. 6.

⁷³ [Record], “A Letter from London,” *North Devon Herald*, 18 July 1918, p. 3; “France’s Day,” *Wakefield Express*, 13 July 1918, p. 7.

life. But where the near community is all community, its exclusiveness rests on ignorance and narrowness of thought... Here is the service of the wider community, not only a completer [*sic*] "civilisation," but also the freedom of a broader culture.⁷⁴

In encouraging aspirations for a better post-war society, NWAC propagandists addressed both a material and civilizational level. They suggested that, provided Britons maintained the harmonious cooperation of the war years, they could expect a better society in the post-war world.⁷⁵ Lloyd George, recalling the Edwardian obsession with national efficiency, asserted that Britain had to "take a more constant and a more intelligent interest in the health and fitness of its people... things that were tolerated before the war cannot be tolerated any longer". It was not only the case that the British public deserved the "reward" of improved living conditions—a fact that Nigel Keohane suggests even Conservatives were prepared to support—but it was a national imperative to ensure them, because it was impossible to "maintain an A1 Empire with a C3 population."⁷⁶ At the civilizational level, however, propagandists also promised that a League of Nations would ensure that such a war would henceforth be impossible.⁷⁷ Such a League was difficult neither to endorse nor establish, since the world already had convenient prototypes in the British imperial "community" of nations committed, as Smuts argued, to "self-government and freedom and liberty", not to mention the twenty-six nations that the Committee boasted had allied with Britain by May 1918. Both Lloyd George, in a speech at Manchester, and Lord Curzon in the House of Lords, described the empire as an existent League of Nations, while Lloyd George added the "Allied countries who are fighting the battle for international right" for good measure. Such estimable communities of nations could only be joined by an enemy like Germany once it had "repudiated" its "perfidy" and militarism.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ R.M. MacIver, *Community: A Sociological Study: Being an Attempt to Set out the Nature and Fundamental Laws of Social Life* [1917] (4th ed., London: Frank Cass, 1970), p. 260.

⁷⁵ See, e.g., the comments of H.F. Selley at Tooting: "War Aims' Meeting at Tooting," *Battersea Boro' News*, 26 October 1917, p. 2.

⁷⁶ *Lloyd George's Message: Looking Forward* (n.p. d. [1918]), pp. 9–11; Keohane, *Party of Patriotism*, pp. 191–92. On 'national efficiency', see, e.g., G.R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899–1914* (paperback ed., London: Ashfield Press, 1990).

⁷⁷ E.g. Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *The League of Nations* (London, [1918]); C.A. McCurdy, *Freedom's Call and Duty: Addresses Given at Central Hall, Westminster, May and June, 1918* (London: W.H. Smith & Son, n.d. [1918]).

⁷⁸ Smuts, *British Commonwealth*, pp. 5–7; For the NWAC's list of allied nations, and Lloyd George and Curzon's claims, see the Committee's handbook, *Aims and Effort of the War: Britain's Case After Four Years* (London: NWAC, 1918), pp. 52, 89, 84–85.

In embracing the concept of a League of Nations, NWAC propagandists were able not only to sprinkle their own perspectives with some more of Wilson's stardust, but also suggest Britain's leadership of such efforts, while undercutting another section of the UDC's dissent. The UDC claimed to have commended the League to Wilson in 1915, and it had been a central element of their demands for the post-war settlement ever since.⁷⁹ By throwing their support behind such an idea, therefore, propagandists suggested that the differences between critics of the war and everyone else were marginal. Even though such critics could question the sincerity of official faith in the concept, they were prevented from claiming that only their approach offered this solution to the world's troubles. NWAC endorsement of the League was rooted firmly in the multiple communities highlighted by propagandists. It behoved the local citizens of Britain to embrace their "civilized" supranational brethren in a close and lasting bond. A community of nations, committed to the defence of civilizational principles would ensure that another devastating war could not occur.

Conclusion

In NWAC propaganda, patriotism and national identity were not seen solely from a central perspective. Locality and supranational ties were equally as important to its evocation of patriotism as national symbols like parliament. One of the most effective propagandists at NWAC events was Smuts. Smuts, the imperial statesman who had fought against Britain during the Boer War, and who later coined the term "holism", successfully combined local, national and supranational issues in speeches at difficult places like the coal-mining district of Tonypandy in South Wales, and Sheffield, both centres of industrial unrest.⁸⁰ Smuts was clear that British identity extended from the locality to the whole world:

he appreciated very deeply the privilege of being in Sheffield and being able to address his fellow citizens of the Empire. (Hear, hear.)... The Lord Mayor [had months ago] assured him, and he had had the assurance repeated from many sides... that in Sheffield—in this part of Yorkshire, anyhow—the best

⁷⁹ Sally Harris, *Out of Control: British Foreign Policy and the Union of Democratic Control, 1914–1918* (Hull: University of Hull Press, 1996), pp. 124, 136–38.

⁸⁰ On the significance of Smuts' holism to his rhetoric, see Saul Dubow, "Smuts, the United Nations and the Rhetoric of Rights and Race," *Journal of Contemporary History* 43 (2008), pp. 59–60.

relations had continued to exist between the various sections of the industrial community...

every part of the nation had contributed their all to this great common cause and to the promotion of victory on our side... and they had done it all for the common cause and for their common mother—the nation, the empire, and the world.⁸¹

At least 117 local WACs celebrated France's Day on 12 July 1918 (the closest Friday to Bastille Day). In the rural constituency of Evesham, in western England, all schoolchildren sang the *Marseillaise*,⁸² an unthinkable prospect during Britain's previous Great War, when Linda Colley suggests that substantial elements of a British identity formed around the intense differentiation between Britain and France, informing the citizens of the British isles of their national commonalities instead of their local particularities.⁸³ The British identity propounded in 1917 and 1918 by NWAC propaganda did not seek to override local senses of belonging, which remained central to individual experience. Nor did it suggest any idea of "splendid isolation". Britain was supposedly at the forefront of civilization, and was part of a community of likeminded nations dedicated to ensuring its preservation. Britons continued to experience the nation through the everyday world of their locality in 1917–18. Within these localities, NWAC propagandists combined local, national and supranational influences in a representation of community both tangible and limitless. Britons, it was claimed, were local citizens of a nation at the centre of the civilized world.

⁸¹ "Prussianism Must Go. Message to Sheffield War Aims Meeting," *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 25 October 1917, pp. 5-6. See also "General Smuts at Tonypany," *Mid-Rhondda Gazette*, 3 November 1917, p. 1.

⁸² Statistics based on the NWAC's meetings register: TNA:PRO T102/17; 'France's Day', *Evesham Journal*, 13 July 1918, p. 8.

⁸³ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* ([1992] London: Pimlico, 2003).

CHAPTER TWO

PRESENTING THE WAR IN IRELAND, 1914–1918

Catriona Pennell

Introduction

Propaganda in conflict is best understood as a “spectacular advertising campaign”, its aim being to justify war.¹ This definition suggests elements of negotiation; if you are trying to sell a product (or event) then it has to be done in a way that the intended audience will respond. During the First World War, every combatant nation set up agencies to control the flow of information and to monitor and influence public opinion. They did not operate in a cultural or social vacuum.² As Jay Winter emphasises, “state-dominated does not mean state-directed.” While a degree of manipulation was always a feature, the most successful propaganda campaigns were those that maintained a “synergistic relationship” with popular opinion:

When common sense on the popular level diverged from state propaganda, the official message turned hollow or simply vanished. But when propaganda coincided with popular feeling, independently generated and independently sustained, then it had a real and profound force.³

The resilience of belligerent populations and armies during the First World War was testament to a shared, positive commitment to the war effort. This was achieved through negotiated persuasion and not, as some have argued, brain-washing.⁴ Propaganda and censorship were, of course, utilized to great effect during the war and Britain was no exception. But populations saw the war as they did not because of government control

¹ Jay Winter, “Propaganda and the Mobilization of Consent,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, ed. Hew Strachan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 216.

² Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain, 1939–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 14.

³ Winter, “Propaganda and the Mobilization of Consent,” 217.

⁴ For example see Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime: Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated Throughout the Nations During the Great War* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1928).

and manipulation but because that is how they wished to see it.⁵ European populations invested in the conflict through a process of popular consent not state-sponsored coercion.⁶

This chapter argues that negotiated persuasion is especially relevant to the case of Ireland between 1914 and 1918. The state that declared war on 4 August 1914 was the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and remained as such until Irish independence in December 1922. Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, managed by officials based in Dublin Castle, answerable to Westminster. This was no easy task; Ireland was both divided internally over Home Rule and a long-term source of turbulence for the British authorities.⁷ These tensions did not evaporate at the outbreak of war; instead they were magnified and weaved into the war dynamic itself. The British authorities needed to persuade the Irish, particularly nationalists who sought independence from British rule, to remain loyal and support the war effort. As a vital source of manpower, Irish men needed to be recruited to the army. At the same time, Ireland remained a potential source of civil unrest; a thorn in the side of the authorities whose focus and resources were now turning to the continent. Therefore, at the outbreak of war, the British faced a delicate balancing act in Ireland. Irish nationalists, rather than the loyal and conformist Ulster unionists, would need some persuading to support Britain's war effort. Resorting to force and coercion, such as that demonstrated on 26 July 1914 on Bachelors Walk, carried the risk of inciting civil war and therefore had to be a last option.⁸ The author-

⁵ Nicholas Hiley, "The News Media and British Propaganda, 1914-1918," in *Les Sociétés Européennes Et La Guerre De 1914-1918*, ed. Jean-Jacques Becker and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau (Nanterre: Université de Paris X, 1990), 177.

⁶ For more on the "consent" versus "coercion" debate, particularly in French historiography of the war, see Pierre Purseigle, "A Very French Debate: The 1914-1918 'War Culture'," *Journal of War and Culture Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008). See also Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *L'enfant De L'ennemi 1914-1918: Viol, Avortement, Infanticide Pendant La Grande Guerre* (Paris: Aubier Collection historique, 1995) 10.

⁷ Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800-2000* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003) 3. The major representative of nationalist opinion—those in favour of self-government—in Ireland in 1914 was the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) led by John Redmond. They were opposed by unionists who campaigned for the maintenance of a full constitutional and institutional relationship between Ireland and Great Britain. Although some unionists came from southern Ireland, the main concentration was in Ulster, home to three-quarters of all Protestants.

⁸ On 26 July 1914, a detachment of the King's Own Scottish Borderers fired on a crowd of Dublin civilians—suspected of being Irish Volunteer gun-runners—on Bachelor's Walk, killing four and wounding many others. This sparked outrage and threatened civil war in Ireland.

ities had to retain legitimacy in Ireland in order to underscore the legitimacy of their cause abroad. Propaganda was therefore central to this process of negotiated persuasion, which characterised the British authorities' approach to Ireland in the first two years of war and evolved as the war progressed. Most notably, this involved a period of 'remobilization' or 're-persuading' following the pivotal moment of revolution in the Easter of 1916.⁹ Although the situation became more complex in the period following the armed nationalist rebellion, the British authorities in Ireland still deemed propaganda—as persuasion—an effective method to continue 'selling' the war and its purpose to the Irish population in order to maintain their support.

Persuading the Irish, 1914–1915

Unlike the other continental armies, Britain, at the outbreak of war, had to rely on volunteerism rather than conscription to swell the ranks of its armed forces.¹⁰ In Ireland, as in Britain, the authorities sought to persuade men of Britain's moral crusade via the language and imagery of recruiting posters, pamphlets, speeches, recruitment drives, marching bands, Music Hall entertainment, cartoons, and newspaper editorials appealing for more recruits. At first, the War Office and the Irish command were responsible for recruiting in Ireland and, as such, the content of recruiting posters tended to be the same on both sides of the Irish Sea.¹¹ They mainly appealed to loyalty to the Empire and tended to be void of any Irish sentiment.¹² William King, in Galway, recalled the "big display of placards outside the RIC [Royal Irish Constabulary] barrack. They were mostly recruiting posters with headings such as 'Recruits Wanted' and 'Your King and Country Need You.'"¹³ Kevin O'Sheil, in Dublin, also recalled how Alfred Leete's

⁹ For more on remobilization, please see J. Horne, "Remobilizing for 'Total War': France and Britain, 1917–1918," in *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe During the First World War*, ed. J. Horne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁰ For more on this subject see R.J.Q. Adams and Philip P. Poirier, *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain, 1900–18* (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), John Gooch, "Attitudes to War in Late Victorian and Edwardian England," in *War and Society: A Yearbook of Military History*, ed. Brian Bond and Ian Roy (London: Croom Helm, 1977).

¹¹ Thomas P. Dooley, "Politics, Bands and Marketing: Army Recruitment in Waterford City, 1914–15," *The Irish Sword* 18 (1990–1992): 211.

¹² Mark Tierney, Paul Bowen, and David Fitzpatrick, "Recruiting Posters," in *Ireland and the First World War*, ed. David Fitzpatrick (Dublin: Trinity History Workshop, 1986), 47–58.

¹³ NA, Dublin: BMH Witness Statements: William King: WS 1,381 (1956)

famous Kitchener poster, first issued in September 1914, was pasted onto “nearly every dead wall in the city [with] Kitchener’s forbidding countenance pointing a huge forefinger at us.”¹⁴ Although Leete’s poster inspired some Irish men, this insensitivity to Irish opinion was seen as a hindrance by many. On his arrival to Cork in September 1914, Sir Francis Vane, a major in the 9th Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers, was surprised to see:

that the walls of that hot bed of Home Rule were plastered over by posters on which the Union Jack was displayed with the words underneath: ‘Come and fight for your flag.’ This seemed to me a particularly inadvisable way of obtaining recruits in a city which was markedly opposed to the political union between England and Ireland.¹⁵

However, it was soon appreciated that in order to be successful this “call to arms” had to tap into a suite of cultural and political prejudices of the day and domesticate the broader discourse of a “just war” to meet local needs specific to the Irish context.¹⁶ After consultation with the permanent recruiting officer in Cork, Vane had the British symbols “superposed, and the Irish Harp substituted with the same words: ‘Come and fight for your flag.’”¹⁷ Recruiting rhetoric was also made specific to Irish audiences. At a recruiting meeting in Collooney, County Sligo, in September 1914 the local priest, Reverend Father Doyle, urged the audience to contemplate what the consequences would be for Ireland if Germany won:

The Germans have cherished the ambition for the past thirty years of planting their surplus population on the fair fields of Ireland and of relegating the ancient Celts once more in the bogs and the mountains. The old age pension would disappear and land reform would cease because it would have no meaning.¹⁸

Tom Kettle, the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) MP who enlisted in 1914, urged men to help Belgium, “the latest and greatest of evicted tenants”

¹⁴ NA, Dublin: BMH Witness Statements: Kevin O’Sheil: WS 1,770 (n.d.)

¹⁵ Francis P.F. Vane, *Agin the Governments: Memories and Adventures of Sir Francis Fletcher Vane* (London: Samson, Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., 1929) 251. Cited in Tim Bowman, “The Irish Recruiting Campaign and Anti-Recruiting Campaigns, 1914–1918,” in *Propaganda: Political Rhetoric and Identity 1300–2000*, ed. Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), 229.

¹⁶ Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 15–16.

¹⁷ Vane, *Agin the Governments: Memories and Adventures of Sir Francis Fletcher Vane* 251. Cited in Bowman, “The Irish Recruiting Campaign and Anti-Recruiting Campaigns, 1914–1918,” 229.

¹⁸ Michael Farry, *Sligo 1914–1921: A Chronicle of a Conflict* (Trim: Killoran Press, 1992) 42.

referring to Irish nationalists' long struggle with the British for land reform.¹⁹ References were also made to the potential of invasion; an attack on the east of England could easily be transformed into an attack on the east of Ireland.

In April 1915, to reflect this sense of the specificity of Ireland, the Central Council for the Organisation of Recruiting in Ireland (CCORI) was established. Based in Dublin, it was a civilian organization; the honorary president was Ireland's Lord Lieutenant, while the council itself was under the chairmanship of the city's Lord Mayor. One of its first tasks was to encourage rural and urban district councils across the country to set up local recruiting committees. In addition it was to assist county recruiting committees to coordinate and develop recruiting drives and to establish a travelling recruiting officer who would focus on more remote places with no locally organized committee or at a distance from a railway station.²⁰ In October 1915, the Department of Recruiting in Ireland (DRI) was formed, which, like its predecessor was a Dublin-based body. Unfortunately, neither of these bodies had centralised records and the administrative records of the British army in Ireland did not survive the withdrawal from southern Ireland in 1922. It is therefore difficult to ascertain what market research went into British recruiting propaganda in Ireland or even how it was organized throughout the country.²¹

What has survived, however, is a comprehensive set of Irish recruitment posters held at Trinity College, Dublin. Its survival suggests that the poster was the principal means of mass communication for recruitment and became the locus for the recruiting campaign in Ireland.²² In Waterford, visual appeals to enlist were the central part of a wider campaign to "sell" the war to the Home Front. Posters "besieged" the city and localised appeals "of a convenient size for windows, noticeboards, and shopfronts" were displayed:

in every conceivable and conspicuous place. The posters were in great public demand and had been fixed to hoardings and dead walls throughout the city as well as on buildings belonging to many prominent citizens. Bills

¹⁹ J.B. Lyons, *The Enigma of Tom Kettle: Irish Patriot, Essayist, Poet, British Soldier 1880–1916* (Dublin: The Glendale Press, 1983) 273–74.

²⁰ Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance* 28.

²¹ Bowman, "The Irish Recruiting Campaign and Anti-Recruiting Campaigns, 1914–1918," 228.

²² Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance* 24–25.

bearing slogans such as 'Remember Belgium' were carried on the back panels of hackney cabs.²³

Whilst it is not known how many different posters were produced, the collection contains a wide-ranging sample of the types of visual and rhetorical devices used to persuade men in Ireland to enlist. Most of these were produced in 1915 when the recruitment drive was at its height.²⁴ Taken together, these posters provide a flavour of the way the war was presented in Ireland. As the war did not need to be domesticated for unionists, who saw themselves as British citizens, the content of the posters in Ireland were primarily to capture nationalist attention.²⁵

Techniques similar to those used in other belligerent countries were employed in Ireland. The size of the poster was adapted to suit the display location. Eye-catching colour was utilised more often than monotone, although single-coloured sheets were more common in 1918. Combinations that may have suggested a certain political loyalty such as red/blue (Britain) or orange/green (Sinn Féin) were avoided. Although in 1914 no poster referred to Ireland, the content and design of the posters became more Hibernicized as the war went on. Irish references were most generally included in the height of the recruitment appeal in 1915. Thus, green became increasingly favoured as the war went on. A variety of pictorial motifs were integrated into the posters. Figures of soldiers, usually identifiable as Irish, were most commonly used alongside conventional symbols such as shamrocks, harps, saints and wolfhounds. Overtly British symbols, like the Royal Arms or Crown, were rarely used.²⁶ Recognisable Irish landmarks were used subtly in the background, such as the Irish Houses of Parliament (now the Bank of Ireland) on College Green, Dublin and the early Christian monastic site in Glendalough, Co. Wicklow, whilst Irish landscapes in general terms—the pastoral idyll—were used more overtly as a land worth defending.²⁷

At their very core, the posters were appeals to Irishmen to enlist in the British army. General appeals were more common than calls to specific

²³ Dooley, "Politics, Bands and Marketing: Army Recruitment in Waterford City, 1914-15," 212.

²⁴ Seventy-five per cent of the 203 posters reflected some Irish content. The print runs for these posters range from 250 to 40,000, although one-third of the posters were issued in editions of 5,000. It is estimated that 2 million were produced in Ireland in total. Tierney, Bowen, and Fitzpatrick, "Recruiting Posters," 47-58.

²⁵ Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance* 53.

²⁶ Tierney, Bowen, and Fitzpatrick, "Recruiting Posters," 54-55.

²⁷ Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance* 40.

units; surprisingly the Irish divisions, whether 36th (Ulster), 16th (Irish) or 10th (Irish), were not referred to explicitly. Tim Bowman views this as one in a number of oversights on the part of the recruiting organisers.²⁸ Instead, several appeals were issued on behalf of the Irish Guards and the Royal Irish Regiment and, more commonly, for specialist personnel in the Army Service Corps and other Labour and Transport sections, as well as the air and sea services. Perhaps this was a strategy to make the appeal more realistic by offering the potential recruit a vision of what he might end up doing in the war. In a similarly reassuring and pragmatic manner, issues such as pay, conditions, and separation allowances, were also addressed in the appeal, almost like a job advertisement.

More consideration went into the way the appeal was made. Many posters embodied personal appeals from military men, politicians, and Catholic clergymen. But it was the thematic posters that were the most emotive. The themes were diverse, but images of women, sporting analogies and German atrocities predominated.²⁹ Lord Bryce's report upon alleged German atrocities, published in May 1915, became the basis for a number of posters attempting to arouse a sense of moral injustice and outrage amongst the Irish. "For the Glory of Ireland", produced by the CCORI in 1915, was clearly inspired by the destruction the German army was inflicting upon Belgium and integrated a number of key themes.

In an appeal to an Irish male of military age (but in civilian clothes), a sturdy, armed, yet effeminate Irish woman gestures knowingly towards a burning Belgium as a refugee family makes its way to the shore. A sense of Irishness is captured by traditional clothing and the shillelagh (wooden walking stick). The poster also appeals to traditional masculinity—will this scoundrel leave it to a woman to defend Ireland? Thus the poster is asking the individual recruit to do his duty. For his own honour, and that of his family and nation, he must defend Ireland and avenge the atrocities committed by the German army. With Belgium burning in the distance, there is an implicit warning that similar atrocities could happen on Irish soil. The use of Belgium is particularly effective in the Irish case; how could Ireland refuse to defend another small nation and one with whom they shared the bond of religion?

²⁸ Bowman, "The Irish Recruiting Campaign and Anti-Recruiting Campaigns, 1914–1918," 229.

²⁹ *Ibid.*



Figure 2.1. 'For the Glory of Ireland', Hely's Limited, Litho, Dublin 1915. Reproduction Number: LC-USZC4-11005 (color film copy transparency) / Call Number: POS – WWI – Gt Brit, no. 163 (C size) [P&P]. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C., bookmark: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003668400/>.

This poster clearly taps into something specifically Irish. At times this method could be rather crude: the use of green, leprechauns, and sham-rocks caricatured Ireland. But, on the whole, the techniques were powerful. Depictions of rural landscapes and homesteads reminded men of what was at stake if they did not fight. The use of Belgium was powerful evidence of the destruction that could be wrought on Ireland. Other tropes, such as women, family, and notions of duty and patriotism, were universal and not just used to target Irish audiences. Overall, the posters offer an insight into how the war was presented to those Irish men of military age—the most crucial section of Irish society in the eyes of the British authorities.

While Irish men volunteered for a number of reasons, it would appear that propaganda, during the first two years of war, played an important persuasive role. Almost 100,000 men enlisted from Ireland between August 1914 and February 1916.³⁰ The average daily enlistment rates for these eighteen months reveal more.³¹ The highest month in this period was September 1914 where around 650 men volunteered per day to the Irish command. This was before any coherent propaganda campaign could be initiated and is, instead, best explained by the general sense of urgency and anxiety associated with the outbreak of war.³² Daily averages per month then decline to around 250 men per day. Yet in April 1915, and again in October 1915, when the CCORI and DRI were created, daily averages increased to around 350 men per day. Excluding the return for September 1914, these were the two highest peaks in Irish daily recruitment figures for the entire war. The evidence suggests that major recruiting campaigns that were better organised, made effective use of public figures, and employed more sophisticated propaganda techniques containing an Irish focus, had a positive impact on recruitment levels in Ireland.³³ After the initial rush to the colours, more Irish men volunteered once the British authorities modified their propaganda campaign from a generic “one-size-fits-all” approach, to one directed at Irish men using Irish symbols. The evidence challenges the view held by Charles Townshend that “the Irish on the whole failed to swallow British propaganda. They did not accept that Britain’s war of rivalry with Germany was a conflict between civilization and barbarism...or even between democracy and authoritarian militarism.”³⁴ Rather, ideas and values encapsulated in the recruitment posters reflected, rather than dic-

³⁰ Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 7. See also Patrick Callan, “Recruiting for the British Army in Ireland During the First World War,” *The Irish Sword* 17, no. 66 (1987): 42–56.

³¹ David Fitzpatrick, “The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914–1918,” *The Historical Journal* 38, no. 4 (1995): 1020.

³² Recent research demonstrates that the vast majority of Britons were subdued and anxious at the opening of hostilities. See Adrian Gregory, “British ‘War Enthusiasm’ in 1914: A Reassessment,” in *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914–18*, ed. Gail Braybon (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003). Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: British and Irish Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³³ Fitzpatrick, “The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914–1918,” 1021. This argument is also confirmed in Thomas Dooley’s case-study of Waterford city. See Dooley, “Politics, Bands and Marketing: Army Recruitment in Waterford City, 1914–15,” 207.

³⁴ Charles Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983) 280.

tated, the belief held by the vast majority of the Irish public that this was a just war and that Britain, on this occasion, was fighting the good fight.³⁵

This argument is further strengthened when we consider the make-up of the recruits. Not all Irish men who volunteered were unionists, naturally affiliated to the British cause and thus predisposed to the British message. The example of Belfast illustrates the limited relationship between political affiliation and recruitment. Contemporary estimates calculated that out of a total of 16,808 Belfast army recruits, 3,880 (23.1 percent) were Catholic against 12,928 Protestants (76.9 percent). Considering that Belfast's population was made up of around 23.2 percent Catholic males, the Catholic representation in recruits was very healthy.³⁶ In September 1914 membership to the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) in Belfast stood at around 30,700 compared with around 3,250 in the National Volunteers.³⁷ Based on police records and figures published in the press, almost 9,000 men of the Belfast UVF and over 1,200 of the city's National Volunteer force had enlisted as voluntary recruits by mid-December 1914. Therefore whilst less than thirty percent of the pre-war Belfast UVF had enlisted, thirty-seven percent of the city's National Volunteers had also enlisted; hardly any difference between the two.³⁸ As Belfast was the most polarised city politically (in Ireland), similar levels of volunteering occurred on both sides. This trend of marginal difference continued; by January 1918, seventeen percent of Irish recruits were identified as National Volunteers compared to nineteen percent from the UVF.³⁹ The predominance of Ulster's manpower contribution to the war has tended to overshadow understandings of recruitment in Ireland during the First World War.⁴⁰ Yet, whilst the province undoubtedly contributed the most men it is wrong to assume they were all Protestant, unionist, and thus loyal to the Crown.⁴¹ Catholics, as

³⁵ Hew Strachan, *The First World War, Volume One: To Arms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 1115.

³⁶ *Irish News*, 13 January 1915

³⁷ Breandán Mac Giolla Choille, ed., *Intelligence Notes, 1913-1916* (Dublin: Chief Secretary's Office, 1966) 73-74.

³⁸ NLI: Redmond papers: MS 15,259 and Fitzpatrick, "The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914-1918," 1028.

³⁹ Callan, "Recruiting for the British Army in Ireland During the First World War," 52.

⁴⁰ Ulster easily "out-recruited" the other Irish provinces during the first months of the war and, although this disparity lessened as the war continued, the contrast between Ulster and the largely Catholic southern provinces endured. Fitzpatrick, "The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914-1918," 1018-20.

⁴¹ I acknowledge that religion alone does not necessarily indicate political affiliation but, used alongside other data, it is revealing in the Irish case.

well as Protestants, were more likely to enlist in industrialized Ulster than in the southern provinces. Beyond the industrial north, county returns for 1915 indicate that Catholics were more likely than Protestants to enlist in sixty-one percent of the country.⁴² Occupation, age and marital status affected recruitment to a much greater degree than political loyalty, or lack of it.⁴³ Whilst it is impossible to ascertain precisely why Irish men enlisted, it is clear that even those least likely to respond to the British propaganda campaign in Ireland—Irish nationalists—volunteered at very respectable levels.

However, not everyone could temporarily suspend their political beliefs and support the war. Redmond's September extension of Irish troop support beyond the defence of Ireland fractured the Volunteer movement, splitting it into two sections. The majority remained loyal to Redmond and formed the National Volunteers which contributed a steady stream of recruits to the British army. The minority, consisting of the more extreme members, broke away to form their own force, retaining the name of Irish Volunteers, led by Eoin MacNeill.⁴⁴ Although this number only made up around six percent of the pre-split Volunteers, many of the "deserters" were the most active members. In the long-term, these advanced nationalists would become the architects of a revolutionary conspiracy to which the whole concept of Home Rule was irrelevant.⁴⁵

From Volunteerism to Conscription, 1915–1916

On 24 April 1916, advanced nationalists mounted an insurrection, primarily in Dublin although with some actions in other parts of Ireland, with the aim of ending British rule in Ireland and establishing an Irish Republic. The Easter Rising, as it came to be known, was suppressed after seven days of fighting, where some 500 people—mostly civilians caught in the cross-fire—were killed. Its leaders were court-martialled and executed at the hands of the British authorities and a further 1,841 men and women were

⁴² Fitzpatrick, "The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914–1918," 1025.

⁴³ Pauline Codd, "Recruiting and Responses to the War in Wexford," in *Ireland and the First World War*, ed. David Fitzpatrick (Dublin: Trinity History Workshop, 1986), 18.

⁴⁴ Fergus Campbell, *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland, 1891–1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 196.

⁴⁵ For a detailed examination of advanced nationalist propaganda produced during the First World War see Ben Novick, *Conceiving Revolution: Irish Nationalist Propaganda During the First World War* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001).

imprisoned in internment camps in England and Wales.⁴⁶ Amongst the British authorities, concerns of legitimacy and persuasion were discarded in the chaos and panic of domestic armed insurrection in the midst of foreign war. Perhaps more importantly, however, the Rising itself stemmed from an awareness amongst advanced nationalists that Irish men were facing the same threat as British men; that the armed forces could no longer be replenished by volunteerism alone and that men would now be compelled to fight. Conscription was threatening to replace persuasion. This was an unpalatable situation for most Irish people who may have supported the British cause in the war, but were not willing to die for a country that refused them their rights as a sovereign nation.

According to Sean McEntee, an Irish Volunteer who fought in the Rising, the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) had decided at the outbreak of European war that an insurrection against British rule should be attempted in three eventualities: if a German army were to invade Ireland; if the war was coming to an end and a revolt had not already begun; or if England tried to enforce conscription in Ireland.⁴⁷ This latter eventuality is crucial to any understanding of Ireland and the war. The threat of imposing conscription in Ireland had been present since the outbreak of war. In October 1914, the Inspector General of the RIC recognised that membership of the Volunteers was “now steadily on the decline” because the members were emigrating through fear “of being called on for military service in the war.”⁴⁸ By December, Volunteer activity, amongst both Redmondites and advanced nationalists, had slumped to derisory levels in part because the threat of conscription dissuaded Volunteers from parading openly.⁴⁹ Although the Military Service Act, which introduced conscription in Britain in January 1916, excluded Ireland, the possibility of compulsory enlistment appeared to be creeping ever closer. This demonstrates the paradox in Irish nationalist support for the war; while most nationalists endorsed Redmond’s support for England’s war, they were not necessarily willing to fight in it. As the wave of volunteerism, that had characterised the opening twelve months of war, subsided the issue of conscription reared its ugly head more prominently driving a wedge between the government and the Irish people. It was a difficult enough pill for the English, especially liberals, to swallow.

⁴⁶ Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848* 308.

⁴⁷ Cited in Thomas Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland: World War One and Partition* (London: Routledge, 1998) 129.

⁴⁸ NA, Kew: CO 904/95, R.I.C. Inspector General report, October 1914.

⁴⁹ Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish Party: Provincial Ireland 1910–1916* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 214–15.

As the war machine rolled on, with no end in sight and fuelled by a visibly limited supply of manpower, the issue of conscription became of increasing concern in Ireland. The Irish public were not against the war, but the majority did not want to die for a country that was yet to grant them independence. Thus direct resistance to conscription became widespread around the same time that the Liberal government merged with the Unionist opposition to form a coalition administration in May 1915. The prospect of Home Rule—the one persuasive trump card the British had to play in Ireland—immediately became more remote.⁵⁰ As the threat of coerced, rather than negotiated, enlistment grew it produced significant reactions, such as the Rising, and anti-conscription activity continued to grow until the crisis point of March 1918.⁵¹

For the first two years of war, Britain had managed a relatively easy-going regime in Ireland that dealt with dissent in a restrained manner. From the outbreak of war, the authorities made use of the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) to aid intelligence operatives in Ireland and many of the regulations were used against internal political targets (as opposed to the external German threat).⁵² Although the police did not act entirely “at arms length”, operations had remained relatively unobtrusive. The authorities were undoubtedly following Redmondite advice not to make martyrs of the small group of dissidents. In addition, shutting down the advanced nationalist papers proved fruitless as they tended to reappear a few days later under different titles. More generally, prior to the Rising, dissent in Ireland was managed in similar ways to elsewhere in the United Kingdom. There was room for controlled dissent, as the example of labour dissidence in Glasgow showed. But this could only happen provided the broad population could be counted on to limit anti-war and especially anti-recruitment feeling. The evidence suggests that this was the case in Ireland throughout 1914 and 1915.

But the Rising instigated a distinct change in the way Britain managed Ireland. Within weeks the civil government had been superseded by the

⁵⁰ Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland: World War One and Partition* 106, 24.

⁵¹ Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848* 280. With the announcement of the coalition, John Dillon, deputy leader of the IPP and MP for East Mayo, described the state of public opinion in Ireland, in June 1915 as “very bad” and, in July 1915, worse than he had known it since 1900. Trinity College, Dublin Manuscripts (TCD, Mss): John Dillon Papers 6740, Dillon to O'Connor, 4 June and 4 July 1915.

⁵² Ben Novick, “Postal Censorship in Ireland, 1914–1916,” *Irish Historical Studies* 31, no. 123 (1999): 345.

military.⁵³ The regime was now oppressive and unrelenting. Martial law—a policy the British authorities had detested for over two centuries and viewed as admissible only in the most desperate of circumstances—was imposed immediately and extended indefinitely at the end of May. Around 50,000 British troops were stationed in Ireland to maintain order, depriving the British army of vital manpower in a time of war. All Dubliners were to be treated as potential suspects. The British Prime Minister H.H. Asquith ordered a clean-sweep of the entire Irish Executive and, to buy time for reconstruction, ordered a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the causes of the rebellion and a comprehensive review of the administrative system. Its report, published in late June, criticised the way the former administration had tolerated armed militias, concluding that “the main cause of the rebellion” was “that lawlessness was allowed to grow up unchecked” and that for several years Ireland had “been administered on the principle that it was safer and more expedient to leave law in abeyance if collision with any faction of the Irish people could thereby be avoided.”⁵⁴ For the first two years of war the British management of Ireland had allowed room for the expression of reasonable dissent and the continuation of pre-war political affiliations. Anyone deemed to be stepping over the mark tended to be managed spontaneously from the grass-roots rather than through a draconian use of official suppression. However, the Royal Commission believed it was this elasticity that was the very root of Britain’s problems in Ireland. Allowing militias to continue was “the negation of that cardinal rule of government which demands that the enforcement of law and the preservation of order should always be independent of political expediency.”⁵⁵

For a brief moment, the British authorities in Ireland appeared to remember the importance of keeping a population onside in a time of war. In an effort to restore faith in the British authorities amongst the Irish population, the question of Home Rule, which had been frozen for two years, was returned to the table. After his post-Rising visit to Ireland in early May 1916, H.H. Asquith gave the Minister for Munitions, David Lloyd George, the unenviable task of trying to work out an agreement with nationalists and unionists. Lloyd George managed to persuade Redmond and Edward Carson to accept a settlement based on the 1914 Act brought

⁵³ Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (London: Penguin, 2006) 281.

⁵⁴ Report of the Royal Commission on the 1916 Rebellion cited in *The Times*, 4 July 1916, p. 6

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

in as soon as possible, but with six counties of Ulster excluded and to be left under the control of a British Secretary of State. The IPP was under the impression that this exclusion would be temporary; when it was revealed in the House of Lords on 11 July that it would be permanent, the negotiations collapsed and were abandoned by the end of the month.⁵⁶

Thus it would appear that *any* coherent strategy of persuading the Irish public to support the war was abandoned so all energies could focus on restoring order in Ireland. One unexpected result of the Rising—a mini-victory for the advanced nationalists—was that it forced the British and pro-war Irish to cease any active forms of recruiting. Tours, meetings, marches—all forms of recruiting propaganda apart from posters were abandoned until April 1918. Thus advanced nationalists had an open field and made great strides in their anti-recruitment propaganda between the Easter Rising and the conscription crisis of March 1918.⁵⁷

The rough treatment Dubliners received at the hands of the British troops, who swarmed the city from 25 April onwards, resulted in turning those loyal, and the vast majority of those who, up to that point had been indifferent, into exasperated residents hostile to martial law and the regime that imposed it.⁵⁸ John Dillon had witnessed the Rising as it unfolded. His awareness of the public mood led him to try and diffuse the British response. The more the British fought back with violence, the more the Irish public's attitude towards the rebels moved from contempt to sympathy. The British government was "letting loose a river of blood" in Ireland that was going to be the death of any policy of collaboration.⁵⁹ This feeling was communicated across the Atlantic, where Irish-American opinion was being closely monitored in the aftermath of the Rising. In a letter to the British Ambassador in Washington, the Irish public were described as "suffering from an 'exasperated patience'" over the way Home Rule had been "dangled like a mouse before a cat...the large bulk of Irish opinion [remains] instinctively pro-ally, but has been rendered voiceless by events in Ireland."⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland: World War One and Partition* 145–51, Michael Laffan, *The Partition of Ireland, 1911–1925* (Dundalk: Dundalagan Press, 1983) 52–53.

⁵⁷ Novick, *Conceiving Revolution: Irish Nationalist Propaganda During the First World War* 25.

⁵⁸ Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848* 302–09.

⁵⁹ House of Commons Debates (Hansard), 11 May 1916, Vol 82, cc.940. (See <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1916/may/11/continuance-of-martial-law> last accessed 28 July 2011).

⁶⁰ NA, Kew: FO 115/2072: Foreign Office, Introductions Irish Nos. 1–20, Letter, 16 June 1916.

The threat of conscription, overshadowing Ireland since the outbreak of war but amplified in the wake of the 1916 Military Service Act, was a contributory factor to the Rising. The British government was demonstrably moving from a policy of persuasion to coercion as the reservoir of voluntary willingness dried up, as indicated by recruitment statistics.⁶¹ Before the Rising, the signs suggested that the British authorities were aware of the sensitivities of introducing conscription and, more generally, coercive methods in Ireland. However, owing to the outbreak of violent resistance in April, coercion was cemented as the only way to deal with Ireland.

But this evolution should not be viewed as unique to Ireland. As mentioned, it is important to keep events in Ireland within the context of global war rather than restricted to a national framework. Nineteen-sixteen was a crucial year for Britain: within the first four months the Gallipoli campaign had ended in disaster; France, its closest ally, was bogged down in the “mincing machine” that was Verdun; and Major-General Townshend’s troops were besieged by the Ottomans at Kut Al-Amara. The British public, in response to a war that was inflicting defeats, disasters, and mass casualties, was showing signs of fatigue. At precisely the same time that the rebellion was taking place in Ireland, the British “Stop-the-War” Committee, made up of, amongst others, members of the No-Conscription Fellowship and the Union of Democratic Control, was planning a demonstration in Trafalgar Square calling for an immediate and negotiated end to the war.⁶² Populations across Europe were beginning to become disenchanted and demoralised with the war and 1916 was the year that the other belligerents succumbed to the “restructuring and reorientation required by total war.”⁶³ In the British case, after two gruelling years, including an attempted insurrection by a minority of advanced nationalists in Ireland, it was evident that a drastic rethink was required. How did the British authorities attempt to reinvest Irish support in the war for the final two years?

⁶¹ See Callan, “Recruiting for the British Army in Ireland During the First World War.” It is worth noting that although Ireland’s recruitment levels were lower than other parts of the United Kingdom, they were not dramatically different. Irish recruitment fell off dramatically after February 1916, but in almost exactly the same proportions as in England, Scotland and Wales. Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* 6.

⁶² NA, Kew: TS 27/39: British “Stop the War” Committee proposed public meeting in Trafalgar Square on Sunday 23 April 1916.

⁶³ Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848* 278.

Remobilization, 1917–1918

If 'self-mobilization' marked the first phase of the war, the corrosive effects of a long war, soaring casualties and receding prospects of victory combined to force belligerent states in the second half of the war to adopt a more directly interventionist role. This was not a simple matter of altering the balance between coercion and persuasion in favour of the former. Political legitimacy remained central to the process of national mobilization.⁶⁴

In Ireland, the spring of 1918 appears, in the framework of consent versus coercion, to be something of a paradox. The British authorities attempted to remobilize the disengaged Irish with a confused mixture of top-down compulsion and bottom-up remobilization. It is the former experience that has remained prominent in popular memory.

In March 1918, the "long damp squid" of the Irish Convention, convened in July 1917 with the aim of resuscitating the Liberal programme of 1912, was brought to an end, not by advanced nationalists, unionists or the British government, but by the German army.⁶⁵ Operation Michael began on 21 March and saw the Germans smash through the allied lines in northern France. In the ensuing chaos, the British government focused on manpower supplies to the battlefield.⁶⁶ All eyes looked to Ireland. In this new emergency it was felt that now, more than ever, Irishmen needed to endure the same sacrifice of conscription imposed on British men since 1916.⁶⁷ Conscription was to be extended to Ireland via a new Military Service Bill, accompanied by a new Home Rule Bill.⁶⁸ In effect, coercion was being mitigated by a new attempt at political legitimacy. Although certain individuals, such as the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord French, favoured the use of force to implement conscription in Ireland, the government, as a whole, understood that there was no room for brute force in the atmosphere of 1918; compulsion had to be partnered with legitimacy.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ John Horne, "Introduction: Mobilizing for 'Total War', 1914–1918," in *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe During the First World War*, ed. John Horne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 7.

⁶⁵ Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848* 314.

⁶⁶ In 1917, the British army had lost about 800,000 men. The number of recruits necessary for 1918 was estimated at 900,000, of which number, only 750,000 could be found. Jérôme aan De Wiel, "The 'Hay Plan': An Account of Anglo-French Recruitment Efforts in Ireland, August 1918," *The Irish Sword* 21, no. 86 (1999): 434.

⁶⁷ Laffan, *The Partition of Ireland, 1911–1925* 57.

⁶⁸ Alan J. Ward, "Lloyd George and the 1918 Conscription Crisis," *The Historical Journal* 17, no. 1 (1974): 114.

⁶⁹ French was of the opinion that the RAF should, if necessary, frighten the Irish "with either bombs or machine guns", in order to force them to accept conscription. Cited in De

In reality, however, Lloyd George's plans alienated both unionists and nationalists. The former felt betrayed; despite their loyalty, Home Rule was no longer being suspended for the duration of the war. Carson also warned that conscripting nationalists—likely to be anti-British and the instigators of disturbances amongst the ranks—would undermine the integrity of the British army as a fighting force. He had a point; those Irishmen supportive of the war and attracted by the army had already volunteered. On 18 April a Sinn Féin-inspired pledge pronounced that nationalists of all shades would “solemnly...resist conscription by the most effective means at our disposal.”⁷⁰ The IPP, Sinn Féin and the clergy were united in their opposition to conscription.⁷¹ With the Germans advancing towards Paris, the British could not risk another rebellion in Ireland and, by May, conscription was quietly discarded.

Instead, Irishmen were once again to be persuaded, not compelled, to enlist. On 18 May, Lord French made a proclamation, asking the Irish people to enlist freely in the army. He wanted 50,000 new recruits by 1 October 1918. Although French did not get the support of the Catholic Church that he desperately needed, and thus only recruited about 8,000 Irishmen by the end of July, this does indicate that the British authorities were aware of the importance of persuading, rather than compelling, men to join the army, using arguments based on political legitimacy and war aims that resonated with the Irish. Within the maelstrom of the 1918 conscription crisis there was a genuine effort to remobilize Irish opinion using domestic propaganda, similar to the efforts instigated across the rest of Britain and France in 1917–1918.⁷² Representatives in Ireland, in liaison with colleagues in Britain, attempted to counteract war weariness and disengagement through persuasion, emphasising that the war was being fought (and thus should continue to be fought until final victory) for a range of aims worthy of Irish sacrifice.

In August 1917, the National War Aims Committee (NWAC) was launched in London, its aim to “strengthen morale and consolidate the national war aims as outlined by the executive government and endorsed

Wiel, “The ‘Hay Plan’: An Account of Anglo-French Recruitment Efforts in Ireland, August 1918,” 436.

⁷⁰ Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986) 555–60.

⁷¹ Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland: World War One and Partition* 220–26.

⁷² For more on these case-studies see the relevant chapters in John Horne, ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe During the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

by the great majority of the people.”⁷³ This was the organization through which the British government sought to reach and persuade the nation. Its structures were rooted in the pre-war party system and constituency organisations were the key to providing the structure and expertise “for the broader domestic propaganda offensive.” Although the state acted as the “guiding hand”, local action was conducted through local committees who disseminated national literature, organized meetings, and also initiated house-to-house publicity. Mass audiences were reached using new technologies, especially film where even the intermission was filled with inspiring talks.⁷⁴

Ireland was not excluded from the NWAC’s operations, although it did not receive the same focus as England, Wales and Scotland.⁷⁵ In April 1918, the NWAC made links with the newly established Irish Recruiting Council (IRC) and acted, for the remainder of the war, in a consultancy capacity. The IRC, based in Dublin, was a recruiting organization run by a group of elected civilian officials. These were members of the IPP who had served in the war, such as Stephen Gwynn, A.M. Sullivan, Maurice Dockrell, and Henry McLaughlin.⁷⁶ On 4 April the IRC was granted assistance from the NWAC’s Publicity Department and sent approved leaflets and pamphlets.⁷⁷ For the remainder of the war, the IRC received assistance from the NWAC, including visits and support from NWAC officials, in reviving the propaganda effort in Ireland.

Indicative of the changing nature of propaganda dissemination by the end of the war, the majority of communication between the NWAC and Dublin concerned the issue of “cinemotor” tours. The cinemotor was a lorry, equipped with a generator and projector. As audiences in Britain were no longer willing to pay to see official war films at the cinema, the films could now be brought to the audience. The “cinemotor” would set up in a town or village, the 25-foot screen would be erected, and a free film

⁷³ NA, Kew: T 102/16: NWAC Minutes and Reports 1917–1918, undated memorandum.

⁷⁴ John Horne, “Remobilizing for ‘Total War’: France and Britain, 1917–1918,” in *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe During the First World War*, ed. John Horne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 201, 06–07.

⁷⁵ The archives of the NWAC are in NA, Kew: T 102/1–26. Scotland was covered by two committees, one for the East and the other for the West, the two combining to form a Scottish Central Committee. See NA, Kew: INF 1/317: Ministry of Information: Home Publicity during 1914–1918 War: Memorandum on Organisation (1939).

⁷⁶ Novick, *Conceiving Revolution: Irish Nationalist Propaganda During the First World War* 25.

⁷⁷ NA, Kew: T 102/16: NWAC Minutes and Reports 1917–1918: Minutes of meeting, 4 April 1918

show would be presented to anyone who chose to come. Two major tours took place in England, Scotland and Wales, between April and May, and again in September and October.⁷⁸ Ireland was part of a third tour. Two “cinemotors” were employed in the country to undertake two consecutive tours, covering counties north and south of Dublin. Starting in mid-September, the final showing was planned for Myshall, County Carlow on 12 December 1918. Over the course of two months the machines would have played to over 100 audiences.⁷⁹

No evidence has survived to indicate what official films were shown across Ireland in the last three months of the war. But it is highly likely that film No. 212 “With the North and South Irish at the Front” was on the programme. Around thirty-two minutes long, this was a compilation film made from footage taken between 1915 and 1917, ultimately released in 1918. The film opens with shots of members of the 36th (Ulster) Division posing, smiling, and waving for the camera. Similar scenes follow of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, some of whom triumphantly hold items—a German “pickle” helmet—secured in battle. The film is an understated attempt at presenting the war to Ireland. It is not trying to enlist sympathy for the British cause or the Irish soldiers on display. It merely “provides evidence for the fact that the British Army on the Western Front contained a number of organized formations made up exclusively of Irishmen.”⁸⁰ However, the implicit messages in this film are strong. Clearly, the war is going well and the public, particularly the Irish, should see soldiering in a positive light. More importantly, it is telling audiences in Ireland that Irishmen from the north and south are fighting together against a common enemy. The film is displaying unity amongst Irish soldiers in their support for Britain in the war effort.

It is difficult to establish how many people actually viewed the “cinemotor” films. During the first two tours, individual attendances ranged from 350 to 15,000 people and the average attendance for one week of a tour was 163,000, significantly less than the millions that had been reached in the original strategy of commercial exhibition.⁸¹ The numbers are likely to have been lower in Ireland owing to the sense of detachment from anything

⁷⁸ Nicholas Reeves, “Film Propaganda and Its Audience: The Example of Britain’s Official Films During the First World War,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 18 (1983): 474.

⁷⁹ NA, Kew: T 102/6: NWAC Correspondence ‘I’.

⁸⁰ Roger Smither, ed., *Imperial War Museum Film Catalogue: Volume 1, the First World War Archive* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 1993) 77.

⁸¹ Nicholas Reeves, *The Power of Film Propaganda: Myth or Reality?* (London: Continuum, 1999) 29.

“British” and “official”. But those involved in the Irish tour remained upbeat about the progress being made. On 13 September 1918, a member of the NWAC team in Dublin reported back to London. Despite being delayed by the harvest and a lack of qualified staff, he believed that “we are making considerable progress here, considering all things...the propaganda side is getting well under way, and patience, I hope, will reward the efforts of all those who have done the spade work in this direction.” However, he also observed how the presence of the British military in Ireland was unhelpful to the propaganda effort: “as we passed through Clare, the other day, we noticed that a large number of people put out their tongues at our car as it passed, this because we had a driver in khaki.”⁸²

The idea of removing the British army from the Irish recruiting campaign was considered as part of the “Hay Plan”, an Anglo-French strategy initiated in late July 1918. Stuart Hay, a British captain working under the leadership of Lord Northcliffe, the English press baron, was ordered to set up a plan to persuade Irish nationalists, in large numbers, to join the French army by invoking traditional Franco-Irish friendship and a promise of French support of Irish independence at the end of the war. It was believed that advanced nationalists were more likely to come to the aid of a fellow Catholic nation and thus serve the allied cause without being subservient to their colonial masters. However, within a month, the idea fell flat owing to political rivalries and a fear amongst some in Westminster that an Ireland, supported by France and the United States at the peace conference, would be too powerful.⁸³

Conclusion

In 1918, in an effort to sustain Irish support for the war, the British authorities initiated a confused strategy that contained elements of persuasion and compulsion. As John Horne has argued, remobilization in 1917–1918 was not simply a matter of replacing the former with the latter. It was a question of balance.⁸⁴ In Ireland, once the chaos of the Rising had subsided, coercion was restricted, at least in practice if not in rhetoric. Those in power, on the whole, appreciated that their legitimacy would be under

⁸² NA, Kew: NATS 1/251: Irish Recruiting Council: Letter to Major P. Lloyd Greame, 13 September 1918

⁸³ De Wiel, “The ‘Hay Plan’: An Account of Anglo-French Recruitment Efforts in Ireland, August 1918,” 439–42.

⁸⁴ Horne, “Remobilizing for ‘Total War’: France and Britain, 1917–1918,” 198.

threat if coercion dominated. Although the conscription crisis has since dominated views of Ireland in 1918, there was also a vigorous propaganda campaign underway in these final months. This consisted of posters, pamphlets, visiting speakers, and the NWAC-assisted "cinemotor" tours. Taken together, they suggest "that the official perception of Ireland in the last year of the War was less pessimistic than might seem appropriate with respect to a people united in their opposition to Conscription and...to the British connection."⁸⁵ In some respects, the campaign paid off; recruiting rates in Ireland rose tremendously in the last three months of the war. Between August and November 1918, 9,845 men joined up, compared to 5,812 in the preceding six months.⁸⁶ More men joined up during this short three-and-a-half month period than had done so during February-August 1916.⁸⁷ In part, this was because many were joining the Royal Air Force and the Tank Corps which had both decreed that they would train recruits in mechanical engineering and maintenance, skills that would be valuable once the war was over.⁸⁸ It may also have been due to the threat of conscription. But significant weight must be placed on the role played by propaganda and the degree to which it tapped into popular beliefs and concerns.

Although many historians suggest that, psychologically, Ireland's war ended on 23 April 1916, an examination of the types of methods used by the British government to sustain voluntary enlistment in Ireland indicates that they believed that the Irish could be persuaded and that war propaganda was an effective way to achieve this. Furthermore, methods of persuasion were effective at different moments in the war—1914–1915 and 1918 in particular—as they contained a message that resonated with the target audience, regardless of their political loyalties. Over the course of the war, over 140,000 Irishmen volunteered to serve in the British army. Even after the Rising, the British were still able to obtain a large number of recruits from Ireland via negotiated persuasion rather than compulsion. Between 15 March and 15 June 1916, 6,000 men volunteered from Ireland; fifty six percent of whom did so after the Rising. This revival was particularly marked in Dublin, and among Catholics.⁸⁹ In addition, many more Irish

⁸⁵ Tierney, Bowen, and Fitzpatrick, "Recruiting Posters," 56.

⁸⁶ Patrick Callan, "Voluntary Recruitment for the British Army in Ireland During the First World War" (Ph.D., University College, Dublin, 1984) 42.

⁸⁷ Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* 8.

⁸⁸ Novick, *Conceiving Revolution: Irish Nationalist Propaganda During the First World War* 25.

⁸⁹ Fitzpatrick, "The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914–1918," 1021.

civilians made valuable contributions to the war effort in terms of the economy and charitable work. Propaganda played a part in this. These people were responding, and were responsive, to messages regarding the legitimacy of the Britain's position in the war. They believed the war was worth fighting and that, despite their increasing animosities towards British rule, Germany needed defeating. Those volunteers numbered "well over a hundred times the number of the rebels who fought against Britain in Easter Week; the volunteers who died in the Flanders trenches represented Irish national opinion more accurately than did the Volunteers who died in the general post office or Kilmainham jail."⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Laffan, *The Partition of Ireland, 1911–1925* 58.

CHAPTER THREE

“FIGHT THE HUNS WITH FOOD”: MOBILIZING CANADIAN CIVILIANS FOR THE FOOD WAR EFFORT DURING THE GREAT WAR, 1914–1918

Mourad Djebabla

Introduction

Before 1914 the British relied heavily on imports for food. This economic reality in peacetime, that became a real Achilles' heel in case of conflict, resulted from the 19th century industrial revolution in which, to the disadvantage of agriculture, industrial development in Great Britain favored manufacturing and tertiary activities. Consequently, basic foodstuffs such as wheat, bacon, sugar and cheese were imported to feed a population that now included a majority of city dwellers. Before the war, in terms of calories, two-thirds of the food consumed in the British Isles came from abroad.¹ In the face of this reality, the merchant navy, control of the seas, and trade with the colonies were *vital* for feeding Britain. The German Admiral von Breusing, aware of this reality, maintained during the 1912 annual congress of the Pan-Germanic League that in case of conflict with Britain, Germany's first objective, in order to defeat her, would be to intercept its supply of foodstuffs.² The First World War caused both sides to apply this policy.

As soon as war began, in August 1914, France and Great Britain opted for a blockade of German ports in the North Sea and of Austro-Hungarian ports in the Adriatic. The aim was to intercept all cargoes capable of contributing to maintaining the enemy's war effort. From 1915 the list of war contraband articles was widened, so that from 1916 it included all commodities.³ It was in the face of this situation that in 1915–1918 the German military authorities reacted by using submarine warfare.⁴ On February 18,

¹ L. Margaret Barnett, *British Food Policy during the First World War* (London and Boston, USA: Allen and Unwin, 1985), 2-3.

² *Ibid.*, 15.

³ Louis Guichard, *Histoire du blocus naval (1914–1918)* (Paris, Payot, 1929), 29.

⁴ Von Tirpitz, *Memoirs* (2 vols., London, Hurst & Blackett, 1919, reprinted New York, NMS Press 1970), 400.

1915 the Germans declared the waters around the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland to be a war zone.

Until the end of 1916, British food imports still reached 90% of prewar levels. That was the result of a first phase of attacks by German submarines, leading to many incidents that caused the death of American civilians; the most important of these was the torpedoing of the liner *Lusitania* in May 1915. This forced Germany to relax its pressure on allied ships, in order to foster American neutrality.⁵ On the German side, however, the winter of 1916–1917 was particularly difficult because of the tightening of the allied blockade, which led the authorities to launch all-out submarine warfare from 1 February 1917. Germany hoped for a quick finish to Great Britain before the anticipated entry of the United States following that decision, by reducing Great Britain to famine in six months, cutting it off from all supplies by sea.⁶ In April 1917, when the greatest number of ships were sunk, the south-west approaches to the Irish coasts had become “the cemetery of British ships”.⁷ The torpedoing of Allied boats extended to the coasts of North America.⁸

Nevertheless, German calculations proved wrong in predicting Britain’s complete strangulation. The German admiralty’s mistake was to underestimate Great Britain’s ability to respond to that threat by setting up a system of convoys in the summer of 1917,⁹ and in turning to Canada. The shipping route between continental North America and Europe was indeed the shortest: transport was less lengthy by comparison with other parts of the empire (such as Australia or India), making it less costly and more likely to arrive safely. Being a dominion of the British Empire, Canada was by its colonial status *de facto* included in the London’s conflict on August 4, 1914. That colonial reality did not prevent it from becoming actively involved in the imperial war effort by responding to Great Britain’s military, economic and food needs. Already before 1914, Canada was a source of supply for the British market by providing outlets for British goods and investments, and

⁵ Jacques Droz, *Histoire diplomatique de 1648 à 1919* (Paris: Dalloz, 1959, 3rd ed. 1982), 546–547.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 548.

⁷ Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis, 1911–1918* (London: Odhams Press, 1938; reprinted New York: Free Press, 2005), 744.

⁸ Martin Gilbert, *The Routledge Atlas of the First World War* (London and New York, Routledge, 1970, 32008).

⁹ This convoy system was reintroduced in 1939–1945 in the Battle of the Atlantic.

also sources of supply for raw materials and agricultural products.¹⁰ During the second half of the 19th century, with the industrial revolution and colonization of the Canadian West, Canadian agriculture developed, enabling agricultural production to increase to feed the ever-growing number of city-dwellers, while surpluses were exported to Britain.¹¹ The main link between the dominion and its metropolis was agrarian; it was symbolized by the "présents" that Canada and each province gave in August and September 1914. On 6 August 1914 the Canadian government gave London a million bags of wheat.¹² The following month, the provinces in their turn sent produce from their land for His Majesty's civilians and soldiers.¹³

The First World War put Canada in the front line as a supplier of Great Britain. The Canadian government made food production a major theme to integrate Canadians into the war effort. This appeared first, as early as 1915, in the mobilization of farmers by the federal government, encouraging them to increase production so that Canada could export as much agricultural produce as possible. Such direction was by no means exceptional; it corresponded to decisions made by the belligerent states to supervise those kinds of national production, such as munitions and foodstuffs, considered vital for the conduct of the war. Producing as much as possible involved each farmer in a national agricultural war effort, the impact of which was however supranational, supporting the arms of fighters overseas. It was the all-out submarine warfare in 1917 that marked a turning-point for Canadian consumers, on whose food economizing would depend the ability of producers to meet the needs of Allied civilians and soldiers. The war influenced Canadian society in many ways, but it was the food question that showed Canadians most clearly the consequences of the conflict, by removing from their tables the provisions demanded in Europe. The ineffective explanation of policy led to the reorganization of food production management and the introduction of a propaganda campaign supporting Canadian food policy.

From the historian's point of view, the development of socioeconomic history in the 1970s and '80s has enabled them to present qualitative and quantitative studies of the economic impact of the First World War, par-

¹⁰ David Dupont, *Une brève histoire de l'agriculture au Québec. De la conquête du sol à la mondialisation* (Québec: FIDES, 2009), 39.

¹¹ Joanne Barker Stacey, "Save Today What Our Allies Need Tomorrow': Food Regulation in Canada during the First World War" (M.A. diss., Carleton University, 2003), 36–38.

¹² Henry Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs*, vol. 1 (London and Toronto: Macmillan, 1938), 457.

¹³ "Les cadeaux des provinces," *Le Peuple*, 18 September 1914.

ticularly in the belligerents' production and imports. For example Gerd Hardach's book *The First World War, 1914–1918* reveals the power of the states in organizing the war economy around the production and exchange of foodstuffs.¹⁴ For Canadian agriculture, the book by John Herd Thompson is a standard reference that describes the economic impact of the first world conflict on the Canadian Prairies, particularly for the production of wheat.¹⁵ On the regulation of consumption in Canada by the federal authorities, one should mention Joanne Barker Stacey's dissertation: "Save Today What Our Allies Need Tomorrow': Food Regulation in Canada during the First World War".¹⁶ Until now this research is the only comprehensive study on the work of Canada Food Control (1917–1918), followed by the Canada Food Board (1918–1919). Yet there has not yet been a study of the discourse used to mobilize Canadians for the food war effort. This chapter will consider Canadian propaganda through the lens of food policy.

Men of an age to wear uniform were encouraged to join the battalions, and the rest of the population was called to play its part in providing food. We shall enquire how, in 1914–1918, the need for foodstuffs for Great Britain and the Allies was presented to Canadian society with a view to obtaining its contribution. The case of Canada is all the more interesting since, in 1914–1917, the federal government left to each unit the initiative in recruiting battalions of volunteers,¹⁷ whereas for food, it developed its own official propaganda, distributed from one ocean to the other. It wished in this way to find means of reaching all Canadian producers and consumers as part of the food war effort that Canada should pursue by producing more (propaganda directed to the country areas) and by economizing supplies intended for export (propaganda for the urban centers). With produce we touch upon the total war effort, the feeding habits of all Canadians bent to the needs of the conflict. Everyone, whatever their gender, age or social status, had to be mobilized if Canada was to respond adequately to the needs of Great Britain and the Allies. It remains to be seen how the propaganda developed in 1914–1918, to organize society at war and tend towards its mobilization, was used to answer this question.

¹⁴ Gerd Hardach, *The Harvests of War. The First World War, 1914–1918* (London: Allen Lane, 1977).

¹⁵ John Herd Thompson, *The Harvests of War. The Prairie West, 1914–1918* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978).

¹⁶ Joanne Barker Stacey, "Save Today What Our Allies Need Tomorrow'. Food Regulation in Canada during the First World War." (M.A. diss., University of Ottawa, 2003).

¹⁷ See for example: Paul Maroney, "The Great War Adventure': The Context and Ideology of Recruiting in Ontario, 1914–1917," *Canadian Historical Review* 77.1 (1996), 62–98.

Production and economy were the watch words of Canadian food propaganda, the final aim of which was to meet the needs of the metropolis abroad (and not to a situation of food shortage in Canada). A specific public was therefore targeted, according to whether it was a question of producing more or eating less. Around the question of foodstuffs, the purpose of the present study is to identify the official bodies responsible for regulating the town and country population, and also to identify the means used to spread propaganda aimed at winning the cooperation of civilians in Canada's food war effort.

Federal Institutions for Regulating the Population

During the period 1914–1918, economic and patriotic activities of civilians on the home front were presented as a contribution to victory, just like the sacrifice of front-line soldiers. For states involved in the hostilities, this role reserved for the civilian population reflected the fact that the First World War was the first contemporary conflict described as "total". No longer the army alone, but the whole nation was at war.¹⁸ For the question of food, the Canadian political authorities turned first to the rural areas.

When hostilities began, it was harvest time, so the Canadian military and political authorities could not influence productivity. In contrast, from the autumn of 1914, when thoughts were turning toward future harvests, farmers were urged to greater efforts to increase production in 1915. When it seemed that the war could not be decided quickly, the Canadian rural press noted that, since Europe had mobilized its men to fight, the Allies would turn largely to Canada and the United States for food supplies. So farmers felt an imperious duty weighing on their shoulders: that of producing as much as possible to enable the fighters to hold out.¹⁹

As early as late 1914 and early 1915, the Canadian Minister of Agriculture, following the example of his British counterpart,²⁰ launched the "Patriotism and Production" campaign. It was renewed in 1916 ("Patriotism and Thrift"), 1917 ("Cultivation") and 1918 ("Greater Production"). From 1915 to 1918, through these national campaigns, the Minister called on farmers to increase production of things necessary abroad: to increase areas devoted

¹⁸ Edward M. Earle, *Les Maîtres de la stratégie: de la fin du XIXe à Hitler*, vol. II (Paris: Beger-Levrault, 198), 2, 42.

¹⁹ "The World's Corn Supplies," *The Northern Advance*, 15 October 1914.

²⁰ Thomas Hudson Middleton, *Food Production in War* (Oxford and London: Clarendon Press, 1923).

to growing cereals and to increase the rearing of beef, dairy cows and pork. This was the first official propaganda campaign conducted by the federal authorities. The Minister of Agriculture saw it as a means of regulating, informing and mobilizing producers.

For the political authorities it was a matter of encouraging producers to continue meeting the country's own needs while producing more to fill the constantly growing food requirements of Great Britain and the Allies. From 1914, profit was an incentive for farmers, but the federal government directed this agricultural mobilization, the main objective of which was to rationalize the Canadian food war effort by preventing competition from turning Canadian farmers away from markets and essential production related to the conflict and indispensable for the metropolis—even if the prices offered were unattractive for the producers. *Patriotism* and *mercantilism* were the two choices that the farmers tried to link: patriotism, to show their support for the allied cause, and mercantilism, reflecting their personal interests. The whole strategy of the Canadian government was therefore to exploit those two approaches in order to enroll farmers in the agricultural war effort. To this end, the federal political authorities decided very early to inform agricultural producers of the needs of the British and the Allies, and also to regulate their agricultural practices in order to maximize yield by distributing advice and aid in obtaining seed and workers.

In 1917, as German submarine attacks intensified, all the ships sent to the ocean depths took with them war materials and food. That was why, from that year on, the food situation of the Allies, Great Britain in particular, was very critical by comparison with previous years. For example, during 1917, 46,000 tonnes of meat was lost, and from February to June 1917, 85,000 tonnes of sugar. All these losses had an impact on the reserves available to the British authorities for their population.²¹ In 1917–1918, those losses led to a severe food shortage in Great Britain, to which Ruth Armstrong, an English child during the Great War, bears witness:

It was a terrible time, terrible. We were starving. I can remember my mother going out and picking dandelion leaves and washing them and making sandwiches with them. It tasted like lettuce. I don't know how my mother managed. It was nothing to see her sitting at the table with an empty place. "Mummy, you're not eating?" "I'm not hungry," she'd say. Whatever she had was for my brother and myself.²²

²¹ Richard van Emden and Steve Humphries, *All Quiet on the Home Front. An Oral History of Life in Britain during the First World War* (London: Headline, 2003), 190.

²² *Ibid.*, 191.

As in Germany, so in English towns, queues formed in front of grocery stores. In February 1918 an average of 1.3 million women in London were waiting in line, a number later considerably reduced by the issue of ration cards.²³ In that difficult setting the idea of a world famine appeared from 1917 in the Canadian press. Whether to fight famine or to sustain the Empire and the Allies, food became a weapon that farmers alone were able to supply in order to work for victory.²⁴ In the face of all-out submarine warfare, each Canadian was thus obliged to play his or her part. The first food policies were directed at producers, but consumers were also targeted in their turn.

After the British and the Americans,²⁵ Canada created, on 16 June 1917, a Canada Food Controller. Setting up this office reflected the new direction of the Canadian war effort which, in order to mobilize all its resources, increased centralization of its actions. 1917 was the year of more direct action by the federal government to improve management of the war economy. This followed the example of what had been done in Great Britain since December 1916 under the Lloyd George government. In autumn 1917, the Canadian Prime Minister Robert Borden also formed a Union Government, so that all efforts of Canadians, whether in conscription, the production of munitions, or food, should be directed only to maintaining the war effort. The creation of the post of Food Controller reflected the Allies' critical situation, but it was also a reaction to the increasingly apparent limitations of Canadian resources after three years of conflict. These limitations involved labor indispensable for arms factories and agricultural production, in the light of the controversial introduction of conscription in the summer of 1917.

On 21 June 1917, the post of Canada Food Controller was given to William J. Hanna, a conservative politician from Ontario. This appointment marked the government's recognition that it was time to use legislation to change, control and reorient the population's eating habits in view of the Allies' needs. This development showed that the Canadian government understood that the old peacetime non-interventionist methods could no longer be an adequate response.

²³ William H. Beveridge, *British Food Control* (London, Oxford University Press, 1928), 206.

²⁴ "Farmers Awake to Great Need," *The Globe*, 1 May 1917.

²⁵ In December 1916 Great Britain established a Food Controller to manage civilian food supply and to control their consumption practices. In the United States, from the time of its entry into the war, government entrusted to Herbert Hoover in April 1917 the U.S. Food Administration.

William J. Hanna identified the foodstuffs to keep for the British and the Allies as the “3 Bs”: *Bread, Bacon, Beef*. These items were at the heart of his efforts to convince Canadians to economize them by turning to substitutes. The Food Controller acted in cooperation with the federal and provincial ministers and his British and allied counterparts. He also counted on the mobilization of local leaders, associations and institutions, such as schools. The Food Controller’s powers related to both the distribution and consumption of food.²⁶ In his 1918 report, Hanna recalled the special influence of Great Britain and the United States in guiding his actions, which were without precedent.²⁷ But the closest cooperation of the Canada Food Controller was with the American neighbor. The United States’ food war effort was indeed similar to that of Canada, since the mobilization of North American consumers was not concerned with a national food shortage, as in Great Britain, but aimed rather at feeding the European allies by reserving foodstuffs for them, while still responding to the needs of the home market.

On 11 July 1917 the Canada Food Controller issued a press release officially informing Canadians of his aims; his action would concentrate on the vital need to provide food for the British and the Allies.²⁸ In his policy statement, contrary to what Canadians expected, there was no question of controlling food prices, even if he had the power to do so.²⁹ During the Great War, and contrary to Great Britain, the Canadian government never chose to control prices, leaving the market to regulate itself; the only thing that mattered was the mobilization of consumers in response to the needs of the food war effort. This provoked many popular recriminations against William J. Hanna.

In fact, in 1917, what Canadians mainly expected from him was price control.³⁰ This was also how they had understood the creation of a Food Controller.³¹ That expectation was related to the inflation that affected most countries in 1914–1918.³² The Allies saw prices doubling on average

²⁶ “M. W.J. Hanna Contrôleur des vivres,” *Le Devoir*, 20 June 1917.

²⁷ *Report of the Food Controller* (HMSO, 1918), 12.

²⁸ “Consumption of Wheat, Beef and Bacon in Canada Must Be Reduced by One-Third,” *The Morning Leader*, 12 July 1917.

²⁹ J. Castell Hopkins, *Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1917*, (Toronto, 1918), 364.

³⁰ For example: “Control of Food Prices Must Be Far-reaching and drastic,” *The Morning Leader*, 12 July 1917.

³¹ “Les explications du Contrôleur des vivres,” *Le Patriote de l’Ouest*, 3 October 1917.

³² Douglas McCalla, “The Economic Impact of the Great War,” in *Canada and the First World War*, ed. David MacKenzie (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2005), 145.

during the war, but in Germany they went out of control because of the blockade and the military authorities' failure to feed their soldiers without starving the civilians.³³ In Canada, there had been inflation from 1913,³⁴ but with the hostilities it reached record levels, making itself felt from 1915. This was the result of several factors: food exports competing with home demands; lack of labor to maintain agricultural production; and inflation affecting the farmers themselves.³⁵ From 1915 to 1920 the cost of living in Canada increased by 71.7%, the rise being felt particularly in the towns, the main area of consumption, affecting first the poorest working classes.³⁶

This inflation meant that including Canadian civilians in food economy, in the name of supranational imperatives, did not in any way reflect their concerns about the "high cost of living". But Hanna's position was that one should not discourage producers by interfering with their profits, at a time when the agricultural war effort demanded constant increases in production, something applauded by the rural press.³⁷ So Hanna was caught between two fires: the campaign against him by organizations of women, workers, consumers, and city newspapers pressing for price control, and farmers opposed to any action of that kind, so as not to be defrauded of their profits.³⁸ Hanna failed to persuasively present the rationale behind the government's policy

Very soon after Hanna's appointment criticisms arose. They became incessant from autumn 1917, when it appeared that he would not act on prices. In the towns the main complaint was that Hanna only took account of the Allies' needs, not those of the Canadians: "Nothing for us, everything for the other side,"³⁹ as the president of the Montreal Chamber of Commerce expressed it laconically in September 1917. Consequently, the action of the Food Controller was devalued in the eyes of the Canadian public. In this context, Hanna had to justify his choices. He declared that there could be a misunderstanding between Canadians and the aims of his office, or between consumers' priorities to fight inflation, and his priorities

³³ Frédéric Rousseau, *La Grande Guerre en tant qu'expérience sociale* (Paris: Ellipses, 2006), 91–92.

³⁴ J. Castell Hopkins, *Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1917* (Toronto, 1918), 439–440.

³⁵ "War Causes Great Rise in Prices," *The Montreal Daily Star*, 16 September 1916.

³⁶ Caroline Roy, "La Ligue des Ménagères de Québec, 1917–1924" (M.A. diss., University of Montreal, 1995), 13–14.

³⁷ "Well Said, Mr. Hanna," *Farm and Dairy*, 4 October 1917.

³⁸ "Back up Mr. Hanna," *Farm and Dairy*, 25 October 1917.

³⁹ "Un violent reproche que l'on adresse à M. Hanna," *La Presse*, 18 September 1917.

of supporting the Allies. He published his point of view throughout the Canadian press on 26 September 1917, stating that price increases were caused by the imbalance between supply and demand, accentuated by British and allied demand. He stated that the only cure was to act on supply by increasing production (so justifying the support to be given to farmers), while also emphasizing that his first responsibility was to respond to needs abroad.⁴⁰

Outside support came to his defense. In October 1917, visiting Canada en route for a mission to the United States, Lord Northcliffe, a British press magnate who was running the British Ministry of War, gave a speech at the Montreal Canadian Club. He supported Hanna's work, reminding his audience that the Food Controller had to attend to food economy, despite the wishes of consumers who expected him to control prices.⁴¹ Lord Northcliffe emphasized that there was still much work to be done in Canada. In particular he stated that he had not seen such strict control as in Great Britain. In this way he blamed Canadians for being insufficiently aware of the state of war.⁴² On 2 April 1918, the British newspaper *The Times* also noted that much remained to be done to convince Canadians of the need to reduce their consumption.⁴³ That British point of view shows how Canadians understood the vision of food control very differently from people in Great Britain.

For the British, food control meant managing access to food, something made problematical by the submarine war. By contrast, the question that concerned Canadian consumers was not the lack of food, since Canada was self-sufficient, but the difficulty of buying food because of galloping inflation. In the face of growing criticisms, and consumers' failure to understand his responsibilities, Hanna resigned on 24 January 1918. In his final report to Robert Borden, he deplored the fact that the population held him responsible for their ills, which were the result of inflation.⁴⁴ Hanna's failure to successfully articulate his position in a persuasive manner would cause a reorganization of the oversight for food production and the creation of a propaganda effort to support government policy.

⁴⁰ "Pourquoi la vie est si chère," *Le Soleil*, 26 September 1917.

⁴¹ "Shall Canadians Retrench or Shall Soldiers at Front Go On Shorter Rations?," *The Montreal Daily Star*, 9 October 1917; "Northcliffe a parlé ...," *Le Devoir*, 10 October 1917.

⁴² "More Production and Economy are Greatly Needed," *The Montreal Daily Star*, 8 October 1917; "Must Produce More, Eat Less," *The Globe*, 9 October 1917.

⁴³ "Eager Cooperation in the War," *The Times*, 2 April 1918.

⁴⁴ *Report of the Food Controller*, 6-7.

So on 11 February 1918, the Canadian Food Controller was replaced by the Canada Food Board. The Food Commissioner would in future report to the federal Ministry of Agriculture. This decision enabled action among farmers to be coordinated with those among city dwellers calling for economy and help in food production. In the context of conscription, which tore Canada apart in 1917–1918,⁴⁵ one of the first tasks of the Food Commission was to find labor for agriculture by mobilizing city-dwellers and young men by setting up "Soldiers of the Soil".⁴⁶ With the enemy released from the Eastern Front after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the most difficult task for 1918 was to mobilize the entire civilian population for economy and food production, as a contribution to defeating the enemy.⁴⁷

Henry B. Thomson was put in charge of the Food Commission. He was an influential businessman from British Columbia who had assisted Hanna and represented him in Washington and New York, where he was responsible for studying the American system of food administration.⁴⁸ His appointment may be understood as expressing the intention to continue and reinforce Canadian cooperation with the United States in the food war effort. The growing needs of the Allies in 1918 led the Food Commissioner to extend his action from the "3 Bs" to fats and sugar. He also worked to increase exports of butter, cheese, pig fat, bacon, beef, canned meat, ham, pork, and canned milk and cream.⁴⁹ These were the products that consumers were to economize more.

Thomson used the press to state his policy for increasing food production in 1918.⁵⁰ The development of licenses to control the profits of storekeepers and wholesalers, following the American example, partly succeeded in calming consumers' sense of being duped. Even though in 1918 the European allies, in particular the French and the British, were led to introduce ration cards, as in the United States, the Food Commissioner refused to do so, preferring to count on the cooperation of the consumers.⁵¹

⁴⁵ On tensions between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians over conscription in 1917–1918, see: Elizabeth H. Armstrong, *The Crisis of Quebec, 1914–1918* (New York: Columbia University Press 1937; Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974).

⁴⁶ "Commission de contrôle," *Le Devoir*, 11 February 1918.

⁴⁷ "What Does it Mean to You?," *Food Bulletin* no. 15, 4 May 1918.

⁴⁸ "Hon. W.J. Hanna Leaves Post of Food Controller," *The Montreal Daily Star*, 25 January 1918.

⁴⁹ G.E. Britnell and V.C. Fowke, *Canadian Agriculture in War and Peace, 1935–1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962), 42.

⁵⁰ "M. Thomson au peuple canadien," *La Presse*, 30 January 1918.

⁵¹ Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You. World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 96.

Rationing was deemed impracticable in Canada because of its size and the costs that rationing would have entailed.⁵² Thomson did not however exclude the possibility of having recourse to it if the war were to be prolonged.⁵³ Thus with this approach focusing on cooperation, everything depended on convincing Canadians; in order to do this, it was necessary to develop official propaganda.

The Means of Organizing the Canadian Population

By definition, propaganda is an effort to persuade. The interest of recourse to propaganda is to lead the target public to adopt the aims for which it has been set in motion.⁵⁴ But to lead the public, the propaganda must speak to people in a fashion that appeals to them. Effective propaganda is a kind of negotiation where the propagandist appeals to the subject's values or interests to direct the subject to the propagandist's ends. In Canada, before the creation in November 1917 of the Department of Public Information, propaganda remained dependent on private initiatives.⁵⁵ In 1914–1917, in order to raise battalions of volunteers, the federal government had left the initiative to each unit and to patriotic associations.⁵⁶ By contrast, in agricultural matters, the government developed for the first time the distribution of official propaganda throughout the country. This enabled all the Canadian campaigns to be united in a single effort. By this means, the Federal Minister of Agriculture intended to organize, inform and mobilize the producers.

To reach the farmers, the press, particularly the rural press, was chosen to distribute inserts from the Minister of Agriculture. For the first time in its history, beyond regional and cultural, Canada's farming community was united from the Atlantic to the Pacific around a single national objective. Both in English and French, in eastern and western Canada, farmers were mobilized following the same approach: to support the Allies and Great Britain by sending them as much food as possible. The government inserts

⁵² "Rationnement volontaire," *L'Événement*, 17 July 1918. "Rationing is Not Practical for Canada," *The Morning Leader*, 5 February 1918.

⁵³ "Le rationnement est impossible," *Le Devoir*, 5 February 1918.

⁵⁴ Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Newbury Park, London: Sage, 1986; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications 1999), 15.

⁵⁵ Jérôme Coutard, "Des valeurs en guerre. Presse, propagande et culture de guerre au Québec, 1914–1918" (PhD diss., Université Laval (Quebec), 1999), 164.

⁵⁶ See for example Paul Maroney, "The Great War Adventure: the Context and Ideology of Recruiting in Ontario, 1914–1917," *Canadian Historical Review* 77.1 (1996), 62–98.

were distributed in 300 newspapers throughout the country.⁵⁷ At the beginning of the 20th century the press remained the main carrier of information. It was by this means that the federal Minister of Agriculture mobilized his "troops", rather than leaving it to local initiatives which might not have the necessary overall view of the situation.

Various approaches were proposed for the agricultural war effort. These included imperial fidelity: "The Call of the Empire to the Farmers of Canada."⁵⁸ In the national distribution of propaganda inserts, we do not find any attempt to adjust the language to the targeted public. In 1914–1916, the call of Empire was replaced, for example in propaganda for the recruitment of volunteers distributed in Quebec, by the call of France, or of the "blood" of the French-speaking ancestors of French Canadians.⁵⁹ On the contrary, the 1917 government propaganda for agriculture applied imperial solidarity to all Canadian farmers, whether English-speaking or French-speaking. For the federal government it was first and foremost the needs of Great Britain which dominated, because of the special bond between Canada and its metropolis. But interventions by local leaders, especially for French Canadians, allowed the relationship to the food war effort to be individualized, negotiated to meet local conditions.

Agriculture was one of the pillars of the French Canadian community's identity. The sociologist Michel Brunet uses the concept of "agriculturalisme" to describe this reality. He defines it as an idealization of the past based on the culture of the soil, seen as a refuge from the changes caused by urbanization.⁶⁰ This "agriculturalisme" was particularly promoted by the Catholic religious elite, which made agriculture the "vocation" of the French Canadian community. It was in that context, specific to Quebec and French Canada that the federal government's policies for promoting agricultural production took their place and were understood in 1915–1918. In the exhortations of religious Catholics calling French Canadians to respond to the agricultural war effort, the "agriculturaliste" approach for example disconnected the increase of agricultural production from the war itself, (which was nevertheless at the heart of its justification), so that

⁵⁷ "Production of Food," *The Daily British Whig*, 3 February 1915.

⁵⁸ "Patriotism and Production—The Call of the Empire to the Farmers of Canada," *Farm and Dairy*, 11 February 1915.

⁵⁹ Mourad Djebabla, "La confrontation des civils québécois et ontariens à la Première Guerre mondiale, 1914–1918: les représentations de la guerre au Québec et en Ontario" (PhD diss., Université du Québec à Montréal, 2008), 236–251.

⁶⁰ Michel Brunet, *La présence anglaise et les Canadiens. Études sur l'histoire et la pensée des deux Canadas* (Montreal: Beauchemin, 1958), 119–120.

it only contributed to an enhanced valuation of agriculture. For the French Canadian religious and political elite, the war thus appeared as a pretext to encourage French Canadians to return to the land that had been abandoned by the 19th-century rural exodus. By contrast the English Canadian approach remained more practical, stressing profits and the support to be given to Great Britain and the Allies.⁶¹ English-speaking Canada saw itself rather in an imperial Anglo-Saxon setting that created supranational solidarity.

Other propaganda inserts of the federal government were more practical, informing farmers of the different needs of Great Britain for cereals, eggs and meat, so that farmers had to do everything possible to meet these needs.⁶² In order to interest rural areas in this war effort, the political authorities also presented the increase of agricultural production as an act of patriotism and opportunity.⁶³ This interpretation sought to meet farmers on a “personal” level, mentioning the profit to be made, at the same time placing them in a national, even imperial context of support for the British. Patriotism, so powerful a motive in the cities, did not seem to be enough to convince the farmers. As soon as hostilities started, the press stressed the “bargain” that the conflict could represent for Canada, which, as the “granary of the Empire”, could not fail to profit from the situation.⁶⁴ During the confrontations, Canadian commerce profited especially from the increase in exports to Great Britain of wheat, meat and munitions.⁶⁵ For the political authorities, profit was to be the carrot waved under farmers’ noses to include them within the objectives of the war effort. For example, in 1918, the Canadian government published a series of posters encouraging farmers to increase the production of eggs, butter and meat (beef and pork). These posters set out in parallel the needs of Great Britain and the opportunity for Canadian farmers to respond to it. The posters’ titles were very explicit, for example: *Canada’s Beef Opportunity*⁶⁶ or *Canada’s Pork Opportunity*.⁶⁷ By supplying figures of Canadian exports in

⁶¹ “Food Regulations for Great Britain to Be More Severe,” *The Montreal Daily Star*, 21 November 1917.

⁶² “Patriotism and Production—Great Britain Needs Food,” *The Farmer’s Sun*, 17 March 1915.

⁶³ “Patriotism and Production—The Duty and the Opportunity of Canadian Farmers,” *The Farmer’s Sun*, 6 January 1915.

⁶⁴ “Les cultivateurs de l’Ouest et la guerre,” *Le Patriote de l’Ouest*, 17 September 1914.

⁶⁵ Gerd Hardach, *The First World War*, 275.

⁶⁶ McGill University Archives, ref. WP1-F3-F1.

⁶⁷ McGill University Archives, ref. WP1-F4-F1. (See figure 3.1)



Figure 3.1. Canada's Pork Opportunity. McGill University Archives, ref. WP1-F4-F1.

past years and those of Great Britain's needs, these posters showed the gap to be filled and the profit to be made from it. Profit and patriotism, or "practical patriotism",⁶⁸ were the approach to rural areas throughout the conflict. In fact the war was only a short-term opportunity, and the post-war period was particularly difficult for an agricultural world that had incurred considerable debts during the 1914–1918 period. Through the press and the *Agricultural War Book*,⁶⁹ a manual published in 1915 and 1916, the Canadian government also followed a didactic approach by publishing figures of the various needs of the British, and also agronomists' advice on how to respond to them as effectively as possible. The watchword was to

⁶⁸ "How to Increase Production With No Larger Cost," *The Northern Advance*; 1 April 1915.

⁶⁹ Government of Canada, *Agricultural War Book. Patriotism and Production* (Ottawa, 1915); Government of Canada, *Production and Thrift—Agricultural War Book* (Ottawa, 1916).

over-produce in order to prove one's patriotism. This approach led the Minister of Agriculture to go as far as to advise farmers to increase their areas of cultivation by using even fallow land, something that went against elementary farming principles, and provoked fierce criticisms on the part of agronomists and the Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture, W. Motherwell.⁷⁰ The latter on the contrary advised farmers to cultivate better, rather than blindly increasing areas under cultivation.⁷¹ For Motherwell, to use up fallow land in the name of blindly increasing agricultural production, even for a patriotic purpose, was simply crazy.⁷² That did not prevent farmers from going ahead, less from patriotism than from opportunism, in order to profit from British demand. Farmers would pay the price for this with diminishing harvests from 1916 to 1918.⁷³

Public lectures were also organized in the Canadian rural milieu.⁷⁴ These were financed by the federal Ministry of Agriculture and relied on the cooperation of agronomists.⁷⁵ These meetings, too, spelt out farmers' duty in relation to the food needs of Great Britain and its allies.⁷⁶ Recourse to agronomists enabled agricultural knowledge to be communicated, and discussion to take place with farmers about the best ways of maximizing production.⁷⁷ In addition to this practical aspect, there was the patriotic side. In this connection it was the turn of federal and provincial politicians and local leaders (mayor, clergy), to speak in order to develop the political and economic context that justified the agricultural war effort, presenting excess production as an act enabling the enemy to be fought just as effectively as on the front. We note that, confronted by this avalanche of advice, the farmers did not much appreciate being told how to do their work.⁷⁸

This approach to the duty of rural areas caused a misunderstanding when recruiting agents travelled the countryside in search of new volunteer recruits. The farmers pointed to the expectations of the federal Minister

⁷⁰ Saskatchewan was one of the main corn-producing Canadian provinces at the beginning of the 20th century.

⁷¹ Government of Canada, *Agricultural War Book. Patriotism and Production*, 10.

⁷² Bill Waiser, *Saskatchewan. A New History* (Calgary: Fifth House, 2005), 215.

⁷³ John Herd Thompson, *The Harvests of War*, 68.

⁷⁴ Joanne Barker Stacey, "Save Today What Our Allies Need Tomorrow", 71.

⁷⁵ "An Agricultural Leader," *The Northern Advance*, 11 February 1915.

⁷⁶ "Government Experts Address Wilkie Farmers," *The Wilkie Press*, 18 February 1915.

⁷⁷ "Agriculture," *L'Avenir du Nord*, 12 March 1915; "Cette campagne patriotique de surproduction agricole" ("This patriotic campaign for surplus agricultural production"), *Le Peuple*, 19 February 1915;

⁷⁸ W.R. Young, "Conscription, Rural Depopulation, and the Farmers of Ontario, 1917-19", *Canadian Historical Review* 53, 3 (1972), 301.

of Agriculture in order to justify their refusal to join up. The *Canadian Military Gazette* reports what may often seemed like a dialogue of the deaf between recruiting agents wanting men for the front, and farmers who felt they were doing their bit in the fields:

The Departments of Agriculture and Militia do not appear to harmonize in the matter of recruiting. An officer who has had some experience in trying to get men to join the ranks gives his experience thus: 'We go out among the farmers and try to get men, and when we ask what we think is an eligible young man to sign up, he pulls out a circular sent to him by the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa or Toronto, which urges him to stay on the farm and produce more. He hands this to us, and tells us that he is doing as much as a fighting man, and probably more. We run against that sort of thing everywhere, and what can we do?'⁷⁹

This misunderstanding increased in 1917–1918 when the federal government imposed conscription. At a conference in August 1917 the Prime Minister of Ontario expressed the point of view of farmers who, having regard to previous years, understood their duty as that of producing food, something that was threatened by conscription.

I hear some farmers, as loyal, as patriotic, as conscientious as any, say: 'Yes, I want Canada to do her part in the war, I want as an individual to do my full part, but you have been preaching the necessity of foodstuffs for the allied armies in the field and the allied nations. You have been urging on us greater production, but today we cannot harvest our grain for lack of help. What will happen if you take away the few sons and labourers we have left on the farms.'⁸⁰

Faced by the disillusionment and the pressure on farmers to keep their sons and laborers on the farm, exemptions and leaves were given for the harvests of 1917 and 1918. For the farming areas, the question of conscription marked the limits reached by the Canadian war effort. The question of conscription versus production gave Canadian citizens the opportunity to negotiate how they would contribute to the war effort.

From the viewpoint of city dwellers, it was the question of food economy that prevailed. As for the farmers, the incentive approach and cooperation predominated, so that consumers' patriotism and solidarity enabled Canada to increase its food exports. In order for this policy to succeed, there too Canadians had to become involved. It was essential to inform

⁷⁹ "Told to Stay on the Farm," *The Canadian Military Gazette*, 13 March 1917.

⁸⁰ Address to "Win the War Convention" (Toronto?), 2 August 1917, F6 collection, William Hearst Papers, Archives of Ontario.

civilians in order to make them aware of the Allies' needs and to justify the sacrifices to be made. This approach was inspired by the example of America, where the same situation prevailed.⁸¹

In 1917 the Food Controller stated that citizens had a duty to reduce by a third their consumption of beef, wheat and bacon, food that the British urgently needed. In order to do this, in 1918 the Food Commission produced posters representing a table loaded with vegetables, including potatoes, and fish. The slogan was: "Fish and Vegetable Meals Will Save Wheat, Meat and Fats for Our Soldiers and Allies."⁸² Canadians had to be made to understand that by reducing their consumption of wheat and meat they showed patriotism and their support for the Allied cause.⁸³ In addition to vegetables, which were the supreme substitute in the war years, specifically with the campaign of "war gardens" in which citizens were invited to grow their own vegetables, Canadians were urged to prefer fish and cereals other than wheat.⁸⁴

This pedagogical and propagandizing approach was the means of making Canadians sensitive to the need for food economy.⁸⁵ As for mobilization of the farmers, consumers were subjected to an all-Canada campaign, with identical messages for the French-speaking and English-speaking populations. The Food Controller / Food Commissioner in Canada used various means to support education of the population. These were the main carriers of information available at that time, whether through booklets, press inserts, posters, or public meetings and demonstrations.

In order to have his own organ of information, the Food Controller also provided himself with a *Food Bulletin*. The first number appeared on 6 October 1917. In about twenty pages it reflected the action, first of the Food Controller, then of his successor. It aimed at the widest possible distribution in Canada, particularly among associations and groups that influenced the population (the press, schools, and religious bodies).⁸⁶

⁸¹ William J. Hanna, *Report of the Food Controller*, 10.

⁸² McGill University Archives, ref. WP1-F7-F2.

⁸³ "Conserve Food or Lose Cause," *The Globe*, 18 July 1917.

⁸⁴ "Food Controller Hanna Tells the People How to Solve the Food Problem—'Eat Less'," *The Morning Leader*, 14 July 1917.

⁸⁵ Jeffrey Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship during Canada's Great War* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), 52.

⁸⁶ William J. Hanna, *Report of the Food Controller*, 28–29. The bulletin appeared until January 1919.

The Food Controller / Food Commissioner also cooperated with his opposite numbers in Great Britain in distributing British films.⁸⁷ For example, the English film "Everybody's Business" (1917) was shown in 164 Canadian cinemas, and "Waste Not, Want Not" in 115, in March 1918.⁸⁸ The English-speaking cultural deal and the universal food problem made it possible to distribute English cinema productions to the English Canadian public. The Canadian film industry was small, so English-speaking Canada was already used to British and American films.⁸⁹ The use of moving pictures was a means of bringing home to Canadians the situation in Europe, and thereby justifying their mobilization in the area of food, since "one picture is worth a thousand words".

Propaganda speeches had to show that voluntary privations could create harmony between the sacrifices endured by soldiers at the front and those of civilians at home. In 1918, Food Commission posters played on this theme. One of them depicts a Canadian soldier in the foreground, with explosions taking place behind him. He points to the sentence; "We are saving you. You save food." This defined each one's duty: soldiers at the front fighting for victory, and civilians in the home country, supporting them by enabling them to be adequately fed. So the slogan on the poster was: "Well-fed Soldiers will win the War."⁹⁰ The mobilization discourse that the Food Controller / Food Commissioner developed was to the effect that the Allies' victory would depend on Canada's capacity to export food (and therefore consumers' ability to economize as much as possible the types of food that were needed abroad). A Canadian could thus become a traitor to his country by refusing to economise food. Social elites reminded Canadians of their duties, for example a 1918 sermon by the Rev. Canon J.M. Snowdon: "The man or the woman who, under existing conditions, ignores the regulations that are today being made for the purpose of saving beef, bacon and flour, for the use of the men who are fighting at the front, is a slacker and a mighty bad slacker."⁹¹ By comparison with the *national* war effort, any seeking of *personal* pleasure at table became an act deemed unpatriotic and favoring the enemy.

⁸⁷ "Food Control Film," *Food Bulletin*, 3 November 1917.

⁸⁸ "Patriotic Film Coming to Regent," *Toronto News*, 29 September 1917; "Food Films are Popular," *Food Bulletin*, 9 March 1918.

⁸⁹ Seth Feldman and Joyce Nelson, *Canadian Film Reader* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1977), 10.

⁹⁰ McGill University Archives, ref. WP1-F9-F2 (see figure 3.2).

⁹¹ "A Mighty Bad Slacker," *Food Bulletin*, 1 June 1918.

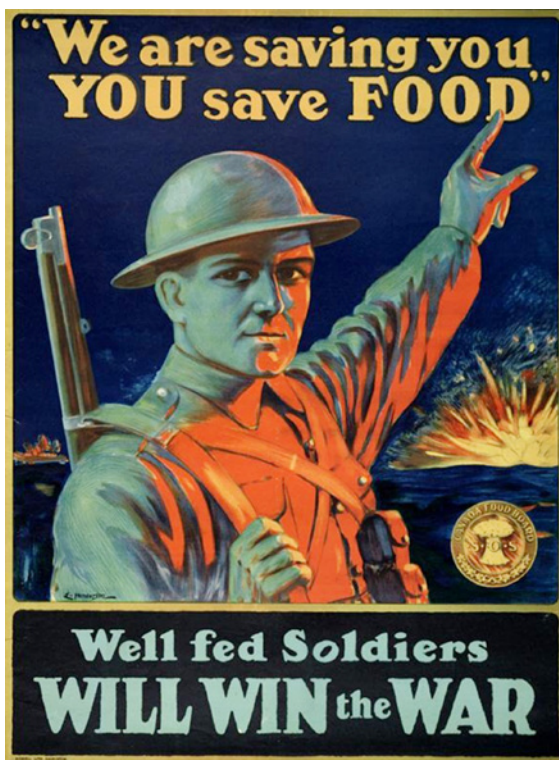


Figure 3.2. Well-fed soldier will win the war. McGill University Archives, ref. WP1-F9-F2.

Most attention was paid to women, since it was necessary to use their social role in managing the domestic economy. They appeared in fact as the main movers of consumption.⁹² In order to redirect in a “patriotic” direction the culinary practices of Canadian women, there were “War Menus”. These menus, distributed through the press by the Food Controller / Food Commissioner, offered for each day different recipes with food substitutes for wheat, pork and beef, based on fish, vegetables, and cereals other than wheat.⁹³

⁹² Susan Strasser, *Never Done. A History of American Housework* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 242–262. Reprinted with a new preface New York: Henry Holt 2000.

⁹³ See for example: “War Menus,” *The Montreal Daily Star*, 2 November 1917. (See Figure 3.3).

Following the Food Control Board



Figure 3.3. 'War Menus'. The Montreal Daily Star, 2 November 1917.

In the autumn of 1917, the Food Controller was inspired by a campaign that had been conducted in the United States to launch Food Pledge Cards. This aimed to get housewives to sign a card pledging them on their honor to practice food economy in their kitchens.⁹⁴ At a time of inflation, the success of this campaign was reduced by the fact that housewives were already faced by a form of restriction imposed by the increase in food prices.⁹⁵ The importance of this campaign was that, by playing on patriotic and moral factors, it reached the private sphere for which control was in any case difficult, even impossible. Women's domestic role in supplying the household and caring for the family's well-being was thus widened to a supranational scale involving supplying the Allies and seeing to the fighters' well-being. As "housewives of the Allies", women logically became a factor in victory. The cooperation of feminine elites and associations made it possible to relay to Canadian women the policies of food economy. For

⁹⁴ "L'économie," *L'Action catholique*, 15 February 1918.

⁹⁵ See for example: "Signing the Pledge," *The Toronto Star*, 20 September 1917; "Le problème des vivres," *L'Action catholique*, 26 February 1918.

example, on 10 April 1918, the Publicity Section of the Food Commission wrote to the president of the Montreal Local Council of Women asking her to make its members aware of the Allies' difficult situation, and that women were expected to do their duty in the food war effort.⁹⁶ Of all the means available, the press was the primary medium used. Information was produced and controlled by the office of the Food Controller/Commissioner, and often put into the women's sections of newspapers.⁹⁷ In addition to adults, children and young people were made aware of the food question through the schools. For the youngest, the ultimate sacrifice was to go without sweets. For example, in 1918 a pledge card was produced in Montreal in order to include children in saving sugar. Because sugar was short in Canada because of the Allies' demand, this meant consuming fewer sweets.⁹⁸ For older children, the service of "Soldiers of the Soil" (S.O.S.) was set up in 1918. Canadian adolescents, following the American model of "Boys' Working Reserves", were to help farmers in the fields to produce more in the absence of conscripted men. In order to recruit adolescents, a national enrollment week was planned for March 1918 in order to gather 25,000 boys between 15 to 19 years old. Schools remained the main place of mobilization, but a specific propaganda campaign was also developed. All means of information-sharing were used: posters, sermons, the press, meetings, booklets, and cinemas.⁹⁹ To mobilize adolescents, the methods used in enrolling volunteers were re-used, but whereas recruitment propaganda remained local, the government made sure, in continuity with the national campaigns for excess production, that it controlled propaganda for the S.O.Ss.

Adolescents were subject to considerable pressure from the political authorities. For example, during the period of voluntary service (1914–1917), the British poster "Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War?" had been distributed in Canada. In this way children appeared as a moral constraint calling men to join the ranks.¹⁰⁰ In the propaganda campaign to mobilize

⁹⁶ Letter of the representative of the Conservation Publicity Section of the Canadian Food Commission to Dr Ritchie England, president of the Montreal Local Council of Women, 10 April 1918, Collection P653, "Montreal Local Council of Women," National Archives of Quebec.

⁹⁷ William J. Hanna, *Report of the Food Controller*, 28–29.

⁹⁸ "Campaign in Montreal," *Food Bulletin*, 23 February 1918.

⁹⁹ *Manual of instructions to 'Soldiers of the Soil' Directors and others, 1918*, Collection E13, Ministry of Education, National Archives of Quebec.

¹⁰⁰ Mourad Djebabla, "Le confrontation des civils québécois et ontariens à la Première Guerre mondiale," 258–364.

the S.O.Ss., this appeal was re-used, but completely inverted and adapted to the new Canadian context of 1918. In the mobilization inserts distributed in the press, it would in future be the parents appealing to their adolescents to ask them what they would do in the war effort to support the arms of the combatants: "My Son—What are you going to do in the Great War."¹⁰¹ or "When Mother Says: 'Do you want to go, Son?'"¹⁰² Rather than supporting the home country by taking up arms, Canadian adolescents were to do it by helping with the harvests. By laying on all Canadians responsibility for food economy, no one was to be left uninvolved. This shows how the conflict had been made total in Canada, in a society called to consider the food question beyond divisions of social class, age or gender.

In addition to the patriotic approach, and following the farmers' example, Canadians were also appealed to by the motive of personal interest. For example in 1918, Dr Aurèle Nadeau, with the authority of the Canada Food Commission, published a booklet entitled *Mangeons moins et mieux* ("Let's eat less and better"). In it he condemned the civilian eating habits developed since the end of the 19th century, which in his eyes did great harm to people's health. Thus the war was enabling the population to rediscover the benefits of frugality.¹⁰³

There is a final point to be emphasized. The Canadian political situation in 1917–1918 was indeed marked by violent disturbances in Quebec about conscription which French Canadians rejected, preferring to remain in Canada rather than being forced to fight overseas in a conflict which they said did not concern them. But the universal threat of famine, from 1918 on a real one because of the impact of all-out submarine warfare and four years of conflict, united both French and English Canadians around the absolute need for economy and food production. For example in March 1918, in order to mobilize Quebec around the problem of food, the Quebec Minister of Agriculture, J.-E. Caron, published in the province's newspapers a letter in which he described the food shortage in 1918, not on the basis of Great Britain's needs, which were however at the heart of federal policies and propaganda speeches of English-speaking Canadians, but rather emphasizing its world dimension.¹⁰⁴ Opposition to conscription usually makes Quebec appear fiercely opposed to the first world conflict, but on

¹⁰¹ "When Father Says," *The Globe*, 19 March 1918; "When Father says," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 20 March 1918.

¹⁰² "When Mother Says," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 21 March 1918.

¹⁰³ Aurèle Nadeau, *Mangeons moins et mieux* (Ottawa: Canada Food Commission, 1918), 3.

¹⁰⁴ "L'augmentation de la production," *L'Action catholique*, 13 March 1918.

the contrary the food question, and study of propaganda speeches, show its contribution toward supporting the Canadian food war effort. It was all a matter of negotiating the “right” angle of approach to interest French Canadians.

Conclusion

Production and food economy were the federal government’s response in order to impose a “duty” on town and country dwellers in Canada: that of contributing to feeding the Allies and Great Britain. The food war effort brought Canadian agriculture into prominence as an important factor in supporting the Allies’ arms. Canadian agricultural production in 1915–1918 was deemed by the federal political authorities a means of supporting overseas populations and combatants faced with submarine warfare.

As for consumers and food economy, in March 1919, following progressive relaxation of restrictions on food consumption, the Food Commission was abolished. In contrast with the food control policies adopted by the European belligerents, Canadian food policies were aimed at responding, not to a situation of food shortage, but to the needs of the Allies. Propaganda was therefore wholly directed toward showing the importance of economizing food in order to support the metropolis overseas.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROPAGANDA, IMPERIAL SUBJECTHOOD AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN JAMAICA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Richard Smith

Introduction

A Raphael Tuck postcard produced during the South African War (1899–1902) and captioned “A Purveyor of War News”, shows a top-hatted, barefoot West Indian bearing a Union Jack. Perhaps he awaits a street-corner audience to regale with the latest news from Mafeking, Ladysmith or Kimberley, gleaned from syndicated bulletins in the West Indian press or conversations from the market or rum shop. The street orator’s walrus moustache signifies a link with the volunteers later to be pictured crowding United Kingdom recruiting offices from August 1914; a “type” who, in the popular imagination, disappeared forever amidst the mud and blood of France and Flanders, but who found immortality as Bruce Bairnsfather’s “Old Bill.” As news of the declaration of war spread, even in the farthest-flung outposts, equally fervent colonial volunteers rallied to offer their services in the British Empire’s hour of need; some sailing directly to the “Mother Country” to enlist. The Tuck postcard image not only anticipates this pro-imperial feeling, but urges us to address how imperial military interests and war aims were articulated to colonial audiences. How were they interpreted at a popular level to raise support among subject populations during imperial crises and ultimately for the war effort from 1914 to 1918?

The colonial empire—the territories ruled by the Colonial Office in London, as opposed to the self-governing Dominions and Indian empire—was pivotal to the war effort, although often overshadowed by the contributions of the latter. The colonies themselves were of strategic utility so required defence. Colonies provided raw materials, trade connections and infrastructure, military bases and potential sources of manpower. The Dominions were dependent on colonial connections, such as those between Canada and the West Indies which resulted in a brief post-war revival of



Figure 4.1. 'A Purveyor of War News, West Indies', Raphael Tuck & Sons' "West Indian View Postcard", author's collection.

confederation proposals.¹ The colonies were required to be self-sufficient in defence so British Army garrisons could be released for active service. As the mobilisation of imperial populations became increasingly important in defending imperial possessions, and as the dependence on colonial raw materials grew, so too the need for propaganda campaigns in support of

¹ The intention was to develop the market for West Indian raw materials in Canada who in turn would provide financial investment and secure markets for manufactured goods. *Jamaica Times [JT]* supplement 11 October 1919, 'The Question of BWI Union With Canada'. Louis S. Meikle, *Confederation of the British West Indies versus Annexation to the United States of America: A political discourse on the West Indies* (London: Sampson Low & Co, 1912).

the empire became more significant.² The promotion of distinctive colonial identities was central to this mobilisation. Best-known is the Australian “digger” myth promoted by Charles Bean, but such identity production was equally important in a colonial territory such as Jamaica where 26,667 men volunteered for service in the British West Indies Regiment (BWIR) from an eligible male population of 135,061.³ Ultimately, conscription was not necessary to sustain the war contingents Jamaica was eventually asked to provide, highlighting the strength of the imperial bond. But equally, the articulation of Jamaican identity within wartime appeals for manpower assisted the development of independent national identity in the post-war era. British officials regarded overt propaganda as somewhat repugnant, a wartime necessity masked by the use of the neutral terms “news” and “information”. Historically, advocacy of the imperial mission was integrated seamlessly into imperial rule with an emphasis on royal and military spectacle, visual art, literature, advertising and education, rather than jingoism and flag-waving. The era of mass culture and consumption coincided with the height of imperialism. Indeed, colonial commodities were central to the growth of the leisure market and the promotion of products, such as soap and chocolate, went hand-in-hand with the promotion of the imperial mission.⁴ Official propaganda tended to be targeted at winning the support of neutral governments and subsequently enemy populations. In the United Kingdom, propaganda aimed at the general population was usually left to non-governmental bodies such as the churches, newspapers and commercial advertisers. An official presence, usually in the form of dignitaries at recruitment rallies and so forth, might be incorporated into the proceedings for additional hegemonic weight as necessary.⁵ This situation was replicated in colonies such as Jamaica, where recruiting committees, comprised of local entrepreneurs and church figures were established in most parishes. Jamaica also mirrored the metropole in the emergence of an alliance between elite political and literary figures who added their

² Ashley Jackson, “The Colonial Empire and Imperial Defence” in Greg Kennedy (ed.) *Imperial Defence: The Old World Order 1856–1956* (London: Routledge, 2007), 234–6.

³ 13,940 were rejected as medically unfit and a further 2,082 were discharged or died before embarking overseas (Stephen A. Hill (ed.), *Who’s Who in Jamaica, 1919–1920* (Kingston: Gleaner, 1920), 247)

⁴ Stephen Badsey, “Propaganda and the Defence of Empire” in Kennedy (ed.), *Imperial Defence*, 218–233; John Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

⁵ Gary S. Messenger, “An Inheritance Worth Remembering: the British approach to official propaganda during the First World War”, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 13: 2 (1993): 117–127.

voices to the imperial campaigns through the pages of the *Gleaner* and *Jamaica Times*. Key figures included Herbert de Lisser (1878–1944), novelist and editor of the *Gleaner*, who produced a history of Jamaica's war experiences in 1917, and Thomas MacDermot (1870–1933), editor of the *Jamaica Times* and a key figure in the emergence of modern Jamaican literature who also wrote under the penname Tom Redcam.

Jamaicans or Britons?

In 1914, Jamaica was dominated by the legacy of plantation slavery which had provided the roots of the race and class hierarchy that placed the majority of power in the hands of a small white elite. This elite, which formed less than two per cent of the population, dominated the Crown Colony legislative system, the colonial bureaucracy and controlled much of the island's key economic assets. Although stratified to some degree by occupation and property status, the white minority formed a distinct block that wielded privilege over the black and brown population.⁶ Whiteness equalled power and prestige and petty differences based on skin shade were rife in Jamaican society, a lighter skin being prized as a means of securing social and economic success. Likewise, acquiring European culture and education became a goal for black and brown Jamaicans who wished to advance their social standing. However, while the cultured and educated black and brown middle class could be regarded as evidence of the "civilising" effect of British imperialism, it also signalled that non-white subjects were the equals of their colonial masters.

The brown middle class emerged from the "free-coloureds" of the slavery era, the descendants of slave women and white planters able to acquire land, trades or professions. Incorporated within this layer of Jamaican society was a smaller black middle element who had achieved success, against the odds, as landowners, church ministers, civil servants, teachers or artisans.⁷ The majority of the Jamaican population, amounting to around seventy-six per cent of the total, comprised the black peasantry, tenant farmers and wage-labourers. Clustered on small plots of land, the peasantry generated the diversification of the post-slavery economy by growing

⁶ Patrick Bryan, *The Jamaican People 1880–1902* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 67–8; Patrick Bryan, 'The White Minority in Jamaica at the End of the Nineteenth Century' in Howard Johnson & Karl Watson (eds.), *The White Minority in the Caribbean*, Kingston, Ian Randle, 1998.

⁷ Bryan, *The Jamaican People* ..., 217–233.

food staples and fruit, coffee and ginger for export. However, from the 1890s, the monopolisation of land by the banana export industry precipitated the peasantry's decline and many were forced to undertake casual wage labour or migrate to the Panama Canal Zone, the United States, the Cuban sugar plantations or the fruit plantations of Central America.⁸ These complex class and race alignments in Jamaica created a wide range of responses to the war which reflected the interests and affiliations held by individual Jamaicans to the local and wider imperial society.

The outbreak of war was seen as an antidote to the 'deadening tropical languor'⁹ that, in the minds of the white planter class, afflicted Jamaican society in general and the black peasantry in particular. Governor Manning called on all subjects, but especially ex-servicemen and constables, to ready themselves for island defence. Betraying the underlying fear of black insurgency that had inhabited the minds of colonial administrators and the plantocracy since the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865, Manning insisted that any activities likely to cause "popular excitement"¹⁰ should be avoided. Fresh in the memory of the colonial establishment was the Kingston tram-car boycott of February 1912; a protest over fare increases that had become the focus for dissatisfaction with the injustices of colonial rule and witnessed the Fabian-leaning governor, Sydney Olivier, stoned by a crowd.¹¹ In its coverage of the 1 August Emancipation Day commemorations, the Jamaican press dutifully stressed class and race unity by, reporting the events as a "patriotic and intelligent celebration of a day that should never be forgotten by any Jamaican black, white or brown."¹²

These initial preoccupations with immanent disorder were allayed by outpourings of popular support for the war effort from all layers in Jamaican society. Letters to the press urged Jamaicans to volunteer and there were calls for the local defence force to be strengthened so that British troops garrisoned on the island could be freed for service in France. Two overlapping strands of patriotic sentiment were already apparent. There was a clear desire to serve the imperial cause, but also evident was the wish, even among elements of the colonial establishment, to defend Jamaican territory and values. Jamaican national consciousness was an embryonic formation emerging, in part, from the cultural and political initiatives of

⁸ Bryan, *The Jamaican People* ..., 131–151.

⁹ Herbert G. De Lisser, *Jamaica and the Great War* (Kingston, Gleaner Co., 1917), 1.

¹⁰ *JT*, 8 August 1914, 8.

¹¹ Winston James, *A Fierce Hatred of Injustice: Claude McKay's Jamaican Poetry of Rebellion* (London: Verso, 2001), 81–87.

¹² *JT*, 8 August 1914, 14.

the black, brown and white middle class, which included the Jamaica League founded shortly before the war. Growing Jamaican national sentiment could be deployed to serve the imperial war effort *or* it could underpin the inherent antagonism between the majority black population and the colonial government and planter class. In the first years of the war, the former prevailed and it was not until wartime privations began to bite and embittered war veterans started to return home that pro-imperial feeling was challenged by elements of the Jamaican middle and working class, and the peasantry.¹³

The possibility Jamaicans might enlist to defend their island shores was aired in a poem published by Claude McKay in 1912, only weeks before the tram-car demonstrations:

An' I hope none o' your sons would
 Refuse deir strengt' to lend,
 An' drain de last drop o' deir blood
 Their country to defend.¹⁴

In the early months of the war, such sentiments took on an explicit pro-imperial tone as a letter to the *Jamaica Times* highlighted: "Men of the Island of Jamaica, be not branded as cowards if you are needed for active service. Be courageous, be firm, be resolute, prepare to defend your country with your life's blood."¹⁵ The presence of black, brown and Indian Jamaicans at volunteer rallies underlined that such words were not just literary posturing.¹⁶ The desire to volunteer in defence of the Empire can be linked to the sense of loyalty felt towards the British monarch which had been evident since the abolition of slavery and which was encouraged through religious teaching and education. Many Jamaicans believed that "Missus Queen, Victoria de Good"¹⁷ had personally interceded to impose full emancipation over the heads of the plantocracy in 1838. But it is important to recognise that this loyalty to the monarch, did not privilege Britain over Jamaica, but rather helped to underpin the value-system with which Jamaicans opposed the white plantocracy.¹⁸ Imperial rule was more vulnerable when it did not appear to act according to the values of fairness, benevolence and progress,

¹³ Richard Smith, *Jamaican Volunteers in the First World War: Race Masculinity and the Development of National Consciousness* (Manchester University Press, 2004) 33–51.

¹⁴ "My Native Land, My Home" from *Songs of Jamaica* (1912) cited in James, *A Fierce Hatred*, 91

¹⁵ *JT*, 12 September 1914, 5

¹⁶ *Daily Chronicle*[*DC*] [Jamaica], 24 August 1914, 11.

¹⁷ Claude McKay, "Old England" cited in James, *Fierce Hatred*, 95

¹⁸ See the discussion of "Old England" in *ibid.*, 95–96.

this had been brought home very clearly during the Morant Bay rebellion and its aftermath¹⁹ and the Jamaica colonial government was forced to tread a careful line in ensuring the black peasantry was not alienated by the demands and interests of the plantocracy.

Although the Colonial Office at first argued that Jamaica should supply raw materials and foodstuffs produced by the plantation economy, rather than volunteers for the war effort, martial verse adorned the pages of the Jamaican press. Although these literary appeals were directed to the white planter class and to a lesser extent the light-skinned middle class, a degree of racial ambiguity opened the possibility they would also find an echo among the black peasantry. Poems such as Tom Redcam's "To Britain's Nameless Heroes" recalled the military achievements of Empire and promised that even the lowliest volunteer would achieve immortality:

From thee our race possessing the nerve that doth not fail,
The will that doth not falter, the heart that doth not quail ...
Though ne'er recorded story may speak his humble name,
Undying lives the Glory that crowns the nameless dead.²⁰

The racial blurring of boundaries in terms of the intended audience was compounded by the fusing of British and West Indian military achievements. The exploits of "Drake, Hawkins, Benbow, Vernon, Rodney, Nelson" could be linked with the battle honours of the black West India Regiments from Martinique in 1809 to Sierra Leone in 1898.²¹

Creating the German Menace

From the outset, the spectre of "Prussian barbarism" was raised in order to instill loyalty among the Jamaican populace. While the likelihood of a German landing was remote, the awful outcome should German forces ever set foot on the island was grimly foretold at recruitment rallies and in the press. In the Jamaican context, the invasion scare was given added potency when linked to strong insinuations that slavery would immediately

¹⁹ Badsey, "Propaganda and the Defence of Empire", 222; Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 263-309.

²⁰ *JT*, 12 September 1914, 1.

²¹ "Fusilier", "The British West Indies Regiment", *United Empire*, VII, 1916: 27. See for example, T. H. MacDermott, "How Jamaica's followed the flag", *JT*, 5 June 1915, 7 and 12 June 1915, 6-7; T. H. MacDermott, "Our Regiment: the famous W. I. R", *JT*, 27 November 1915, 9.

be reinstated in the event of German occupation. This message permeated the Jamaican press throughout the war with headlines incorporating the words "Victory or Slavery."²² Germany had not been involved in the transatlantic slave trade, however, British propaganda capitalized on atrocities in German South West Africa during the Herero and Nama genocide (1894–1908) and wartime allegations of ill-treatment in German East Africa.²³ In November 1915, Constance Douet, a white Jamaican nurse who had seen service in France addressed a recruitment meeting in St. Andrews with the plea that "England was in great danger. She was endeavouring to keep them from slavery ... German soldiers were slaves, but the British soldiers were free."²⁴ Following the eightieth anniversary of emancipation this was a persuasive propaganda weapon. The economic independence and personal autonomy fundamental to the black Jamaican peasantry, and more specifically black Jamaican masculinity, had been hard won indeed. Therefore, portrayals of British fair play and amateurism ranged against the "mailed fist" of ruthless German efficiency encouraged Jamaicans of all racial backgrounds to regard themselves as foot soldiers in a war for civilization, especially when linked to the idealised notion that British humanitarianism alone had achieved the abolition of slavery.

Until the US intervention of July 1915, Haiti represented the main area of German influence in the Caribbean. German companies had interests in the railway and coffee industry and controlled the shipping wharfs. Germany also sponsored the Simon and Leconte coups between 1908 and 1912. Britain feared Haiti would be established as a German protectorate and used as a coaling station for warships.²⁵ The German presence in Haiti, combined with the age-old anxiety among the plantocracy that Jamaica might experience an insurrection similar to the Haitian revolution of 1791–1804, stoked spy and invasion rumours from the outset of hostilities. In

²² *JT*, 27 November 1915, 1.

²³ See David Olusoga and Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust. Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010). The most important publication of the war was Frank Weston, *The Black Slaves of Prussia: An Open Letter Addressed to General Smuts* (London: Universities Mission to Central Africa, 1918). Weston, the Bishop of Zanzibar subsequently condemned British post-war labour policy in East Africa (see Andrew Porter, "The Universities' Mission to Central Africa: Anglo-Catholicism and the Twentieth-Century Colonial Encounter" in Brian Stanley (ed.), *Missions, Nationalism and the End of Empire* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003).

²⁴ *Gleaner*, 3 November 1915, 13.

²⁵ Robert and Nancy Heinel, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People 1492–1971* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1978), 351–3.

October 1914, the General Officer Commanding, Jamaica reported that one of his officers believed he had seen an "aeroplane full of Germans ... followed by 2 war balloons", an apparition apparently caused by the "Evening Star seen through light cloud."²⁶ Those with actual or suspected German origins were viewed with some suspicion. A shopkeeper, Sigismund Bruhn, was suspected of being a German spy. Although in fact a US citizen, he was deported upon his release from custody. During the war, over 700 hundred Germans and other enemy aliens were interned by the Jamaican authorities, many of them merchant seaman stranded by wartime circumstances. But Jamaicans from the small ethnic German population centred around Seaford Town in Westmoreland parish were also among the internees. The origins of this community lay in the mid-nineteenth migration of Germans induced to settle on the islands after emancipation to supplement the plantation labour supply.²⁷ There were complaints to the International Red Cross about their treatment and at least two prisoners were shot for allegedly trying to escape.²⁸ Throughout the war, the only significant direct contact with German forces in the vicinity of Jamaica was the capture by H.M.S. Essex of the tender, *Bethania*, which was towed into Kingston harbour at the end of 1914. This prize of war became cause for minor celebration, to be mentioned in the same breath as Rodney's naval victory over De Grasse in 1782 which had prevented a Franco-Spanish invasion of Jamaica.²⁹

The invasion-scare story had a lengthy genealogy in both popular adult and children's fiction dating to the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871). The genre had emerged in the wake of George Chesney's *Battle of Dorking* (1871) and initially sought to encourage military reform to develop adequate national defence. Writers routinely worked closely with military figures of the day to push a political agenda through popular literature, exemplified by the collaboration between William Le Queux and Lord Roberts. The currency of invasion fiction was not limited to British shores, but was also a feature of pro-imperial literature in the Dominions.³⁰ Frederick Van Nos-

²⁶ The National Archives, WO95/5446 War Diary, GOC Jamaica, entry for 16 October 1914.

²⁷ Douglas Hall, "Bountied European Immigration into Jamaica" *Jamaica Journal*, 8: 4 (1975): 48–54 and 9: 1 (1975): 2–9.

²⁸ *DC*, 15 August 1914, 2; 25 August 1914, 3; 28 August 1914, 11; *Zouave*, March 1915: 50; Glenford Howe, *Race, War and Nationalism: A Social History of the West Indians in the First World War* (Kingston, Ja.: Ian Randle Publishers, 2002), 10–12.

²⁹ Frank Cundall, *Jamaica's Part in the Great War 1914–1918* (London: West India Committee, 1925), 21.

³⁰ Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850–2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 86–109; David Trotter, 'Introduction' to Erskine Childers,

trand Groves who abounded in the pen-name, "Harry Morgan", a pseudonym at once less Germanic and instantly identifiable with Jamaica's buccaneer past, lost no time in developing a version of this motif to encourage war-readiness amongst his island audience. In November 1914, his tale, "When the Germans Took Jamaica", was published in two parts in the *Jamaica Times* and endeavoured to represent Britain as the protector of colonial peoples in the face of German barbarism, as well as warning of the dire consequences should Britain be defeated. The title itself presents a feminised Jamaica who unprotected would be exposed to all manner of violations, on a scale that, according to press reports, had already befallen Belgium. The previous month, the *Daily Gleaner* had reprinted an article from the London *Daily Mail* which reported the visit of a British member of parliament to the country. Subtitled "The Diabolical Work Wrought By The Germans In Belgium" the piece described how at Liege women and children were torn from their men folk who were then summarily shot. On the same page, a reader's letter told of bayoneting and other mutilations of civilians by German troops.³¹ Perhaps such news provided ample material for Harry Morgan to embellish for his Jamaican readership.

Morgan presents the reader with a Jamaica laid waste by a full-scale German invasion deploying ships and aircraft, as well as infantry and cavalry. The population is forced to flee to the countryside until an aging white patriarch, Sir Horace Meadows, almost single-handedly rallies the defeated Jamaican forces and rescues the island from tyranny. Meadows is a caricature of the robust and sportsmanlike English hero who, even in the most impossible of situations, is able to fell "the Hun" with a few well-aimed punches. Morgan's tale draws together the historic fear of black rebellion and more recent anxieties around the possible growth of German influence in the Caribbean region. Significant too is the attempt to respond to the uncertainties and fears around the raising of non-white troops by the European powers; the invading army includes "an armed contingent of 2,000 recruited in a neighbouring island ... commanded by German officers, clothed and equipped by the German Government."³² Morgan leaves no doubt about the origins of these troops for the narrator reports after the successful repelling of the invasion that "[o]f the Haytians some 1,600 have

Riddle of the Sands (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998); Badsey, "Propaganda and the Defence of Empire", 219.

³¹ *Gleaner*, 15 October 1914, 10.

³² *JT*, 14 November 1914, 4.

been captured.”³³ Significantly, the white German troops are not substantially differentiated from their black auxiliaries and are portrayed in language that may have once been reserved by whites fearful of black revolt. “[T]he Kaiser’s demonical hordes yell[ed] and shriek[ed] in fiendish glee” after shooting some prisoners and “ended their orgy by hacking their corpses to pieces with ... short sabres.”³⁴ The association of the Germans with terms generally reserved for those beyond the pale of empire was also evident in the patriotic poems that appeared in the *Jamaica Times* at this time. Tom Redcam poured scorn on the Empire’s enemies as “Hate’s dark-rolling millions.”³⁵ While C.C. Percy described the Kaiser as a “naygar”, a term usually taken to mean a “good-for-nothing” or “uncivilised” African.³⁶

Morgan’s tale portrays an immediate loss of discipline, character or effectiveness among the black population when British authority is temporarily removed—the regression into barbarism that colonial commentators insisted would accompany any lessening of white governance and control. The black soldiers “of the once proud West India Regiment [(WIR)]” fled “wild-eyed.”³⁷ But Morgan also portrays the reduction of the white population to a rabble, partly perhaps to underline the dismal outlook in the event of a real invasion, but also alluding to the belief that white people had a greater predisposition to degeneracy in a tropical environment: “Up Slipe Road they came, dense mobs of terrified people, black and white alike wringing their hands and wailing piteously.”³⁸

Meanwhile, Meadows, wearing pistols and a bandolier, embodies the qualities of the white frontiersman protecting his home and womenfolk—stoicism, stolidity, with a touch of blustering bravado thrown in for good measure. After barricading his home against the invading hordes he reassures his wife and daughter that all will be well. Sure enough, divine authority comes to the aid of the Empire and a great earthquake destroys

³³ Ibid., 29.

³⁴ *JT*, 7 November 1914, 28.

³⁵ *JT*, 12 September 1914, 1.

³⁶ “Dat War and de Kaysah”, *JT*, 26 December 1914, 11; Frederic G. Cassidy, *Jamaica Talk: Three Hundred Years of the English Language in Jamaica* (London, Macmillan, 1961), 157.

³⁷ *JT*, 7 November 1914, 28. The two battalions of the WIR that remained in 1914 were the remnants of the West India Regiments raised from slaves and free black men during the wars with France from 1793. The majority of the ranks were raised in the British West Indies, while the white officers were posted from Great Britain. The battalions rotated duties between Jamaica and Sierra Leone and both saw service overseas during the First World War before finally being disbanded in 1926. See Brian Dyde, *The Empty Sleeve: the Story of the West India Regiments of the British Army* (St. Johns, Antigua: Hansib, 1997).

³⁸ *JT*, 7 November 1914, 28.

the enemy forces, paving the way for a British victory. Significantly, two days before news reached Jamaica of the declaration of war with Germany, a small earthquake had struck the island, providing a reminder of the deadly quake of 1907 which had cost over 800 lives and was etched into the popular consciousness. In a further twist, reports of the earthquake in the *Gleaner* appeared alongside news of hostilities between Federal troops and rebels in Haiti.

This representation of the war as a struggle between good and evil drew on Jamaican millennial and folk traditions which explained tumultuous events through biblical allegory and allusion.³⁹ Indeed, such a belief system may have compounded the unsettled mood on the island, causing some readers of "When the Germans Took Jamaica" to take the tale rather literally. As a result, the *Jamaica Times* was forced to publish a reassuring notice lest greater panic ensue.⁴⁰ For some among the white elite, this may have reinforced the belief that the Jamaican population in general lacked the stoicism and self-control that were felt to be the preserve of white men.

Although "When the Germans Took Jamaica" and much pro-war poetry in the early months of the war presented the Germans as a nation of barbarians, the colonial elite needed to ensure this mood did not encourage criticism of Europeans in general. Anti-German feelings were moderated by alternative positions which portrayed the Germans themselves as victims of "Prussianism", an aberration that had caused the war through ruthless militarism. "Prussianism" was also characterised as inflexible, obsessed with efficiency and hostile to the kind of individualism, idiosyncrasy and amateurism which underpinned the benign imaginings of British imperial rule. That Kaiser Wilhelm was Queen Victoria's grandson also placed boundaries around anti-German feeling. A dialect poem by Raglan Phillips, hinted that Wilhelm's misunderstanding of Christian obligations, not his racial background, were responsible for the war.⁴¹

³⁹ See Richard Smith, "J. Edmestone Barnes, a Jamaican Apocalyptic Visionary in the Early Twentieth Century" in Karolyn Kinane and Mike Ryan (eds), *End of Days: Popular Conceptions of the Apocalypse* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009), 136–153.

⁴⁰ *JT*, 14 November 1914, 15.

⁴¹ *JT*, 12 December 1914, 9.

Pro-imperial Sentiment

In the August 1914 edition of the *Zouave*, magazine of the second battalion WIR, Lance Corporal James Grocer expressed the loyalty to much-vaunted imperial ideals shared by many Jamaican subjects. Grocer suggested that the Union Jack was symbolic of a progressive and virtuous Empire which had the interests of every subject at its heart. This was an imagined set of ideals devoid of the hierarchies of race and class which governed the daily life of Jamaicans. The Union Jack was “the vial that contains the glorious essence of Civilization” and the British Empire a machine of modernity “dragging ... the train of blessing to man[k]ind the wide world over, irrespective of Class or Creed ... remov[ing] from Mankind ... despotism and tyranny ... bringing in an atmosphere of hope and prosperity.”⁴²

In a further article for the *Zouave*,⁴³ Grocer disclosed that he had read *Self-Help* by Samuel Smiles, the Scottish reformer and writer.⁴⁴ Grocer may have been drawn to the book, which by the early twentieth century had run to 250,000 copies, for its summary of the anti-slavery struggle.⁴⁵ Smiles outlined how “the glory of manly character” could be achieved through “diligent self-culture, self-discipline, and self-control—and, above all, on that honest and upright performance of individual duty”. Smiles’ words were aimed at the improvement of the industrial working class but also underpinned, more generally, mid-Victorian ideals of masculinity and industry. As a soldier, Grocer would have felt a particular resonance and as a loyal colonial subject could have read these words as axioms for a civilising imperial mission, which sought to impress upon the subject races individual industry as the means of achieving economic and social development.⁴⁶

The Empire’s place as guarantor of “Emancipation” and “Freedom” in the face of German barbarism, was further underpinned by the ideals of liberty which were presented as central to the imperial project. Grocer reiterated the words attributed to the elder Pitt that “the humblest peasant in his cottage may bid defiance to ... the Forces of the Crown.”⁴⁷ This was

⁴² *Zouave*, August 1914, 138.

⁴³ “The Will & the Way”, *Zouave*, November 1914, 170–171.

⁴⁴ Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help: with illustrations of Character and Conduct* (London: John Murray, 1859).

⁴⁵ Peter W. Sinnema, “Introduction”, in Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), vii.

⁴⁶ See Holt, *Problem of Freedom*.

⁴⁷ *Zouave*, August 1914, 139.

a powerful ideal in the hands of the Jamaican peasantry whose economy and lifestyle was still circumscribed by the interests of the plantocracy, despite greater encouragement of peasant self-sufficiency from the Colonial Office.⁴⁸ As such these principles could be linked to the defence of an empire which might ultimately deliver greater autonomy over the heads of the white Jamaican elite. As Grocer declared, "Love, Liberty and Loyalty, are the trumpets that call us today to extend our powers, however feeble, to a gigantic cause, better known as a righteous war."⁴⁹

The impact of these pro-imperial sentiments was underlined when Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), inaugurated on the eve of the war, approved a resolution affirming its loyalty to King and Empire in Kingston on 15 September 1914:

being mindful of the great protecting and civilizing influence of the English nation and people ... and their justice to all men, and especially to their Negro Subjects scattered all over the world, we hereby beg to express our loyalty and devotion to His Majesty the King, and Empire ... We sincerely pray for the success of British Arms on the battlefields of Europe and Africa, and at Sea.⁵⁰

UNIA's resolution highlighted how the institutions, values and ceremonials of empire were initially regarded as the natural aspirations and measures of black self-improvement. The decision by some Irish Nationalists to suspend the campaign for Home Rule in return for post-war concessions and which was reported in the Jamaican press may have further influenced Garvey to issue a declaration of support.⁵¹ Scare stories in the Jamaican press, which had been fuelled by allegations of German atrocities in France and Belgium, were also likely to have had some influence.

Propaganda and Recruitment

The Colonial Office had initially supported the War Office line that colonies such as Jamaica would better serve the war effort through the provision of raw materials, rather than men for the front. It was forced to change this position as enthusiasm for military service among the black Jamaican

⁴⁸ Holt, *Problem of Freedom*, 316–317.

⁴⁹ *Zouave*, August 1914, 139.

⁵⁰ The National Archives CO137/705/5 Marcus Garvey, Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association & African Communities League to Rt. Hon. Lewis Harcourt, MP, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 16 September 1914.

⁵¹ See for example *Gleaner*, 8 August 1914, 8

population became increasingly apparent, in the belief that continued rejection of volunteers could result in resentment and a possible upsurge in anti-colonial feeling.⁵² The palpable sense of loyalty to the British monarch sustained the eagerness to enlist with volunteers often making their own way to Britain, despite the possibility of rejection at the recruiting offices on racial grounds. From the early days of the war, George V's addresses to dominion and colonial audiences were reproduced in the Jamaican press. His messages to the "Dominions, Colonies and to the peoples of India" on 9 September 1914 spoke of how "my whole Empire at Home and Overseas have moved with one mind and purpose to confront and overthrow an unparalleled assault upon the continuity of civilisation and the race of mankind"⁵³ and highlighted the promise of troops and naval support from the Dominions and India.

By October 1915, when the Earl of Derby introduced his scheme to increase the faltering supply of volunteers in Britain, the King, who had already started to encourage the formation of West Indian contingents, issued a fresh call for volunteers in an "Appeal" circulated throughout the Empire. Acknowledging the loss of those who had already fallen, he pleaded:

I ask you to make good these Sacrifices.
In ancient days the darkest moment had ever produced in men of our race
the sternest resolve.
I ask you, men of all classes, to come forward voluntarily and take your share
in the fight.⁵⁴

After the appeal was read in all Jamaican churches on Sunday 31 October,⁵⁵ a litany of press articles and poems appeared to reinforce the message of racial inclusivity and justice. Tom Redcam called on "Sons of the Empire ... Heedless of race, rank, or creed" to be "Mindful of Duty alone"⁵⁶ While Rose de Lisser in "The Appeal" urged the women of Jamaica not to prevent their men folk from presenting themselves for the army for "It is better to know they are fighting, For that which is dearest and best; Than to see them home playing the coward, In a languorous ease and rest."⁵⁷ In "The Motherland's Call", Sydney Moxsy, a rationalist and Justice of the Peace, reiter-

⁵² The National Archives CO137/712/ WO to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 19 May 1915.

⁵³ *Gleaner*, 11 September 1914, 1.

⁵⁴ *The Times*, 25 October 1915, 7.

⁵⁵ *Gleaner*, 25 October 1915, 8; 26 October 1915, 13.

⁵⁶ Rev. J. W. Graham and Tom Redcam, *Round the Blue Light* (Kingston: Jamaica Times Printery, 1918), 5.

⁵⁷ *Gleaner*, 26 October 1915, 6.

ated the vision of Britain as the upholder of liberty and the guarantor of a free labour economy. He explicitly called on non-white Jamaicans to enlist in the defence of “the Motherland” and, while risking death, earn the promise of a place in the national pantheon.

Colonial hearts in loyalty must stir,
 Face danger, death face all for sake of her ...
 No outward shade can dim the pluck within,
 Brave hearts may beat beneath a coloured skin ...
 What do you think, proud Sons of Liberty,
 Your Land enslaved could you then happy be?
 Defend that land, don't seek alone renown,
 Brave duty done is Life's immortal crown⁵⁸

Moxsy's interpretation of “The Appeal” was crucial in suggesting that black Jamaicans were equal to the ideals of white masculinity in relation to front-line service. This was an indirect riposte to the War Office who, up until the intervention of George V, had resisted offers of volunteer contingents from the West Indian governments. Furthermore, Moxsy was calling for the defence of Jamaican sovereignty and subjects, as well as urging volunteers to support the imperial cause.

For many Jamaicans, the early involvement of the Indian Army and French African soldiers inspired emerging black racial consciousness and instilled a desire among black Jamaicans to volunteer. North African Zouaves, whose uniform had been adopted by the WIR in the nineteenth century,⁵⁹ were reported to be anxious to get to grips with the German foe,⁶⁰ encouraging suggestions that the WIR to be deployed in Europe.⁶¹ Major Edward Dixon, a member of the Jamaican Legislative Council, argued that the WIR's training and combat experience made it a more effective fighting unit than the reserve and yeomanry battalions based in the United Kingdom.⁶² As the British Expeditionary Force came under increasing pressure, units of the Indian Army were sent to France and Belgium in an attempt to stave off the German advance. The *Daily Gleaner* reported that the Indian forces had “covered themselves in glory” in their first action at Le Bassée in October 1914.⁶³

⁵⁸ *Gleaner*, 29 November 1915, 14.

⁵⁹ Dyde, *Empty Sleeve*, 148–150.

⁶⁰ *DC*, 26 August 1914, 5.

⁶¹ *West India Committee Circular*, No. 416, 8 September 1914, 414.

⁶² *JT*, 5 September 1914, 15.

⁶³ *Gleaner*, 21 October 1914, 5.

That the views on the war presented in the Jamaican press percolated to the mass of the population is evident in the large number of labourers and peasants who came forward as volunteers. The BWIR was formed in October 1915 to accept the West Indian contingents starting to arrive in the United Kingdom. Of the first 4000 Jamaicans who volunteered for service in the regiment, labourers (1633) formed the largest occupational category, followed by cultivators (657).⁶⁴ By this stage in the war, in addition to the influence of local news, patriotic demonstrations and recruitment meetings were being staged in even the most remote districts of the island. But there was also some scepticism about the war and the merits of joining the army among the black working class and peasantry. Military service could be regarded as meaning a loss of the autonomy and independence so valued by the peasantry who mocked the volunteers with phrases like “Him foot not used to boots.”⁶⁵

Serving the cause of King and Empire would assume a deep significance in the post-war era for those who had volunteered in the belief they served the causes of liberty and justice. These ascribed imperial values served as a benchmark against which demands for post-war economic reform and the aspirations of Jamaica's subject population could be measured. Sacrifices, both real and imagined, entailed by veterans who had enlisted in the cause of empire could then be deployed to legitimise demands for progressive change. Prior to the war, Jamaican subjects could be represented by the imperial project as the humble recipients of British goodwill and beneficence. But wartime service cast Jamaicans in a far more proactive role as defenders of the liberties apparently bestowed upon them by an altruistic Empire. At a recruitment rally in Kingston, two weeks before the King's Appeal, Governor Manning painted a stark picture of the world that would emerge in the event of a German victory and asked all able-bodied Jamaican men to show their gratitude to the empire by enlisting. “Were they satisfied with the benign rule of the empire to which they belonged or did they prefer the iron heel of Prussian militarism crushing them?”⁶⁶

As discussed above, the need to preserve hierarchies of race and class in colonies such as Jamaica imposed limitations on anti-German propaganda. Criticism of Germany had to be measured to ensure it did not result in this questioning of white authority in Jamaica. By suggesting the Germans themselves were dupes of “Prussianism”, hegemonic whiteness was pre-

⁶⁴ Hill, *Who's Who in Jamaica*, 246.

⁶⁵ *Gleaner*, 2 February 1917, 7.

⁶⁶ *Gleaner*, 12 October 1915, 13.

served. Accordingly Anglo-Saxon Britons represented the pinnacle of civilisation, but a German, untouched by Prussianism and often portrayed as slightly simple and rustic, was just a step behind; "an excellent fellow, home-loving, industrious and kindly, if a bit coarse."⁶⁷

In the first month of the war, the *Zouave* published an article which contrasted the application of iron Prussian military discipline with the British tradition. "The German Military Muddle" argued that total obedience and a thorough knowledge of military science could not replace the soldier "who knows how to 'muddle through' and how to 'carry on' when in a tight place, without waiting for instructions." German military customs would "eradicate individualism" and result in "iron-bound automatism." Furthermore, discipline alone was insufficient for the officer "is in exactly the same position as the father who has launched his son upon the battle of life. He must rely upon the past training of his son, certainly, but above all upon his individuality, courage, and devotion."⁶⁸

Recruitment campaigns in Jamaica reflected this need to balance anti-German feeling with the preservation of the racial hegemony. In a society in which agricultural labour was synonymous with the black peasantry, presenting military service as a duty requiring technical capacity provided an ideological means of limiting recruitment to those elements of the black population who had the most contact with British education and values. This rearticulation of racialised beliefs served to link the lighter-skinned middle class with an additional element of the respectable black working class. Together, these two elements of Jamaican society reinforced the buffer between the potentially unruly black masses and the white elite during a period of imperial self-doubt. Simultaneously, images of German technological efficiency could be used to remind the black peasantry of their status in Jamaican society.

In May 1915, as a war contingent began to assemble in Jamaica, Brigadier-General Blackden, general officer of the Jamaican local forces, envisaged a certification system for skilled men to assist future deployment which "should be sparingly given ... to really skilled men... Preference should be given to unmarried men between 20 and 30 years of age who are in a position to feed and clothe themselves until embarkation."⁶⁹ At a recruitment rally in October 1915, Blackden declared that Jamaican volunteers would be "going to fight against the Germans, people of great scientific ideas ...

⁶⁷ *JT*, 5 September 1914, 14.

⁶⁸ *Zouave*, August 1914, 121.

⁶⁹ *Gleaner*, 31 May 1915, 13.

who had discovered the latest methods of warfare." This situation demanded "the best and most intelligent men" but, complained Blackden, it was often "an undersized, ragged, barefooted set of fellows, who came forward probably to get a meal."⁷⁰ Blackden insisted that Jamaica be "represented by its most intelligent people ... although there is ... room for the muscle that drives the bayonet home, there is ... more room for the brain that can use the complicated weapons of modern warfare."⁷¹ However, in a society such as Jamaica where regular and reasonably paid employment was so hard to come by, it was inevitable that military service would be regarded as an attractive option by the subsistence farmer or casual workman; a situation clearly indicated in the recruitment statistics.

The Problem of Race and Imperial Unity

The concern to maintain Jamaica's race and class structure and simultaneously promote a unified imperial war effort was further complicated by racial attitudes in the empire at large. Robert Graves' *Goodbye to All That* provides a number of anecdotal scenarios which highlight that the racial hierarchy of empire was a complex affair. There were as many tensions, prejudices and rivalries between different elements of the colonial and metropolitan elites as between colonial states and non-white subjects. Racial attitudes fashioned in the context of imperial occupation were not simply forgotten for the sake of the war effort. On arrival in France in the early days of the war, a battalion of the Welsh Regiment was understood by Graves to still be wearing the shorts issued to them while stationed in India. The attitude of the soldiers was likewise unchanged, "The men treat the French civilians just like 'niggers', kick them about, talk army Hindustani at them."⁷²

Graves complained when an eighteen year old son of the Jamaican planter class was commissioned straight to the rank of first lieutenant in the Middlesex Regiment over the heads of more experienced men. For men born in the United Kingdom, such privileges apparently granted to the offspring of colonial elites were a source of resentment. Men from such backgrounds were generally regarded as feeble in character and stamina due to the supposed enervating effects of the tropical climate and colonial

⁷⁰ *Gleaner*, 20 October 1915, 14.

⁷¹ *Gleaner*, 12 October 1915, 13.

⁷² Robert Graves, *Goodbye To All That* (London: Penguin, 1960 [1929]), 107.

morality. For Graves, this resulted in disastrous military consequences. During the British offensive at Le Bassée in September 1915, the white Jamaican lieutenant left his post as bombing officer at a vital moment, allowing a German machine gun to mow down advancing columns of the Welch Fusiliers.⁷³ In general, the descent of the war into mass destruction and the accompanying erosion of codes of “fair play” was blamed on the presence of French African and Indian troops in France and Flanders. According to Graves ‘[t]he presence of semi-civilized coloured troops in Europe was, from the German point of view, we knew, one of the chief Allied atrocities. We sympathized’.⁷⁴ Graves recounted the tale of a French North African soldier who arrived at the mess room demanding a jam ration in exchange for the German head he was carrying. Graves also repeated an account, apparently told to him by a French civilian, in which a retreating German column was set upon by a black French regiment who ripped the ears off their victims, keeping them in their pockets as souvenirs.⁷⁵ In general, antipathy towards the Germans was tempered by other complex representations of ethnicity, culture and religion. Graves described a racial hierarchy based on ascribed standards of hygiene. In descending order these were:

English and German Protestant; Northern Irish, Welsh, and Canadians; Irish and German Catholics; Scots, with certain higher-ranking exceptions; Mohammedan Indians; Algerians; Portuguese; Belgians; French ... We put the Belgians and French there for spite; they could not have been dirtier than the Algerians and the Portuguese.⁷⁶

In the first year of the war, before the establishment of the BWIR, several newspapers in the United Kingdom published articles and accompanying photographs about black men who had enlisted in the British army on arrival from the West Indies. A black Jamaican in the Staffordshire regiment was shown joking with members of the Household Cavalry in Whitehall, and Edward Jones of Barbados, who enlisted in the Cheshire Regiment, was shown sitting on the lions in London’s Trafalgar Square.⁷⁷ However, other black men travelling to the United Kingdom to enlist usually met with a rather difference response. The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act

⁷³ Ibid., 129–32.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 155.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 155.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 152.

⁷⁷ *Daily Sketch*, 7 March 1916 and *Daily Mirror*, 8 November 1915 cuttings in Institute of Commonwealth Studies WIC/2/BWIR Album of Press Cuttings; *Illustrated Western Weekly News*, 11 March 1916; 27.

regarded "Any person born within His Majesty's dominions and allegiance" as a "natural born British subject."⁷⁸ Military law was more ambiguous for it regarded 'any negro or person of colour' as an alien, thereby restricting the numbers who could be recruited to no more than one in fifty of the ranks.⁷⁹ As a result, black volunteers from Jamaica and elsewhere were accepted according to the whims or prejudices of local recruiting officers.

Some Jamaicans successfully enlisted, but were then dismissed from service without clear explanation. The failure to recruit from among the black population in Britain's seaports met with some criticism.⁸⁰ In May 1915, at West Ham Police Court, nine men from Barbados were charged with stowing away on the S.S. *Danube*, but claimed they had come to Britain to enlist.⁸¹ The case against them was discharged, but the men's desire to fight for the empire, perhaps motivated in this case from the promise of adventure, was met with dismissive remarks from the magistrate.⁸² A group of three Jamaican stowaways, who arrived with the same intention two years later were treated more harshly by the same court and were sentenced to seven days' imprisonment.⁸³ Once recruits to the BWIR arrived in the United Kingdom, the image of a racially cohesive and united empire could be renewed. Any attempts to disrupt this image were punished. Shortly after the first West Indian contingents arrived in October 1915, Lawrence Bristow Graham appeared at Lewes Police Court and was charged with making remarks likely to jeopardise recruiting to His Majesty's forces. At a hotel bar, Graham had accosted two privates in the BWIR, demanding to know why they had settled for the King's shilling when leading ministers were being paid many thousands of pounds per year. Graham continued, "Look at your King, he's a German, and so are all the rest of the family, why don't you lay down your arms and do no fighting?"⁸⁴ Graham further suggested that white men should be left to fight their own battles and that the West Indians were fools to fight for the Empire. Graham was sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour.

In the later stages of the war, recruitment in Jamaica had the potential to be affected by increasing coverage of racial hostility that was being ex-

⁷⁸ *British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act* (London: HMSO, 1914), 33.

⁷⁹ *Manual of Military Law* (London: HMSO, 1914), 471.

⁸⁰ *Seaman*, 19 November 1915, 5.

⁸¹ *Stratford Express*, 29 May 1915, 2.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 19 May 1915, 3.

⁸³ *Stratford Express*, 12 May 1917, 3; London Borough of Newham Archives, West Ham Police Court Register of Charges 1917, p. 101, entry for 3 May 1917.

⁸⁴ *Newhaven Chronicle*, 18 November 1915, n.p.

perienced by black servicemen and war workers in the United Kingdom. By the summer of 1917 reaction to the black presence in the metropole had become distinctly antagonistic, eroding the more welcoming and cohesive tone which marked the outbreak of war. The *Gleaner* reprinted a selection of extracts under the headline "Coloured Men in Motherland" which highlighted the racialised anxieties that were beginning to emerge. On the one hand it was clear that the presence of black volunteers and workers was a necessary evil in wartime. On the other, there was a concern they should be effectively excluded from contact with the white population, particularly women. An extract from the *Empire News* suggested the provision of "rational amusements in the evening" so that black men were "left with nothing more to do in the evening than to lounge at corners outside public-houses." The *Daily Dispatch* complained of the "pronounced weakness" of black men "for associating with white women."⁸⁵ Parents of young girls were said to be "crying out ... that conditions should be returned to normal."⁸⁶ An "Anxious Mother", reflected the widely-held concern that women should not engage in behaviour that transgressed the boundaries of race, class and gender, particularly while their men folk risked death or injury at the front. She called on the government to "step in and remove a temptation which is daily becoming more hideous."⁸⁷

To balance this hostility, the *Gleaner* edition also highlighted some more favourable reports. These anticipated be welfare and economic reform to be enjoyed when the black war worker returned home; "to the black, the better empire of the better Britain must give the share that he has helped to win, home and contentment, security for him and his, beneath the sunshine of his native skies."⁸⁸ More liberal voices argued that citizenship should be regarded as the appropriate reward for war service. A statement attributed to Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck held that "the native labourer should be treated as a citizen of the British empire, and not as a helot whose only lot in life was to work for the white man ... I would give the native the privilege of settling down in the country where he works after his agreement is finished."⁸⁹ Sentiments such as these would feed the aspirations of Jamaicans who believed a post-war dispensation would reward military service.

⁸⁵ *Gleaner*, 4 September 1917, 10.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Anti-German and pro-imperial propaganda in Jamaica during the First World War was conducted largely on informal or semi-official lines and developed around discourses of both imperial and Jamaican national belonging. Wartime mobilisation was seen as a means of drawing Jamaica more firmly into the disciplinary frameworks of modernity as applied to military service. However, wartime propaganda endeavoured to ensure that the race and class expectations of Jamaican colonial society remained intact by differentiating the wartime roles for the black peasantry, black working class, lighter-skinned middle class and white elite. Likewise, condemnation of Germany, and its purported intentions in relation to Jamaica, were carefully nuanced to ensure this did not lead to criticisms of white colonial rule. While a black Jamaican military tradition was clearly evident in wartime propaganda, it was equally clear that this tradition was dependent on the retention of white leadership.

The strong pro-imperial sentiment built around the British monarch, who signified alternative authority to the colonial government and guarantees of emancipation, provided the lynchpin of wartime propaganda in Jamaica. This was particularly significant after the King's "Appeal for Men" in October 1915 and in the monarch's personal role in the raising of the BWIR. The monarch's involvement served to place Jamaica in a broader imperial alliance and also provided alternative sources of masculine military identification, such as the Indian Army. The imperial relationship, particularly when reflected through the monarchy, was central to the ideals of justice and equality upon which a Jamaican contribution to the war effort depended. However, those Jamaicans who had volunteered in the hope of a more equitable and just imperial settlement were ultimately left unsatisfied as the post-war Jamaican economy spiralled into crisis. As disillusionment with the post-war imperial future imagined in wartime propaganda grew, an independent Jamaican national identity predicated on wartime service began to emerge.

Wartime propaganda in Jamaica did fulfil the purpose of drawing out and reflecting the high degree of pro-imperial sentiment in the colony. However, it is clear that Jamaicans supported the war effort for a complex array of other reasons. A deep-rooted aspiration to values such as freedom, democracy and economic development, which were believed to underpin Britain's imperial mission, created a well-spring of support for the war effort from all layers of Jamaican society. Among the black and brown middle-

class and intelligentsia, a belief that post-war reform would ensue was a critical factor in their espousal of the war effort and their involvement in informal propaganda such as poems and letters to the press. These sentiments in turn percolated through to the black working class and peasantry, who shared a similar enthusiasm for the war effort but who may have been as motivated by economic hardship, and perhaps a sense of adventure, as they were by pro-imperial feeling or the hope of post-war redemption.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Anne Samson

When the First World War broke out in Europe, the Union of South Africa was drawn into the conflagration by virtue of it being a British dominion. The country had united in name in 1910 following years of conflict between the two Boer dominated republics of the Orange Free State and Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek, which did not want to be governed by Britain or any other power, and the two British dominated colonies of the Cape and Natal. Following the 1899–1902 war in Southern Africa, also known as the Anglo-Boer War, the two Boer territories came under British sovereignty. The inhabitants of each remained divided in their loyalty with the predominantly Boer section biding their time to regain their independence. A measure of independence was achieved in 1906 and 1907 when the two Boer territories were granted responsible government and then again in 1910 with Union. However, this did not satisfy all. Uniting the territory was one thing, uniting the people remained the challenge.

The outbreak of war in August 1914 provided the South African government with an opportunity to demonstrate its loyalty to Britain and to show its appreciation for the speed with which the Boers had been granted their measure of independence. The subsequent outbreak of civil war in October 1914, however, showed clearly that the white population was still divided. Having committed itself to support the British war effort, whilst ameliorating its dissident population, the South African government had to tread carefully. In this, the press played its role, aligned to, or funded by, the political parties.

To date, most of what has been written on South Africa's involvement during the First World War has been on Delville Wood by South African authors such as Bill Nasson, P.K.A. Digby and Ian Uys.¹ There is a growing interest in non-white South African involvement highlighted by Albert

¹ Bill Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme* (London: Penguin, 2007); P.K.A. Digby, *Pyramids and poppies: the 1st South African Infantry Brigade in Libya, France and Flanders 1915–1919* (Rivonia: Ashanti, 1993); Ian S. Uys, *Delville Wood* (Germiston: Uys, 1983)

Grundlingh and Norman Clothier,² while the East Africa campaign is starting to rise in popularity with works by Ross Anderson and Edward Paice. South African interest in the campaign has been slower which is surprising given the number of troops, carriers and animals that lost their lives there and that it was commanded by two South Africans—Jan Smuts (February 1916–January 1917) and Jaap van Deventer (March 1917–November 1918).³ Less popular, but not completely forgotten are the German South West Africa campaign as recorded by J.J. Collyer and G. L'Ange and the 1914 rebellion as seen in Sandra Swart's work.⁴ However, take a closer look at these texts, whether book or journal article, and invariably other theatres of war where South Africans were involved will be covered. It is almost impossible to explain South African involvement in one theatre without reference to at least the rebellion and events at the outbreak of war. My own work, for example, although focusing on the East Africa campaign covers the rebellion and German South West Africa, and Nasson's *Springboks on the Somme* covers the same as well as German East Africa.⁵ What this serves to indicate is the complexity of South African society and politics and that one group, or even event, cannot be exclusively discussed without reference to another. The extent to which this is, and has been, done is a product of the existing politics in the country and elsewhere at the time of writing. Dominant discourses developed as they were safe—either to explain the ruling ideology's position or to support the opposition's case. Any topic which threatened to do anything other—namely split the groupings—was avoided, hence the relegating to relative obscurity of the rebellion and the campaigns in German South West Africa, East Africa and Palestine in South African historiography, if not national memory.

² Albert Grundlingh, *Fighting their own war: South African blacks and the First World War* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987); Norman Clothier, *Black valour: the South African Native Labour Contingent 1916–1918 and the sinking of the Mendi* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1987)

³ Ross Anderson, *The forgotten front* (Stroud: Tempus, 2004); Edward Paice, *Tip and run* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2007); James Ambrose Brown, *They fought for king and country: South Africans in German East Africa 1916* (Rivonia: Ashanti, 1991)

⁴ J.J. Collyer, *Official History: Campaign in German South West Africa 1914–1915* (Pretoria: 1937); Gerald L'Ange, *Urgent Imperial Service: South African forces in German South West Africa* (Rivonia: Ashanti, 1991); Albert Grundlingh & Sandra Swart, *Radelose rebellie?* (Pretoria: Protea, 2009)

⁵ Anne Samson, *Britain, South Africa and the East Africa campaign, 1914–1918: The Union comes of age* (London: IB Tauris, 2006); Anne Samson, *World War One in Africa: The forgotten conflict among the European powers* (London: IB Tauris, 2012)

Little has been written in South Africa about the press and the role of propaganda, particularly before the advent of Apartheid. Identified texts include *A newspaper history of South Africa* and *South Africa in Two World Wars* both by Vic Alhadeff and Ken Vernon's *Penpricks: The drawing of South Africa's political battlelines*.⁶ Comparisons and references have, therefore, where appropriate, been drawn from other dominions' experiences and literature. In this regard, Jowett and O'Donnell have proven useful in defining propaganda whilst Putnis and McCallum's work on propaganda in Australia during World War One has been of use in understanding the role of Reuters in the supply of information.⁷ Local histories, both published and unpublished, as well as personal accounts have helped complete the picture.⁸

Discourses of South African history tend to focus on specific groups, such as white, black, English, Afrikaans and Boer or specific events. Even in compilations, the events and groups are generally dealt with separately. Within these texts reference may be made to other segments of the population, however, few have tried to reconcile the apparent differences between them or to explore the interrelatedness between groups, for example, English and Afrikaans speaker or to be more specific, the pro-empire supporter and the republican advocate.⁹

The majority of the newspapers were English and at the start of the war quite outspoken in supporting Britain and the empire. Other papers included *The Friend* funded by the South African Party but accused by Botha of supporting Hertzog's National Party in 1914, *De Burger* started by the National Party in July 1915, *De Volksblad* which was Nationalist and *Grocott's Penny Mail* which was independent. Most papers were regional

⁶ Vic Alhadeff, *A newspaper history of South Africa* (Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1986); *South Africa in two World Wars: a newspaper history* (Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1979); Ken Vernon, *Penpricks: The drawing of South Africa's political battlelines* (South Africa: Spearhead, 2000)

⁷ G.S. Jowett & V. O'Donnell, *Propaganda and persuasion*, 4th ed (Los Angeles: Sage, 2006); P. Putnis & K. McCallum *The role of Reuters in the distribution of propaganda news in Australia during World War I* (paper presented to the Australian Media Traditions Conference 24–25 November 2005)

⁸ V. Bickford-Smith, E. van Heyningen, N. Worden, *Cape Town in the twentieth century: an illustrated social history* (Uitgeverij Verloren, 1999); K.M. Satchwell has kindly shared draft papers of her research into individuals in the Grahamstown/Albany area and whose papers are kept at the Cory Library, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa.

⁹ Supported by Albert Grundlingh, 'The king's Afrikaners? Enlistment and ethnic identity in the Union of South Africa Defence Force during the Second World War' in *Journal of African History*, no 40 (1999). This chapter is focusing on the two white tribes of South Africa, English and Afrikaans, which were dominant at the time.

or local with the most national being *De Volkstem*, *De Volksblad*, the English *Sunday Times* and the *Rand Daily Mail*. Towards the end of the war, the number of English papers reduced as two main companies emerged taking over some papers and entering into distribution agreements with others. At the same time, there was an increase in the number of nationalist or Afrikaans/Dutch papers.¹⁰ Coincidentally, this development coincided with the growth of nationalism and a consolidation of money in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Given the changes South Africa was undergoing at the time and the opportunities involvement in the war, and in particular the East Africa campaign, provided, the relative absence of information about the campaign in the South African press is significant. In exploring why this was the case and its implications within the wider context of South African history, this chapter will demonstrate how a conscious decision to withhold information from the masses becomes a form of propaganda.

Historical Background

Before continuing with the discussion on propaganda, it will be helpful to take a brief look at South Africa's involvement in the First World War.

On the outbreak of war, South Africa was asked by Britain to put the wireless stations in German South West Africa out of order. This, Prime Minister Louis Botha and his deputy Jan Smuts were prepared to do, although other senior politicians were reluctant due to the difficulties they foresaw. As preparations for an invasion took place and a number of English-speaking South Africans left to serve in Europe, so the country became more unsettled. Finally, when the troops were ordered to entrain, a group refused and a rebellion erupted. Botha took to the field and personally leading troops loyal to the government brought the rebellion to an end by December 1914. This allowed the country to fulfil its promise of subjugating South West Africa, an action which took six months.

As the campaign drew to a close, leading figures looked for ways to keep South Africans loyal to the Empire, but not prepared to fight in Europe, involved in the war. The Germans in East Africa seemed an appropriate target and following an election in October 1915, recruitment began. Others had been raised specifically as Imperial Service Units, paid for by Britain, to serve in Europe and Nyasaland (today's Malawi). In addition, Britain

¹⁰ Ken Vernon, *Penpricks* (South Africa: Spearhead, 2000), 40–54

paid for two corps of Cape coloureds to be recruited for service in East Africa. Their recruitment caused some concern in South Africa as there was a significant group of whites who objected to the arming of non-white South Africans. However, the offer of the British government to pay for the contingents reduced any argument in parliament. There was less of an outcry about sending labour contingents to East Africa and Europe and the raising of an Indian Bearer Corps as these groups were unarmed and undertaking tasks in which they were “already competent” and which “white men [could] not be asked to perform”.¹¹

Defining Propaganda

According to Jowett and O'Donnell, propaganda is the purposeful misleading of a group of people and can be classified as black, white or grey. White propaganda is information which is relatively accurate and from a legitimate source, black propaganda is where lies are convincingly told from a false source and believed to be credible, whilst grey is a mix of the two.¹² They continue that “Propaganda [...] runs the gamut from truth to deception. It is, at the same time, always value and ideology laden,”¹³ and that “The purpose of propaganda is to promote a partisan or competitive cause in the interest of the propagandist but not necessarily in the interests of the recipient.”¹⁴

Philip Taylor defines propaganda as “An attempt to influence the attitudes of a specific audience, through the use of facts, fictions, argument or suggestion—often supported by the suppression of inconsistent material—with the calculated purpose of instilling in the recipient certain beliefs, values or convictions which will serve the interest of the author, usually by producing a desired line of action.”¹⁵ This raises the question: Where does one draw the boundary between news, reporting, electioneering and propaganda? In addition, where does censorship fit in? Where Taylor believes they are all elements of attempts to persuade and convince

¹¹ Anne Samson, *Britain, South Africa and the East Africa campaign* (London: IB Tauris, 2006), 108

¹² G.S. Jowett & V. O'Donnell, *Propaganda and persuasion* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2006)

¹³ G.S. Jowett & V. O'Donnell, *Propaganda and persuasion* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2006), 26

¹⁴ G.S. Jowett & V. O'Donnell, *Propaganda and persuasion* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2006), 30

¹⁵ Philip M. Taylor, *The projection of Britain: British overseas publicity and propaganda 1919–1939* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), 4–5

others to follow a specific path,¹⁶ this author has chosen to define propaganda as the purposeful manipulation of the masses for a specific purpose which excludes the conveying of ideology and information for election and political party support (persuasion). The discussion below will attempt to demonstrate the subtle difference, whilst showing how they are linked.

South Africa, War, Elections and Propaganda

The South African situation contrasts with other countries' experiences during World War One and also with South Africa's later use of the press, most notably during the Apartheid years. During the war years, South Africa's propaganda was very simplistic. This is not surprising given that the government was still finding its feet—Union had taken place in 1910 and the South African Defence Force formed in 1912 with no formal department in place when war broke out in 1914. In addition, the political landscape was changing with the formation of the National Party in early 1914 which added a new level of complexity. No longer was it Briton versus Boer, it was now Briton versus Boer pro-Empire supporter against Boer anti-Empire supporter, but how the population would align itself in the latter two groups was yet to be determined. A significant section of the South African public still needed to develop its political awareness. Until the 1915 election, it remained the case that the Boers voted or followed the leader who had led them during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902.

Another aspect in which South Africa differed to other countries concerned the moral reason for fighting the war. Where there was generally consensus amongst other populations regarding the moral reason for fighting the enemy, in South Africa this was not the case.¹⁷ The country was split, as seen by the rebellion of 1914, as to who should be supported—Germany or Britain.¹⁸ Avoiding discussions which could potentially lead to the moral issue being debated were therefore avoided, leaving the only area for negotiation to take place in the sphere of electioneering.

¹⁶ Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the mind: A history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present era*, 3rd edition (Manchester University Press, 2003), 6–7

¹⁷ Another country split in its allegiance was Ireland, although the anti-Empire group was not as openly supportive of Germany.

¹⁸ Most of the leading rebels claimed they were fighting for independence from Britain and not to support Germany. Manie Maritz, however, had signed an agreement with the Germans in South West Africa.

As mentioned above, South African politics during the war was confused as relationships were still being defined and redefined. *De Volkstem*, regarded as the most vociferous anti-government voice, published information which could only have been supplied by the government and did so before many other papers suggesting that it had an inside source. For example on 14 August 1914, the paper announced that all the army officers were in Pretoria for a briefing by the Defence Minister. In addition, one of *De Volkstem's* correspondents, Nathan Levi, published a biography on Smuts during the war which was not anti-Smuts or the South African Party.¹⁹ When Levi approached Smuts about final acceptance of the draft manuscript, Smuts directed him to the editor of *De Volkstem*, Dr F.V. Engelenburg who was later to write a biography on Botha (both biographies are fair representations of their subjects).²⁰ The other paper which seemed to have an inside source was the pro-government *Bloemfontein Post*.²¹ In the early days of the war, it followed the movement of senior politicians, noting on 4 August 1914 that there was no news from the government but that Botha was meeting Smuts at his farm. It was the first to announce that the Imperial troops were being returned to Britain.²² The split in Labour between empire supporters and others led to further confusion while the jingoist Union Party papers were realigning support to accommodate the more middle of the road South African Party to not alienate the pro-empire Afrikaners.

It is suggested for the purpose of this study that there was an empire propaganda campaign running alongside a local political agenda which was electioneering. Where the empire agenda potentially conflicted with the local, for example East Africa, the issue was avoided or side-stepped. It was clearly not the intention of the South African politicians to avoid issues. Their interest was to persuade their followers that their approach was in everyone's best interests. However, political necessity dictated that issues which would divide their following or result in them being accused of treachery were avoided. If anything, the South African political parties were manipulating the press and information in the country by avoidance rather than through publication. The question remains: where does the

¹⁹ W. Keith Hancock, *Smuts papers*, vol 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1966), 358, 380 L. Botha to J.C. Smuts 13 Apr 1916; Nathan Levi to Smuts 13 Jun 1916; Nathan Levi, *Jan Smuts being a character sketch of General the Hon. J.C. Smuts KC MLA, Minister of Defence Union of South Africa* (London: Longmans, 1917)

²⁰ W. Keith Hancock, *Smuts papers*, vol 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1966), 429 Levi to Smuts 5 Dec 1916; F.V. Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha* (London: George Harrap, 1929)

²¹ *De Volksblad, Bloemfontein Post*, 14 Aug 1914, 25 Aug 1914

²² *Bloemfontein Post*, 4 Aug 1914, 7 Aug 1914

overt avoidance of issues fall within the range of actions defined by Taylor, Jowett and O'Donnell as propaganda?

As early as 7 August 1914, the press, English and Dutch/Afrikaans, was reporting that the South African Mounted Reserve had been put on alert and would most likely be sent to patrol the border between the Union and German South West Africa.²³ Three weeks later, the Beaufort West *Courier* announced that "German troops have officially crossed the border in the neighbourhood of Nakob and invaded Union territory" and the *Uitenhage Chronicle* that "a German patrol attacked a small force of Africander (sic) refugees on an island in the Orange River."²⁴ In parliament, Hertzog accused Smuts of orchestrating the German violation by redrawing the boundary on the map used to explain why South Africa and the German colony were at war. Smuts denied the accusation. Whether the incidents at Nakob and in the Orange River area themselves were orchestrated or fortuitous remains to be determined. What is known is that the border was under dispute given the 1910 Union boundary definitions.²⁵ That the government had some say in what was generally published in the press was evidenced by the publication of General Beyers' letter of resignation. Although Beyers sent his letter directly to Reuters for publication, it was withheld by non-Hertzogite papers until the government could publish its response.²⁶ The Reuters chief in South Africa, Roderick Jones, further suggested to Smuts that the government publish Beyers' letter and the government response in pamphlet form to counteract the press reports in the nationalist papers.²⁷

What becomes apparent in looking at the press articles is that there was a mix of propaganda and electioneering all the way through the war with variations in extent. The propaganda articles mostly originate from London and Reuters dealing with the war in general and events in Europe. Articles on local South African events were reported differently—more factually and less emotionally and on occasion even ignored. Thus when we come

²³ *Kokstad Advertiser*, 7 Aug 1914 in Vic Alhadeff, *South Africa in two World Wars* (Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1979), 8

²⁴ Vic Alhadeff, *South Africa in two World Wars* (Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1979), 13

²⁵ Annette Seegers, *The military in the making of modern South Africa* (London: IB Tauris, 1996), 20

²⁶ W. Keith Hancock, *Smuts papers*, vol 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1966), 199 R. Jones (Reuters) to J.C. Smuts, 26 Sep 1914; *De Volkstem*, 15 Sep 1914

²⁷ W. Keith Hancock, *Smuts papers*, vol 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1966), 199 R. Jones (Reuters) to J.C. Smuts, 26 Sep 1914; Jones was to take over Reuters in 1915 following the death of Baron Reuter.

to the potential propaganda coup justifying South Africa's invasion of German South West Africa, the action at Nakob on 20 August 1914 and the Orange River incident, we find that it was based on legitimate interpretation of existing information as opposed to manipulation, which was evident in the reporting around the war in Europe.

South Africa implemented martial law on 12 October 1914, two months after the outbreak of war, while neighbouring countries such as Nyasaland and British East Africa introduced it straight away.²⁸ The passing of martial law, which included the banning of mass meetings and rallies, was brought about by the Boer rebels who refused to invade the neighbouring German colony. Under the act, it appears that only one publication was forced to close—*The War on War Gazette* which had been set up by anti-war and anti-capitalist labour supporters.²⁹ Once the rebellion was over, it appears that the constraints imposed by martial law were reduced out of necessity for canvassing votes in the 1915 election but also, it seems, to allow those against the war to have their say providing they did not threaten the security of the country. The leniency of the government towards opposition was berated by J.X. Merriman, senior politician, who complained about the publication and distribution of seditious pamphlets. Action was not taken against the outspoken *De Burger* after its formation in mid-July 1915 and neither did the government appear to curtail what was published in the non-white press which saw in the war an opportunity to obtain freedom and recognition as equal citizens.³⁰ The government's leniency continued to cause some concern and formed the topic of debate at St Andrew's School in the Eastern Cape. In 1917, the St Andrew's debating society debated "That some further limitation of the press in the present circumstances in this country is desirable." The outcome was 39–38 in favour of further limitation.³¹ The result takes on a new significance when assessed alongside the press reports first complimenting the men of Grahamstown and Albany (Eastern Cape) on their patriotism and later exhorting and berating them for their failure to support the country in its time of need.

²⁸ Errol Trzebinski, *The Kenya pioneers* (London: Heinemann, 1981); TNA: CO 525/57/38176, 14 Aug 1914 G.G. Nyasaland to CO, ff.83–85

²⁹ Bill Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme* (London: Penguin, 2007), 24; W.P. Visser, *The South African Labour movement's responses to declarations of martial law, 1913–1922*, (paper presented at The War & Society Conference in Africa, South African Military Academy, Saldhana Bay, 12–14 September 2001), 14–17

³⁰ V. Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town* (Uitgeverij Verloren, 1999), 52

³¹ St Andrew's College Magazine in article supplied by K.M. Satchwell, *The propaganda war*

As debate did not seem to be an integral feature of parliament, the use of the press and publication of pamphlets appeared to fulfil the function.³² Smuts writing to Merriman about the forthcoming election noted that he had received some pamphlets, affidavits and letters which he would have “scattered broadcast.”³³ These were significant means of communication, both sides using pamphlets to explain the reasons for, and development of, the rebellion. Election manifestos and messages were also published in pamphlet form. Here as with the press, Merriman complained that Smuts was not carrying out the government’s duty in preventing the spread of propaganda: “You have not done the things you ought to have done in not exercising some vigilance over this propaganda of poison, or in omitting to publish vital documents,” many of which originated in Stellenbosch. Apart from being anti-government, Merriman was concerned at the “more highly coloured versions of *De Burger* doctrines” which were corrupting “the whole mind of the people outside the towns.”³⁴

The South African papers, Dutch, Afrikaans and English, regularly carried updates on how the war in Europe was progressing and before September 1914 a fair amount of debate on the extent to which the Union should get involved in the war or not and the impact this would have on the country—the point of view expressed determined by the political leaning of the paper. Once South Africa had formally decided to participate in the war and campaign in German South West Africa, the amount of reporting decreased and by the time the decision was being made to go into East Africa, the press had very little to say about the employment of troops although adverts were still run. Developments on the Western Front and other significant theatres were reported but the major concern of the nationalist reporters, reflecting that of the country, was economic so the price of wool, amongst other exports, was hotly discussed as was any hint that South Africa might have to pay for any aspect of the war.³⁵ As a result Botha tried to find ways to circumvent parliament in order to avoid any confrontation with the Nationalists, although this was not always possible.

³² Round Table, *Commonwealth Quarterly*, no 17 (Dec 1914), 491–496; V. Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town* (Uitgeverij Verloren, 1999), 57

³³ W. Keith Hancock, *Smuts papers*, vol 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1966), 311 J.C. Smuts to J.X. Merriman, 30 Aug 1915

³⁴ W. Keith Hancock, *Smuts papers*, vol 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1966), 315 J.X. Merriman to J.C. Smuts, 30 Sep 1915

³⁵ *The Evening Chronicle*, 5 Aug 1914, 10 Aug 1914; Bill Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme* (London: Penguin, 2007), 95

Britain helped, with the result that many South Africans were recruited as imperial troops. By recruiting imperial troops, for example the Cape Corps consisting of coloureds, parliament's permission did not need to be obtained as their recruitment was in accordance with General Order 672 of 1915 which provided that "The South African Overseas Expeditionary Force will be Imperial and have the status of British Regular Troops."³⁶ Information about these opportunities was provided in the papers as adverts with further information being supplied at meetings or recruitment venues.³⁷ As the war progressed and recruitment numbers declined, various enticements were offered such as dental treatment if that was the only thing preventing the volunteer from passing his medical.³⁸ Similar information was published after 1917 announcing that if men who had been invalided out of East Africa were passed medically fit, they could re-enlist for service.³⁹

In general, it is difficult to regard the newspaper adverts as propaganda as no emotive or persuasive language was used unless recruiting for Europe where it was anticipated that only English-speakers would serve.⁴⁰ A newspaper recruitment advert for service in East Africa, aimed at Botha supporters, in 1915 read:

Recruits are required for the following work in the Union Defence Force: Field artillery (Gunnery); South African Medical Corps; Infantry—drafted in as necessary.⁴¹

This was in contrast to the recruitment poster posted in prominent areas. The following poster recruiting for East Africa from late November 1915 announced:

MEN OF SOUTH AFRICA TO ARMS! Every fit man must get into khaki today. It is his duty. Britain has asked us to conquer German East Africa and during January, February and March this must be done. These are the only months during which a campaign is possible in our enemy's colony. 10,000 men are wanted. We believe we shall get them, but not if you, reader, leave it to the other fellow. The call is urgent. Immediate action is essential. Our

³⁶ K.M. Satchwell, *Recruitment*

³⁷ Ken Vernon, *Penpricks* (South Africa, Spearhead, 2000); V. Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town* (Uitgeverij Verloren, 1999), 52; K.M. Satchwell, *Recruitment*

³⁸ K.M. Satchwell, *Bertram Dixon*

³⁹ *Matatiele Mail*, 11 Jan 1917; Vic Alhadeff, *South Africa in two World Wars* (Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1979), 21

⁴⁰ See Vincent Crapanzano's *Waiting: The whites of South Africa* (London: HarperCollins, 1985) for a basic analysis of the different white groupings in South Africa.

⁴¹ *Sunday Post*, 10 Jan 1915

manhood must realise that we have reached a crisis in our history when a rifle in every available South African hand is imperative. The word "NOW" cannot be too strongly urged because NOW MEANS VICTORY.

Have you not been thrilled by the example of Australia and Canada? Australia has sent her sons in thousands to the Dardanelles and their deed and valour will live forever. The Canadians in Flanders held the line against a terrific German attack which was supported by POISON GAS. The world rings with the fame of Britain's colonial sons. We conquered German West and we can conquer German East if YOU will help. There is only one way and that is in khaki. Realise the urgency of this call to arms. Remember the tragedy of Belgium, the wholesale murder of her civilian population, the Lusitania women and children, the Zeppelin raids on peaceful villages, the shelling of Ancona's lifeboats and the brutal murder of Nurse Cavell. Remember the perpetrators of these deeds are our neighbours and a menace to the Union. Springboks TO ARMS! Your country is calling.

Recruiting Office: City Hall⁴²

Britain needed help. By mentioning this in the advert, Smuts deflected attention away from it being his idea that South Africans fight in East Africa, thereby avoiding any potential confrontation with the nationalists.⁴³

The poster was more in line with the newspaper adverts recruiting for Europe, as seen by the following in 1917:

Won't you join?

Help man a British trench. Conscience, duty, honour bid you take a soldier's pay, revenge and love of man bid you enlist today... be a man in a world of men; and mother will pray for her soldier son and the girls will love you then. Think of the Empire and what it means; of her heroes who have bled. For Overseas Brigade (AJC)⁴⁴

Another dominant concern for white South Africans was the fear of possible black uprisings if too many whites left the country to fight in Europe or East Africa. When black leaders promised they would remain peaceful during the war, the fear of whites going to the front was somewhat reduced although those staying behind, including rebels, were permitted to retain their weapons.⁴⁵ This fear was exacerbated in the run-up to the 1915 election as pro-Britain supporters feared the reduction of voters in the country could mean a victory for the National Party.⁴⁶ The result was that recruitment

⁴² Poster at <http://hoohila.stanford.edu/poster/viewLargePicture.php?posterID=SA+104&size=large> [accessed 19 June 2011]

⁴³ Anne Samson, *Britain, South Africa and East Africa* (London: IB Tauris, 2006)

⁴⁴ *Matatiele Mail*, 8 Feb 1917

⁴⁵ V. Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town* (Uitgeverij Verloren, 1999), 50

⁴⁶ Annette Seegers, *The military in the making of modern South Africa* (London: IB Tauris, 1996), 22–29; H. Strachan, *The First World War in Africa* (Oxford University Press,

slumped until after the election when there was a marked increase in recruitment numbers.

That there was a problem obtaining recruits for East Africa is evident from the adverts notifying prospective volunteers that they could choose their regiment or obtain free dental plates:⁴⁷

Free teeth: Men who are fit in every other way except as to dental requirements may be accepted for service with East Africa contingents provided that their teeth can be put in order within 6 weeks and that they are likely to become efficient soldiers. A dental staff will be employed at Potchefstroom at the expense of the Government.⁴⁸

Another enticement was the opportunity to see Central Africa: "Here is a chance to see Central Africa. Twenty medical orderlies are required for service in Nyasaland. Pay at Union rates with separation allowance for dependents at Imperial rates. Apply to Magistrate."⁴⁹ During December 1915, there was a drive to malign the Germans. On 23 December 1915, the *Matatiele Mail* reported that "Germany has an army in East Africa almost entirely of barbarians, who she has gathered and drilled." The article continued that that German governor had circulated a notice of jihad against Christianity in the native language and "You can imagine what the results will be if this German Mohammedan influence is going to become ascendant in Central Africa."⁵⁰ Supporting the recruitment drive was a poster campaign as mentioned earlier.

The most effective recruitment forum appeared to be the gathering or rally, as noted by the election rallies announced and reported in the press. What was said at the rallies, meetings and other gatherings, "where speeches are popular", has not always been recorded, although we know they took place as a result of written references.⁵¹ At these meetings, messages could be tailored to each specific audience with the speaker relatively secure in the knowledge that little would get reported further than the local area and that if it did an appropriately vague explanation could be coun-

2007 reprint), 2; HoLR: Dav 27/5, 8 Jun 1915, letter Buxton to Bonar Law; *The Bloemfontein Post*, 6 Aug 1915

⁴⁷ *De Volkstem*, 23 and 26 Nov 1915, *Matatiele Mail*, 30 Mar 1916; E.S. Thompson, whose diaries were published under the title 'A machine gunner's odyssey through German East Africa' in *South African Military History Journal* (1988) was recruited after receiving a dental plate; K.M. Satchwell, *Gordon Munro*

⁴⁸ *Matatiele Mail*, 30 Mar 1916

⁴⁹ *Matatiele Mail*, 23 Nov 1916

⁵⁰ *Matatiele Mail*, 23 Dec 1915

⁵¹ W. Keith Hancock, *Smuts papers*, vol 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1966), 312 J.X. Merriman to J.C. Smuts, 6 Sep 1915

tered in response. This was evidenced in Smuts' announcement at a rally in September that South Africans could possibly be sent to East Africa.⁵² Given today's coverage of elections, it is interesting to observe that the newspapers of 1915 carried no manifestos and very little detail of why the party concerned should be elected. The politicians set out their plans at party gatherings which were tailored to the audience in front of them. In this way, Botha was able to deal with questions in Rustenburg and Potchefstroom about the Cape Corps being given voting rights in return for their volunteering for service in East Africa. He had to consider his response carefully as this was a sensitive issue which was reported in the more national papers and he needed the coloured vote in the Cape to ensure the success of the South Africa Party there.⁵³

The South African press, on both sides, unwittingly colluded in the dissemination of propaganda when it came to reporting the war. Reuters, accused of being in the pay of the British government, was the main supplier of news, which the Afrikaans and Dutch papers had to rely on after the German wireless stations had been disabled.⁵⁴ Once the German wireless stations were out of action, if Britain did not release information about the war it was quite difficult for reporters in South Africa to know what else they could report on, they could only give their own interpretation to the biased information coming from London. As the East Africa campaign was not seen as crucial to the outcome of the war and due to the disastrous performance of the allied troops prior to the arrival of the South Africans and Smuts, little, if anything was reported in Britain and hence in South Africa. Once Smuts took over command in February 1916, more news did trickle through but even this was sparse, and here, as Smuts had his own agenda which was also to survive politically in South Africa, he manipulated the information disseminated to London and hence South Africa.⁵⁵

⁵² *De Volkstem*, 2 Sep 1915

⁵³ *De Volkstem*, 21 Sep 1915, p.11; W.A. Kleynhans, *South African general election manifestos 1910–1981* (Pretoria, 1987); *Bloemfontein Post*, 13 Nov 1915; *De Volkstem*, 19 Jan 1915; Parl: Dav 27/21, 11 Aug 1915 Buxton to Bonar Law; TNA: WO 106/572, 15 Jul 1915 telegram GG SA to SoS Colonies; CO 616/27/32634, 15 Jul 1915 telegram HC SA to SoS Colonies (rec 1.45pm); 16 Jul 1915 CO minute; *De Volkstem*, 5 Oct 1915 'Generaal Botha te Potchefstroom'; Wanderers Recruitment rally, *De Volkstem* 16 Nov 1915; K.M. Satchwell, *The propaganda war*; Victor Noel Robinson; V. Aldaheff, *South Africa in two World Wars* (Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1979),

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⁵⁴ Roderick Jones, *A life in Reuters* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951)

⁵⁵ Ian Liebenberg, *Sociology, biology or philosophy of a warrior? Reflections on Jan Smuts, guerrilla-being and a politics of choices* (Unit for African Studies: Pretoria University) accessed 25 Feb 2011, <http://scientiamilitaria.journals.ac.za/pub/article/view/7/31>

Botha and Smuts had held high hopes for the East Africa campaign, but these were dashed firstly when South Africa had to forego taking complete control of the campaign due to the low election result and a miscalculation on the support South Africa would be able to offer. A second factor was the South African rout at Salaita Hill on 12 February 1916, a week before Smuts arrived to take command of the forces there. Botha had to do all in his power to prevent the issue being discussed in parliament which would potentially open the government up to attack from the nationalists. As it was, the situation helped justify Smuts' assumption of the command as a South African would better manage the large number of South Africans there than a British commander, but this soon worked against the South African government, too, when the campaign began to drag on.

A number of factors had pushed the South African government to support the British war effort and especially to find an acceptable outlet for Afrikaners or Boers who wanted to participate but felt they could not go to Europe. At the outbreak of war, although the Union was automatically drawn into the conflict, it was given the freedom to determine the extent of its involvement. Knowing that the Union had expansionist ideas into German South West Africa, Britain asked South Africa to put the German colony's wireless stations out of action. It was this desire for expansion and a feeling of obligation to repay Britain for its generosity in giving the Boers so much freedom so quickly that Botha and Smuts felt sufficiently confident to take the country into the war. At the time this decision was made, the Governor General Sydney Buxton was not yet in post. His arrival on 8 September 1914 added another incentive and drive to utilise South Africans elsewhere in the war.

Once the German South West Africa campaign was over, there was no clearly discernable area in which South Africans were operating. South Africans were significantly involved in the war as evidenced by the election fear, they were just not necessarily in identifiable units. On the declaration of war, many English-speaking South Africans left to return to England where they joined up with local units and others, of the more adventurous kind, had signed up in theatres such as Rhodesia. This excluded the Boer majority which, if left to remain uninvolved, would work against Botha's idea of uniting the two language groups. And it was this which led Botha and Smuts to look for other avenues for South African involvement. As this suited Buxton's agenda of promoting the empire and supporting Britain, he would do what he could. Similarly, so would the English press; which

on the whole refrained from inciting racial hatred between the English and Afrikaans even during the rebellion. They let their feelings be known when they thought the government had acted inappropriately, such as Botha giving lenient sentences, but never ran a cartoon on the incident.⁵⁶

After German South West Africa, Botha refused to commit the country to any further action until after the election scheduled for 1915. His reason was sound given the rise of the National Party since January 1914 and the feelings of unrest exhibited by the rebellion. He was further motivated by his having been out of the country for four months leading the campaign in South West Africa. With limited access to newspapers whilst on the march and unable to get amongst the people, he was uncertain. Although he directed that no active recruiting would be done by South Africa prior to the election, opportunities were open for those returning from South West Africa and in the Union. This was enabled by Britain offering to pay the costs of an imperial contingent for service in Europe—a move motivated by pressure from the English-speaking press, particularly in Cape Town.⁵⁷ With Britain picking up the costs, Botha could safely run adverts for the contingent and not have to worry about getting parliament's permission, thereby avoiding a potentially difficult situation.

Before the election in 1915, the press discussion, mirroring concerns by correspondents, was that the recruitment of the contingent for Europe would result in valuable votes for the South Africa and other pro-Empire or war parties being reduced as voters would no longer be in the country. A perusal of the election manifestos of 1915, published as pamphlets for local distribution but not in the press, reinforces the secondary nature of the war to internal South African politics. The war does not appear in the manifestos except in very general terms with a view to future economic development. There is no mention whatsoever about recruitment or the sending of troops to German East Africa despite Botha's insistence that the election be held before South Africa commit openly to the campaign in that theatre.⁵⁸

It was acknowledged at this point that recruitment was not doing as well as expected.⁵⁹ As soon as the election was over, recruitment numbers increased to the extent that it was announced that from 16 December 1915 to 1 March 1916, there would be a hold on recruitment. Those interested in

⁵⁶ Ken Vernon, *Penpricks* (South Africa, Spearhead, 2000)

⁵⁷ V. Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town* (Uitgeverij Verloren, 1999), 50

⁵⁸ W.A. Kleynhans, *Election manifestos* (Pretoria, 1987)

⁵⁹ *Bloemfontein Post*, 6 Aug 1915

signing up were placed on a recruitment list maintained by the Magistrate. However, having misjudged the need for reinforcements, the hold on recruiting was lifted early, on 6 January 1916.⁶⁰

Between the election and the hold on recruitment, there were a few adverts in the press for various volunteers. On 22 October 1915 there was a second call for the South African Flying Corps, the first having been made for the Royal Flying Corps in September, at the same time that the 2nd Rhodesian Regiment was being formed for service in East Africa. In November 1915 readers were reminded that they could not enlist with the volunteers in British East Africa unless they joined the imperial forces at imperial rates of pay and that they needed a passport.⁶¹

The decision having been made to send South Africans to East Africa meant that the subject would feature more substantially in the press, as apart from supporting Britain's war effort, it could suit the South Africa Party electioneering agenda in future years in proving the unity of the white South African races. Most of the news which filtered into South Africa from the East Africa front appeared in the English-speaking press and not in the Afrikaans or nationalist papers, including the news which started to filter through about the "discomforts endured by the troops during the campaign".⁶² Engaging in discussion about the state of the troops could open the nationalist press to accusations it wanted to avoid and also an acknowledgement that there were Afrikaans speakers supporting Britain which was in effect against its political stance. The nationalist press did, however, take the opportunity to accuse the British generals of "incompetence and callousness" following the huge loss of South African life at Delville Wood in July 1916, in contrast to the English press which emphasised the sacrifice and heroism of the men.⁶³

As the war progressed, the focus of information changed. Recruitment was becoming more difficult but South Africa had to meet its obligations. Advertisements reduced in number but became more direct and enticing whilst rallies and street campaigns increased. Women were drawn into the recruitment drive to coerce men to enlist and pressure through guilt

⁶⁰ *Matatiele Mail*, 16 Dec 1915, 6 Jan 1916

⁶¹ *De Volkstem*, 12 Oct 1915, 12 Nov 1915

⁶² W. Keith Hancock, *Smuts papers*, vol 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1966), 414, Buxton to Smuts 21 Nov 1916; *The African Herald*, 26 Jan 1918, 2 Feb 1918

⁶³ Bill Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme* (London: Penguin, 2007), 221; Vic Alhadeff, *South Africa in two World Wars* (Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1979), 29

became the main force.⁶⁴ News articles continued although in reduced form from East Africa once Smuts left demonstrating the newsworthiness of the theatre to South Africa and the rest of the Empire whilst it worked to support the empire propaganda agenda.⁶⁵ As the campaign dragged on and men were being invalided back, rumours abounded that the troops were on safari and not really doing their bit in the same way that the men on the Western Front were. This was not helped by the increase in the number of adverts for “war trophies” in the form of taxidermy for shot animals.⁶⁶

There was also a change in information coming from Britain. This was in line with a proposal by Roderick Jones, now running Reuters, to increase the “flow of Imperial news” and that Robert Donald of the *Daily Chronicle* in London was suggesting a more aggressive propaganda to be undertaken “on lines that will conceal more or less its official character.”⁶⁷ By April 1918, William Turner, Reuter’s Dominion Editor, noted that the new service “can claim to have done a great deal towards arousing in South Africa the spirit of renewed effort”. The service had given special prominence to “Australia’s decision to help to the utmost” and had “in a host of other ways impressed South Africa with a sense of the gravity of the position and the need for full assistance.”⁶⁸ This, together with the work being done in South Africa, ensured a regular, albeit limited, supply of recruits. The message was also becoming apparent that if South Africans did not enlist, they would be responsible for the failure of Smuts’ drive to finally capture Lettow-Vorbeck in East Africa or cause South Africa to be the only dominion in Europe not to have a recognisable force thereby damaging the identity of the country and any future benefits that might bring.⁶⁹

The nationalist press however, continued to express concern about issues which would directly impact on South African society and the position of the Afrikaner, in particular. The use of the Cape Corps remained a concern as did the impact of the destruction of the German colonies and

⁶⁴ V. Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town* (Uitgeverij Verloren, 1999), 54; K.M. Satchwell, *Recruitment*

⁶⁵ K.M. Satchwell, *The propaganda war*

⁶⁶ For example, *The African Herald*, 26 Jan 1918; *De Volkstem*, 29 Jan 1918

⁶⁷ P. Putnis & K. McCallum, *Reuters* (paper presented to the Australian Media Traditions Conference 24–25 November 2005), 7–8

⁶⁸ Turner to Dickinson, 8 April 1918 RCA in P. Putnis & K. McCallum, *Reuters* (paper presented to the Australian Media Traditions Conference 24–25 November 2005)

⁶⁹ Ken Vernon, *Penpricks* (South Africa, Spearhead, 2000), 40–54; K.M. Satchwell, *Victor Noel Robinson*

what that would have on the future of the white man given that the local inhabitants would have seen the fallibility of whites which could later be exploited.⁷⁰ According to *De Volksblad*, Wilhelm Solf, the German colonial secretary was the only person talking sense about the colonies when he recommended that the natives decide for themselves who should rule them.⁷¹ In July 1918, concern was expressed about the introduction of conscription in Rhodesia and the implications of this for South Africa.⁷² This followed on from concern in January that Alfred Milner's appointment to the Colonial Office in London would mean a refocus on imperialism and that South Africa would be flooded with English immigrants to replace the Germans.⁷³ Despite these worries, of greater interest to the nationalist press was Russia and the events taking place there, particularly in 1918. The change in focus for the nationalists may well have been forced by the change in message from Reuters which became less neutral in its reporting about German forces. With less information coming through about Germany which the nationalists could turn to their own use, they had to find something else to report on,⁷⁴ and the overthrow of an established order seemed the ideal topic. This was until the peace discussions started when the nationalists again could focus on presenting their case to the electorate and ensure South Africa's selfish interests were kept at the top of the agenda.

Conclusions

The difficulty with a paper such as this is that by focusing on a specific issue, it gives prominence to certain aspects which in the greater scheme of things is disproportionate. The whole should not be forgotten. The points discussed in this paper only have significance when considered in the original context of the entire English and Afrikaans/Dutch press in South Africa during the war years. With this in mind, the suggestion that there was a lack of propaganda concerning East Africa is realised particularly in the nationalist press. There did seem to be greater freedom of expression in posters and pamphlets which were used locally, but these media appear

⁷⁰ *De Burger*, 7 Jan 1918, 9 Jan 1918, 10 Jan 1918

⁷¹ *De Volksblad*, 2 Apr 1918

⁷² *De Burger*, 1 and 2 Jul 1918

⁷³ *De Burger*, 14 Jan 1918

⁷⁴ P. Putnis & K. McCallum, *Reuters* (paper presented to the Australian Media Traditions Conference 24–25 November 2005), 11

limited to recruitment in the case of posters, and pamphlets for election manifestoes and explaining specific events such as the reasons for the 1914 rebellion. The use of different media for political purposes, together with an assessment of what was published in the non-white press, is an area which requires further investigation.

There were many occasions that events in East Africa could have been used by the nationalist press to promote its agenda. However, it chose not to, particularly as more South Africans saw service in East Africa in designated South African contingents than in Europe.⁷⁵ Little was said about Salaita Hill, the number of men being sent home due to illness and starvation or the falsity of Smuts' claims that the war in East Africa was over when clearly it was not. Nothing was done to welcome the men back in the same way those who had fought in German South West Africa were.⁷⁶ Why not? The government clearly did not want to draw attention to the poor care the South Africans had endured in East Africa. This could have potentially opened the divide between English and Boer which some spoke of as already evident in East Africa, especially as many of the general staff responsible for the distribution of supplies were British whilst the fighting men, in 1916 at least, were South African.

Why did the nationalists not exploit the Boer-English divide to prove their case that empire was not what the Union wanted? Similarly the question should be asked: "why did the South Africa Party government not use the campaign more to highlight where English and Afrikaans speakers were working together?" especially as numerous memoirs came out soon after the war testifying to this.⁷⁷ The South Africa Party was in a difficult position. It was guilty of the accusations the National Party levelled at it about working with the opposition Union Party but also supported the desires of the Nationalists to promote Afrikaans albeit within the empire. To say so openly would undermine their position and so it was best to say nothing. If the Nationalists were to involve themselves in a debate about East Africa, they would find themselves in a similar predicament using arguments which would undermine their case. The safest action was, therefore, to say nothing and leave the general political divide as it was—there was no clear

⁷⁵ Official History, *The Union of South Africa: The Great War 1914–1918* (Pretoria, nd); K.M. Satchwell, *Arthur Dixon*

⁷⁶ V. Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town* (Uitgeverij Verloren, 1999), 54

⁷⁷ For example, Francis Brett Young, *Marching on Tanga with General Smuts in East Africa* (Glasgow: W. Collins, 1917); Thornhill, Christopher J, *Taking Tanganyika: Experiences of an Intelligence Officer 1914–1918* (Uckfield, reprint 2004)

indication as to how sub-groups would split, and the risk of causing a renewed split during the war was too dreadful for all sides to contemplate. There is no evidence, yet, to indicate whether there was a conscious decision not to report on or engage more deeply with the East Africa theatre in the South African press. However, there was a conscious decision, by the South African party and the British government in response to concerns espoused by the Governor General, to avoid confrontations which could cause unnecessary ill feeling and perhaps incite further rebellion. This was aided by the limited and controlled information coming through from Reuters, the head of which was well aware of the South African situation having left there in 1916.

The South African scenario during World War One provides an opportunity to study propaganda at multiple levels: at a global or Empire level where the information fed through to South Africa was determined by the relationship between the British media and government as was all information fed through to other empire territories; at a dominion level where agreement was reached between the British and South African governments about avoiding certain issues which could escalate xenophobic relations; and at a local level where it played out as electioneering. Ultimately it was the local electioneering demands which determined what empire propaganda was disseminated and what was avoided.

SECTION TWO

PROPAGANDA AND THE PROPER CONDUCT OF WAR

CHAPTER SIX

THE HUN AND THE HOME: GENDER, SEXUALITY AND PROPAGANDA IN FIRST WORLD WAR EUROPE

Lisa M. Todd

As Londoners journeyed to work, school or to the local grocery store in 1918, they may have stopped to look at a colorful poster entitled “The Hun and the Home” (Figure 6.1). If so, they would have seen two contrasting pictures: one a bucolic English village scene with the caption: “Our Homes are secure, Our mothers and wives are safe, our children still play and fear no harm;” the other of an invaded Belgian street scene, which read: “Their homes are destroyed, their women are murdered and worse, their children are dead or slaves.”¹ The poster admonished the viewer: “Back up the men who have saved you.” As a piece of propaganda, this poster aimed to work on several levels: it warned women to be grateful for the protection of their armed forces, it shamed men who still held civilian status, and it situated the horrors of war in homes and neighborhoods, rather than in trenches, and named the victims of war as women and children, rather than male soldiers. The war, then, in the context of “The Hun and the Home” was not about broken treaties, belligerence between governments, nor military strategy; instead, it was about men protecting women and children in the domestic sphere. Scholars are increasingly well acquainted with these connections between gender and propaganda. Far too often, however, analyses of wartime imagery have been restricted along national lines. This article intentionally seeks linkages between the atrocity campaigns of Britain, France and Germany to illustrate how, from the “Rape of Belgium” to the “Black Shame on the Rhine,” propagandists relied heavily on narratives of sexual contact between soldiers and civilians to provide moral justifications for military actions.

As the scholarship on the theory and historical realities of “total war” continues to broaden, historians are increasingly investigating the lived

¹ National Army Museum Archives, Artist David Wilson (1918), Negative No. 42812, Accession No. NAM. 1977-06-81-25.



Figure 6.1. 'The Hun and the Home' by David Wilson (1918), Negative No. 42812, Accession No. NAM. 1977-06-81-25. Courtesy of the National Army Museum Archives

experiences of soldiers and civilians in the First World War. While the most common gendered division saw men at the fighting fronts and women on the home fronts, the very nature of this industrial war meant that many Europeans were forced into unfamiliar roles: women were asked to knit socks and conserve food, but were also asked to make shells and munitions. Society lauded men as conquering heroes, but also shunned them as physical cripples and victims of shell shock. The home front could be geo-

graphically separated from the fighting, as in Great Britain and Germany, but it could also be a place of violence and occupation, as in France and Belgium. Throughout this conflict, the crucial distinctions between combatant and non-combatant were increasingly being blurred, contested, and often, discarded.²

Wartime propaganda provides a rich opportunity to investigate the tensions felt by Europeans over how war-making responsibilities should be divided along gendered lines. In an era of rapidly-expanding mass media, propaganda came from a variety of sources: government-issued posters, privately-funded pamphlets, profit-driven newspapers. Propagandists on all sides presented war as a heroic and moral crusade—in Germany as a defense of *Kultur* against British *Civilisation*, in Britain to protect “Little Belgium” from treaty-breaking militarism, and in France as a physical defense against a menacing aggressor and long-held enemy. European propagandists used gendered norms and constructions in myriad ways that were not always complementary, standardized, nor in sync with the realities of lived wartime experiences. For instance, propagandists sought to accentuate a particular image of virile and heterosexual manhood, which many conservatives claimed to be under attack at the *fin-de-siècle*. Working from the assumption that all “real” men would fight in this war, propagandists then created easily identifiable categories of “Others”: primarily women who *could* not fight and “shirker” men who *would* not fight. Following from this, many propaganda images supported the false notion that battles were won by individuals in World War I. The conflation of the male, heroic individual is extant in the propaganda which rarely contains images of more than a few men, and certainly not the thousands who were mired in muck along any given stretch of the line. Often these lone men are shown on horseback, as a throwback to the days of one-on-one combat. One British poster told its audience: “Thousands have answered the call. But you may be THE ONE to turn the scale at a Critical Moment. Do You Realize This?”³ Disconnect between image and reality grew rapidly as the Western Front became mired down in trench warfare and the average soldier changed from being an offensive to a defensive personality.⁴ The

² Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914–1918* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2010).

³ Imperial War Museum, London, First World War Poster Collection (hereafter IWM PST): No. 5143.

⁴ David Englander, “Discipline and Morale in the British Army, 1917–18,” in John Horne, Ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in England during the First World War* (Cambridge:

soldier no longer went out to seek the enemy; the enemy instead came to him in the form of high-powered explosive shells. Wartime propagandists also created a stylized world of trenches which largely omitted mention of fleas, mud, maiming and death in favor of “chivalry,” “honor,” and “crusade.” At times, propaganda materials went so far as to use the medieval chivalric representation of soldiering, complete with shining knights and helpless maidens. Propagandists thus sought to counteract the destabilizing effects of an increasingly global conflict by falling-back on the “traditional” tropes and cultural fantasies of male heroism and female vulnerability.⁵

For many Europeans, contact between soldiers and civilians represented one of the greatest dangers of the shifting boundaries of “total war.” This chapter will illustrate how, in the British and French media, this contact was framed in terms of the brutal violence perpetrated by German soldiers against innocent civilians. Whether in the so-called “Rape of Belgium,” the unrestricted submarine warfare and aerial bombing campaigns, Allied propagandists painted vivid pictures of the German “Hun”: a beast so uncivilized that he could not even follow the rules of civilized warfare. This equation of “Germaness” with barbarism, lawlessness and lack of civility remained a constant in the Allied message (both domestically and internationally) until the final days of the war. However, German propagandists were also keen to report on dangerous contact between soldiers and civilians and the central themes of these messages shifted in relation to the progress of the war effort: from the Russian invasion of East Prussia to attacks on soldiers by francs-tireurs on the Western front, to the sexually-diseased women on all fronts. In 1919, with the Allied occupation of the Rhineland, attention again focused on the victimization of German women—this time at the hands of African men.

Cambridge University Press, 1997): 125–143, here 126.

⁵ See the Austrian poster *Zeichnet die Kriegsanliehe* (1917), IWM PST: No. 0223 and the German example *Unser Kaiser an sein Volk* (1914), Library of Congress Poster Collection (hereafter LOC POS)—Ger.K3353, no. 1. See also Lisa M. Todd, “In Invitation to Manliness: The Chivalric Representation of Warfare, 1914–1918,” (M.A. diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, 1998) and Stefan Goebel, *The Great War And Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Soldiers and Civilians in Allied Propaganda Campaigns

The German invasions of Belgium and northern France provided ample material to propagandists anxious to justify British involvement in continental war.⁶ The rape, murder and mutilation of women and children were the central tenets of the most effective Allied propaganda campaign of the war: the circulation of atrocity stories. Designed to agitate fear and hatred of the enemy and to persuade those removed from the fighting fronts that the war was being battled between civilized men and barbarians, atrocity propaganda had long been part of organized warfare. However, new to the First World War was the relative quickness with which these atrocity stories, and their accompanying images, could reach a broader audience. The European public could read about the graphic treatment of women in newspapers, pamphlets, or magazines, in one of numerous government publications, such as the British *Bryce Report*, the *Report of the French Commission of Inquiry* and the German *White Book*, or they could see the images on postcards and posters. All nations used atrocity propaganda; however, the Allies were much more successful in disseminating it to an international audience. Propagandists spreading atrocity stories had many concrete goals: to quickly recruit soldiers, to provide a moral justification for military intervention, to prompt neutral countries (primarily the USA) to join the fight in Europe, to sell war bonds, to fundraise for victim relief organizations and to sell newspapers. These campaigns also solidified the notion that this was a war in defense of the home and women and children as its primary victims.

In August 1914 atrocity stories began to circulate on all home fronts in the described attacks on women and children in graphic detail. In the pamphlet *The Truth about German Atrocities* a witness described a 17 year-old French girl, dressed only in a “chemise” and in “great distress.” She had been part of a group of girls who had been “dragged into a field, stripped naked and violated,” and was lucky not to have been “killed with a bayonet”

⁶ Nicoletta F. Gullace, “Representations of the ‘Hun’ in Britain, North America, Australia and Beyond,” in Pearl James, Ed., *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010): 61–78, “Sexual Violence and Family Honor: British Propaganda and International Law during the First World War,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 102, No. 3 (June 1997): 714–747, and “*The Blood of Our Sons*” *Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

like the others.⁷ Similarly, in Liege, a Belgian soldier reported seeing a woman of 28 to 30 years old “stark naked,” and tied to a tree. Her whole bosom was smeared with blood and her body was covered with bruises. He “believed” the woman had one of her breasts cut off, but could not be sure of this. At her feet were two small children.⁸ Another “most respectable young woman” was “violated by two soldiers in succession” in the absence of her husband, who was “with the colors,” and another woman was the victim of “grievous violence at the hands of two Germans.” This woman was living with her in-laws while her husband was at the front. One of the Germans, the report reads, restrained the father-in-law, while the other committed “acts of revolting obscenity”, and threatened the young woman with a rifle. The mother-in-law witnessed the attack, which continued when another soldier “outraged” the young woman.⁹ In this account, the domestic violation extended to the masculine: not only was the husband immobilized by being at the front, but his father was rendered powerless as well. As men in the Occupied Territories seemed unable to protect their families, it became the responsibility, so said Allied propagandists, for British soldiers to protect women on the Continent. In the preface to the 1915 *Official Book of German Atrocities*, a call to enlistment reads: “It is the duty of every single Englishman who reads these records, and who is fit, to take his place in the King’s Army, to fight with all the resolution and courage he may, that the Stain, of which the following pages are only a slight record, may be wiped out, and the blood of innocent women and children avenged.”¹⁰ Other prominent themes in atrocity propaganda included the rape of nuns, the murder of pregnant women; even violence against children had strong gendered connotations, as girls could be victims

⁷ Great Britain Committee on Alleged German Outrages, *The Truth about German Atrocities—Founded on the Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages* (London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, 1915): 15.

⁸ Sir Theodore Andrea Cook, *The crimes of Germany: being an illustrated synopsis of the violations of international law and of humanity by the armed forces of the German Empire* (London: The Field and Queen (Horace Cox, 1917): 11. See also Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *L’enfant de l’ennemi, 1914–1918: Viol, avortement, infanticide pendant la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Aubier, 1995): 3.

⁹ Commission instituées en vue de constater les actes commis par l’ennemi en violation du droit des gens, *German Atrocities in France: A Translation of the Official Report of the French Commission* (London: The Daily Chronicle, 1914): 24, 29–30.

¹⁰ *Official Book of the German Atrocities Told by Victims and Eye-Witnesses: The Complete Verbatim Report of the Belgian, French and Russian Commissions of Enquiry* (London: Pearson, 1915): 8.

of sexual violence, while boys had their hands cut off, to prevent them from being future soldiers. The reoccurring trends in these reports stress: a specification of the victim's age, an emphasis on her state of undress, and a vivid description of the bodily mutilation. These details added to the shocking nature of the attacks and served to heighten the perverse sexuality of the crimes. Soldiers' diaries relate that although they felt frustration and outrage at their inability to save female victims of sexual violence, they were also "fascinated" by the "luridness" of it all.¹¹ William LeQueux wrote in the introduction to his *German Atrocities: A Record of Shameless Deeds* that "one could not read a single page of it without being thrilled with horror at the unspeakable acts of the barbaric troops," which he later referred to as "one vast gang of Jack-the-Rippers."¹² The German invasion of Belgium was accompanied by very real suffering and destruction; however, reports of German atrocities were presented to the public in a highly stylized and often highly fabricated manner.¹³

Propaganda continually emphasized the vulnerability of British civilians in this war. When German cruisers shelled the northern seaports of Hartlepool, Whitby and Scarborough in December 1914, British propagandists no longer had to rely merely on the threat of foreign invasion, but could legitimately claim that their women and children were at risk. The poster, "Men of Britain, Will You Stand This?" depicted a little girl holding a baby outside her destroyed home. Likewise, French newspapers called German pilots "Vikings of the Air" when they reported in March 1915 that sixty-five bombs had fallen on Paris and the surrounding suburbs. As *Le Matin* wrote, German airships dropped their bombs on a city where "women, old people, and children slept—where there were no men at war. They thought thus to sow terror."¹⁴ As a reprisal, French planes bombed

¹¹ Ruth Harris, "The Child of the Barbarian: Rape, Race and Nationalism in France during the First World War," *Past and Present* 141 (October 1993): 170–206, here 188.

¹² William Le Queux, *German Atrocities: A Record of Shameless Deeds* (London: G. Newnes, Ltd., 1914): 6, 15.

¹³ Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Post-War Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). For the difficulties historians encounter when trying to distinguish fact from fiction in atrocity reports, see Alan Kramer and John Horne, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) and Adrian Gregory, "A Clash of Cultures: The British Press and the Opening of the Great War," in Troy R.E. Paddock, Eds., *A Call to Arms: Propaganda, Public Opinion and Newspapers in the Great War* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2004): 15–50.

¹⁴ "Quatre zeppelins viennent sur Paris," *Le Matin*, 22 March 1915, as cited in Susan R. Grayzel, "The Souls of Soldiers: Civilians under Fire in First World War France," *The Journal of Modern History* 78 (September 2006): 588–622, here 597.

Karlsruhe the following year, killing 260 civilians. Many of the dead were children, as bombs fell on a circus tent.¹⁵ The May 1915 sinking of the ocean liner RMS Lusitania provided yet another opportunity for European propagandists to highlight the vulnerable role held by civilians in this war. The German U-boat attack occurred eleven miles off the coast of Ireland, killing 1,198 of the 1,959 passengers aboard. Propagandists ignored the debate on whether the liner had been an appropriate military target, or whether the passengers had been given fair warning of attack. Instead, images and descriptions of dead women and children blanketed newspaper pages, recruitment posters, and pamphlet covers. Likewise, propagandists cared little for whether British nurse Edith Cavell received a just sentence for her role in aiding the escape of Allied soldiers from German captivity. They cared only that she was a woman who had been “murdered” by enemy troops at the front lines.¹⁶ As Europeans struggled to make sense of the shifting realities of combatants and non-combatants in twentieth-century warfare, propagandists took full advantage of these attacks to once again highlight the fact that women and children were the most vulnerable victims of this war.

Soldiers and Civilians in German Propaganda

German propagandists responded directly to Allied allegations that the “Hun” was a barely-human barbarian who refused to operate within the modern (read: European) boundaries of warfare. Posters such as the ironically entitled “We Barbarians,” highlighted German scientific and cultural achievements, and the widely circulated “An Appeal to the Civilized World,” sought to dismiss Allied accusations.¹⁷ Signed by 93 of Germany’s leading artists and intellectuals, the manifesto protested the “(poisonous) weapons of lies” their enemies were using to “stain” the nation’s “honor,” and declared that Germany would fight and win the war as a “cultured people” to whom the “legacy of Goethe, Beethoven and Kant” are as “sacred

¹⁵ Christian Geinitz, “The First Air War Against Noncombatants: Strategic Bombing of German Cities in World War I,” in Roger Chickering and Stig Förster eds., *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilisation on the Western Front, 1914–1918* (Washington: German Historical Institute, 2000): 207–226, here 212.

¹⁶ See, for instance, Anne-Marie Claire Hughes, “War, Gender and National Mourning: The Significance of the Death and Commemoration of Edith Cavell in Britain,” *European Review of History*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2005): 425–444.

¹⁷ IWM PST: No. 6921, See also David Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War: the Sins of Omission* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000): 46–47.

as hearth and land.”¹⁸ Apart from such immensely public declarations of innocence, the German press tended to remain largely quiet regarding the brutal actions of its soldiers toward civilians on the Eastern and Western fronts.

In the early weeks and months of the war, German propagandists also had their own atrocity stories to tell. Russian attacks on women in East Prussia played into a long-standing German fear of the advancing “Slavic hordes.”¹⁹ Indeed, in early August 1914, most Germans pointed to Russia as their most threatening enemy, and indeed, the instigator of the war. Troy Paddock describes how German newspapers (of all political stripes) ran reports of the “deeds that Europeans held for impossible” committed by Russian troops on the Eastern Front. In doing so, journalists warned of dangerous Slavic barbarism and denigrated the *Unkultur* of the Russian people.²⁰ The Manifesto of 93 made this clear: “... in the east, the earth is drinking the blood of women and children who were butchered by wild Russian hordes,” and “those who have allied themselves with Russians and Serbs, and who present the world with the shameful spectacle of inciting Mongolians and Negroes against the white race, have the very least right to portray themselves as the defenders of European civilization.”²¹

German authors took advantage of atrocity stories on German soil for as long as they could; the occupation, though, was relatively short-lived. By the 19th of September, one newspaper was able to proclaim that East Prussia had been “liberated” from the “robbers and murderous thugs.” However, the population there was still dealing with the fact that there was “hardly a vulgarity” that the Russian soldiers had committed. Indeed, in a blatant move to associate Germany with the West rather than the East, the article concluded: “we Europeans and Germans could not yet imagine these things until now.”²²

¹⁸ “Scholarship and Militarism: The Appeal of 93 ‘to the Civilized World!’” (1914), a document by Bernhard vom Brocke. In *Wilhelmine Germany and the First World War (1890–1918)*, edited by Roger Chickering, Steven Chase Gummer and Seth Rotramel, volume 5, *German History in Documents and Images*, German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).

¹⁹ Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East, 1800 to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) and *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²⁰ Troy R.E. Paddock, “German Propaganda: The Limits of *Gerechtigkeit*,” in Paddock, *A Call to Arms*, 115–160.

²¹ vom Brocke, “Scholarship and Militarism,” n.p.

²² Paddock, “German Propaganda,” 140, 145.

German campaigns then shifted from focus on the brutalization of non-combatants to the danger faced by German soldiers *by* non-combatants. Newspapers articles and pamphlets began to tell their audiences about the atrocities being visited on male soldiers. In doing so, German propaganda revived the decades-old story of the “*francs-tireurs*,” civilian “sharp-shooters” who acted contrary to the laws of war. Drawing on stories of civilian violence from the Franco-Prussian War (1870/71), the alleged crimes of the *francs-tireurs* were widely disseminated in prints, postcards, novels and in the illustrated press.²³ For example, the German *White Book* described the torture and murder of wounded soldiers, of German officers assassinated in their quarters as they slept, of soldiers burned alive or crucified, attacked with boiling tar, enduring the agony of nails (or knitting needles) being driven through their eyes and of being “otherwise horribly lacerated.”²⁴ These atrocity stories could also extend soldiers’ anxieties in hypersexual and gender specific ways, as some reports told of soldiers who had their genitals mutilated or removed. The earliest *francs-tireurs* myths feminized the enemy’s use of guerilla warfare: propagandists emphasized that Belgian civilian men attacked soldiers from behind, hid in their houses, and disguised themselves in Red Cross uniforms and priests’ robes. The narrative then changed, crucially, to figure the most dangerous “sharp-shooters” as female. This made their existence treacherous and doubly problematic: not only were they acting outside the laws of war by shooting at soldiers while in civilian clothing, but they were stepping outside their “natural” wartime roles. As historians John Horne and Alan Kramer explain, the *francs-tireurs* “myth-cycle” may have caused young military recruits to be even more trigger-happy as they entered enemy lands and “the *Franktireurkrieg* transformed the French and Belgian victims of German military violence into the imaginary perpetrators of truly atrocious acts, thus making victims of the invaders and legitimizing the invasion.”²⁵ The German Chancellor certainly legitimized this justification when he stated to his public that the Belgian population was acting “cruelly” against German soldiers, and the behavior of Belgian men and women had been “one of the most painful, embarrassing surprises of this war.” Bethmann Hollweg continued, “Your countrymen will be told that German troops have burned Belgian villages and towns to the ground, but no one will tell

²³ Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 137.

²⁴ James Morgan Read, *Atrocity Propaganda, 1914–1919* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941): 78–103. See also Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 109.

²⁵ Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 113.

them that Belgian girls have stabbed out the eyes of defenseless wounded men on the battlefield.”²⁶ This explicit blurring of combatant and non-combatant violence reinforced the fear that this first European conflict of the twentieth century was being fought outside the modern laws of warfare.

The threat of Belgian and French women taking up illegal arms against occupying soldiers echoed another widespread fear: foreign women were intentionally infecting German men with venereal diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhoea. This threat, too, had been common during the Franco-Prussian War and reminded soldiers that they could not trust the women they encountered in foreign lands. It also further questioned the “masculinity” of French and Belgian men, by implying that these countries defended themselves with feminine wiles. These themes were taken up by various agencies and civilian groups who sought to “protect” soldiers from foreign women as soldiers’ pamphlets provided medical warnings about the dangers of contagious venereal diseases. One publication reminded soldiers that when they were in “enemy lands,” they must “guard against the lewdness” of the women they encountered.²⁷ Another directly equated the “laps of enemy women” with the techniques of the *francs-tireurs*. Authors referred to “the lurking enemy behind the front” and reminded German soldiers that “a woman who looks completely healthy is often sick and infected.”²⁸ Persuasive pamphlets had concrete aims, but they also (intentionally or not) portrayed sexual encounters between German soldiers and foreign women as consensual. This reminds us that the debate on the German home front was not about sexual violence at the front, but indeed questioned whether the government should be in the business of running brothels. This was a far cry from the “evil Hun” image put forward by Allied propaganda. One pamphlet even reminded men to stay away from prostitutes because it was not the “German way” to treat women as “mere objects for sale.”²⁹ In German propaganda, then, German soldiers were not rapists;

²⁶ *Neue Freie Presse*, 7 September 1914, as quoted in Andrea Orzoff, “The Empire without Qualities: Austro-Hungarian Newspapers and the Outbreak of War in 1914,” in Paddock, *A Call to Arms*, 161–198, here 177–178.

²⁷ Deutscher Zweig der Internationalen Föderation zur Bekämpfung der Prostitution, “Soldaten!” Landesarchiv Berlin, Helene Lange Archiv, microfilm reel 3400.

²⁸ Deutschen Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten, *Für Männer! Anleitung zum Selbstschutz vor Geschlechtskrankheiten*. Copy in Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfeld (hereafter BAB), R86.1.1063; Reichsgesundheitsamt, *Geschlechtskrankheiten: Abhandlungen und Broschüren*, 1907–1931.

²⁹ Adolf Sellman, *Ein lauender Feind hinter der Front!* (Westdeutsche Lutherverl., 1915): 25–26.

instead they were urged to protect themselves against the lewd advances of French hussies.

A rather unique German propaganda campaign further highlighted the dangers of civilian women becoming too close to enemy soldiers.³⁰ During the course of the war, the German Army captured about 2.5 million prisoners. These men came primarily from Russia, France, Belgium, England, Serbia and Poland, and in the early stages of the war were placed in POW camps.³¹ Eventually, though, the camps filled to capacity. At the same time, Germans were facing labour shortages because of the millions of men in military service and the growing demands of industry and agriculture. The government then recruited foreign POWs to work on German farms. And, of course, many of these farms were being led solely by women, as their fathers, husbands and brothers were fighting at the front. Thus, enemy prisoners worked side by side with German women. Indeed, the men were often billeted with the women—sharing work, meals, and according to the rumour mills in small towns, sharing beds. As such stories came to the attention of government officials and the media, lawmakers scrambled to find a way to legally prevent these relationships between Germans and foreigners—not surprisingly, they thought it bad for morale for German women to be cavorting with the very men from whom the army was allegedly protecting them in this “defensive war”.

To begin this campaign, the authorities placed notices in local newspapers and constructed warning signs to remind Germans that “unnecessary contact” between civilians and prisoners could be punishable by fines or imprisonment, and stepped up prosecutions for treason under the Prussian Siege Law of 1851, which curtailed contact between civilians and prisoners (meant to prevent aid in escapes, spread of disease, etc.). Over the course of the war, thousands of women were arrested as a result of their relationships with foreign prisoners.³² Even relationships that did not involve

³⁰ Lisa M. Todd, “The Soldier’s Wife Who Ran Away with the Russian”: Sexual Infidelities in World War I Germany, *Central European History*, Vol. 44 (2011): 257–278.

³¹ Prussian War Ministry to various General Commanders and Local Governments, 25 June 1917. BAB, R1501.112388—Ministerium des Innern, Polizeiwesen, Kriegsgefangen, 3 September 1916–31 Oktober 1917, 299–300, “Ein Kriegsgefangenenlager in Deutschland,” *Neueste Illustrierte Rundschau* 18 (4 May 1918).

³² The “newly-wed” servant girl Frieda Jung, for instance, was sentenced to two months for her relationships with two Russian POWs. Kaiserslautern Local Court, 9 August 1916. Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart (hereafter HstAS) E130b Bü 3808—Staatsministerium—Kriegsgefangene, insbesondere Fürsorge und Abfindung, 1914–1931, 12. The single saleswoman Margarete B. was sentenced to four months for engaging in an “intimate” relationship with a French prisoner, “4 Monate Gefängnis für eine Verkäuferin,” *Würzburger Generalanzeiger*

sexual activity fell under the rubric of these new laws. Women were arrested for flirting, conversing, and letter writing.³³ In some cases they were made to pay fines, while others received jail sentences that ranged from one week to one year. These tales of adulterous women often found their way into local newspapers (The “Press Pillory”). For the most part, the stories played on a few familiar tropes. German women involved with POWs were betraying the men in the trenches, who had been charged with their protection. Loose women were bad mothers to their children. Adulterous women forgot about honour during a serious time. Sexually promiscuous women were often driven to violent acts in order to continue their affairs unfettered. And, of course, the key theme running through this media discourse was that the actions of adulterous women were harmful not only to their husbands and families, but dangerous for the German wartime nation as a whole.

The discourse around sexually promiscuous women shifted again in 1919, when, as a result of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany’s political and diplomatic position within Europe changed. The so-called “*Schwarze Schmach*” (“Black Shame”) campaign has been the subject of much recent research.³⁴ Historians have well documented attempts by German and international campaigners to use racist stereotypes about non-white soldiers to create a panic around the sexual safety of women in the occupied Rhineland. And, as we have seen from the work of several scholars working in the field of Gender and Empire, while the reality of interracial sex was generally relationships between white men and black women, more anxiety was provoked by couplings between white women and black men.

(26 July 1916); as cited in Bruno Grabinski, *Weltkriege und Sittlichkeit: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Weltkriegejahre* (Hildesheim, 1917), 196.

³³ Anna Kuntz was fined thirty Marks for writing to a French prisoner. Landau Local Court, 19 January 1917, HstAS E130b Bü 3808—Staatsministerium—Kriegsgefangene, insbesondere Fürsorge und Abfindung, 1914–1931, 12.

³⁴ See for instance, Julia Roos, “Nationalism, Racism and Propaganda in Early Weimar Germany: Contradictions in the Campaign against the ‘Black Horror on the Rhine’,” *German History* Vol. 30, No. 1 (March 2012): 45–74, “Women’s Rights, Nationalist Anxiety, and the ‘Moral’ Agenda in the Early Weimar Republic: Revisiting the ‘Black Horror’ Campaign against France’s African Occupation Troops,” *Central European History* Vol. 42, No. 3 (2009): 473–508; Iris Wiggers, *Die Schwarze Schmach am Rhein: Rassistische Diskriminierung zwischen Geschlecht, Klasse, Nation und Rasse* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2006). Chris Koller, “Enemy Images: Race and Gender Stereotypes in the Discussion on Colonial Troops. A Franco-German Comparison,” in Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schuler-Springorum, eds., *Home/Front: War and Gender and Twentieth Century Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); and Sally Marks, “Black Watch on the Rhine: A Study in Propaganda, Prejudice and Prurience,” *European Studies Review*, 13 (1983), pp. 297–334.

E.D. Morel argued in his widely-read pamphlet of 1920, *The Horror on the Rhine*, that African troops were bound to act in a more obscene manner than white soldiers because they had been separated from their own wives and girlfriends, and as he wrote, their “sex-impulse is a more instinctive impulse... a more spontaneous, fiercer, less controllable impulse than among European peoples hedged in by the complicated paraphernalia of convention and laws.”³⁵ As Morel then wrote by way of warning:

Danger lurks everywhere...In ones or twos, sometimes in parties, big, stalwart men from warmer climes, armed with sword-bayonets or knives, sometimes with revolvers, living unnatural lives of restraint, their fierce passions hot within them, roam the countryside. Woe to the girl returning to her village home, or on the way to town...or at work alone...Dark forms come leaping out of the shadows³⁶

Morel's warning, and indeed his discursive tropes were well-showcased in a *Berliner Tageblatt* article of 5 August 1920. Under the headline “Black Troops Riot in the Occupied Areas: Rape of Women and Children,” the newspaper provided several explicit descriptions of the brutalization of German civilians, of which the following account of a woman from Frankfurt a.M. is fairly typical:

On April 8th, 1920 between four and five in the afternoon, five black French soldiers came into my house on the Gutleutkaserne, Building A154. As they stepped through my doorway, a sense of foreboding came over me. At the same moment, one of the black soldiers stepped into the room, grabbed me by the hair and breast and hauled me into the kitchen. I tried to gather my wits and my strength and I screamed for help. The black put a hand over my mouth and threw me to the floor. Then he grabbed my kitchen knife and threatened me with it. When I struggled some more, he forgot about the knife. He held me by the mouth while he raped me. The black then left and I went directly to the French [authorities] where I asked for the arrest of the black man. The officer laughed at me. I went to a different officer with my story. I did not receive any respect there either. He said to me: “the lads have already been away from home for two and a half years and must have it.”³⁷

The similarity in language and imagery between Morel's pamphlet and the newspaper report is clear. The domestic and indeed, international, success

³⁵ E.D. Morel, *The Horror on the Rhine* (London: n. p., 1920), 10.

³⁶ Morel, *The Horror*, 13.

³⁷ “Die Ausschreitungen der schwarzen Truppen im besetzten Gebiet: Vergewaltigung von Frauen und Kindern,” *Berliner Tageblatt*, 5 August 1920. BAB, R1602. 1755; Reichskommissar für die besetzten rheinischen Gebiet, Coblenz—Farbige Truppen, 1.

of the Black Shame campaign depended upon a steady supply of these stories that all had the same moral: the unwanted presence of foreign black soldiers threatened the safety and purity of white German women. The racist language used to describe African soldiers was already familiar to a German society, who, though late-comers to the imperial game, readily embraced a “colonial culture” that placed them at the top of a racial hierarchy.

Campaigners against black troops in the Rhineland then used very similar tropes to those used by wartime propagandists: this time, though, it was the Allied soldiers who were barbarous, sex-starved, cruel, and attacking women in front of their helpless husbands and fathers. This is an obvious parallel between the two campaigns. The wartime accounts consistently highlight the fact that the husbands and fathers of the victimized women were either at the front, or, being held back by weapon-carrying soldiers, against which they were powerless to resist. Likewise, commentaries on the Rhineland attacks often emphasized the fact that the African soldiers were armed—that the French had taken weapons away from the Germans, given them to the colonials, and attacks on civilians were the result. The sexual victimhood of women, then, could be read in both campaigns as an emasculator of men—men had come back from the trenches physically and psychologically damaged, and were prohibited from protecting their societies by the dreaded Treaty of Versailles. Historian Christian Koller and others have argued that these stories radically upset the imperialist power hierarchy, as non-white colonial “subjects” routinely exercised power on former colonizers in the colonizers’ own country. It is worth restating that Weimar Germans were anxious to highlight the fact that they were now the victims, not the perpetrators, of military occupation.

There are also intriguing parallels in the two campaigns regarding the dangers of inter-racial reproduction. The campaign against the so-called “Rhineland Bastards”—children born of relationships between white German women and black African men—used the pseudo-scientific language of racial hygiene and degeneration theory to insist that these babies would ultimately weaken the nation by polluting the German blood—just the kind of consequence which the proponents of colonial anti-miscegenation laws had warned. In 1920, a Dr. Rosenberger wrote in the *Ärztliche Rundschau*, “Shall we silently accept that in the future instead of the beautiful songs of white, pretty, well-formed, intellectually-developed, lively, healthy Germans, we will hear the raucous noise of horrific, broad skulled, flat nosed, ungainly, half-human, syphilitic half-breeds on the banks of the

Rhine?"³⁸ Before we limit our thinking of European views on miscegenation to the colonial context, however, it is worthwhile to recall historian Ruth Harris' intriguing work on France's campaign against the so-called "Children of the Barbarian"—babies born of relationships between French women and German soldiers during the war. Of these transnational pregnancies, Catholic priests, medical doctors, and concerned citizens used patriotic and racist arguments to encourage pregnant women to seek abortions rather than bring such children into the national fold. As one doctor wrote, "Despite everything, these children will remain as the mark of the barbarians' temporary victory. In the end, we will be able to reconstruct households, cities, cathedrals... only they will live on to remind us forever of this tragic time."³⁹ As news of this campaign reached the home front of the "barbarians," few Germans were pleased to know that even Catholic priests found terminating pregnancies preferable to contamination by Germanic blood.

Germans had a whole well of images and horrific tales on which to draw when foreign troops occupied their territory in 1920. The same kinds of accusations which prompted the Group of 93 to issue a manifesto in defense of German honor in 1914 seemed accurate enough when aimed at the group occupying their own soil in 1920. Drawing on wartime atrocity propaganda that was barely a few years old, the "black horror" campaign kept the brutalization of women as its central representation (although it was now German women who were the injured party). In both cases, acts of sexual violence against individual women (whether real or imagined) were conflated to represent the suffering of an entire nation. And, in both cases, real or imagined sexual violence against women was used by others to further their own goals: wartime campaigners wanted the support of neutral countries, higher volunteer enlistments, and to sell war bonds. Weimar campaigners wanted Allied occupation forces out of the Rhineland. And, perhaps, Germans, who had been horrified by accusations that their soldiers were guilty of such heinous acts in Belgium and France, found in the Black Shame campaign a way to redeem themselves: they too were victims of war, of occupation, of sexual violence by foreign men.

³⁸ Dr. Rosenberger, *Ärztliche Rundschau*, 47 (1920), as cited in Rainer Pommerin, *Sterilisierung der Rheinlandbastarde: Das Schicksal einer farbige deutscher Minderheit, 1918–1937* (Düsseldorf, 1979), 24.

³⁹ Dr. Paul Rabier, *La loi du mâle: à propos de l'enfant du barbare* (Paris, 1915): 60, as cited in Harris, "Child of the Barbarian," 199.

Conclusions

First World War propaganda gives us another way to explore the tensions between the expectations and everyday lived experiences of men and women in wartime Europe. As we have seen, the war's most prominent campaigns were those that drew on the most dire consequences of total war: dangerous encounters between enemy soldiers and civilians. This was just one theme in a broader use of gender norms, stereotypes, and clichés in myriad ways to battle for the hearts and minds of wartime Europeans. The ideal male body was a heroic fighting soldier, while the most typical female body was a victim of wartime aggression. This gendered dichotomy worked to present a particular narrative of the war—one centered on a strict division of labor and the geographical boundaries of home front and fighting front. Thus, the rape, murder and mutilation of women were central themes of one of the most effective propaganda techniques of the war: the circulation of atrocity stories. Fuelling hatred and fear of the enemy was important in a war which depended, in varying degrees, on the support of volunteer armies and civilian populations. Atrocity propaganda was used at different times to stiffen the fighting spirit of the troops, bolster the morale of the civilians, sell war bonds, encourage enlistments and justify breaches of international law. The stories of violence against women were not novel to the First World War, but certainly the speed with which they could be disseminated to readers, in the form of newspaper articles, pamphlets, books and posters meant that these images reached a large audience. However, wartime propaganda and culture presented ambiguous, and often contradictory, views of sexuality: women could be simultaneously portrayed as sexual victims, sexual rewards, sexual perpetrators, and sexual beings to be guarded, adding to the confused nature of the proper place of early twentieth-century women in the modern war machine. Images of highly sexualized female bodies were created to titillate male soldiers; while images of sexually violated female bodies were meant to repulse wartime audiences.

However, we must guard against a simplified gendered dichotomy in wartime propaganda. The Western Allies painted German men as dangerous aggressors, and used their behavior as justification for the continuation of the war effort. That German soldiers would operate so far outside the bounds of "civilized" warfare seemed another example of the danger of German militarism. The Germans, in contrast, fingered certain civilians (both foreign and on their own home front) as the most dangerous enemies

facing/damaging their war effort. Foreign women, either in the role of *francs-tireur* or prostitute, were operating outside the rules of civilized warfare. How could the German Army combat such insidious enemies? Likewise, the grave mistrust of the domestic home front played a central role in the immediate post-war construction of the “stab-in-the-back” mythology, which said that the great German Army was not defeated at the fighting front, but was instead betrayed by the profiteering businessmen, conniving Jews, weak Socialists, and adulterous women at home. In the early Weimar Republic, atrocity stories resurfaced, this time in response to the Allied military occupation of the German Rhineland. Reeling from both the loss of the war and of a colonial empire, Germans propagandists used familiar wartime language to describe their feeling of being geographically “violated” as a nation. And, as in the case of wartime atrocity campaigns, propagandists sought a very real result: the withdrawal of foreign troops. Reading wartime propaganda, then, reminds us how frequently military occupations have been described in the form of sexual occupation and gives us another vantage point into the shifting realities of the lived experiences of soldiers and civilians in this first “total war” of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GERMAN PROPAGANDA AND PRISONERS-OF-WAR DURING WORLD WAR I

Kenneth Steuer

Studies on propaganda during and after the First World War rarely address prisoners of war. The Germans captured over 2.8 million Allied POWs and interned civilians from 29 countries. This threatened security and drained the German war economy. The Germans utilized these men as a labor supply and for propaganda purposes. Propaganda involving POWs was an important part of Germany's total war effort to enhance flagging morale within the empire, to influence Allied behavior through reprisal camps, to prepare for post-war policies by winning support of colonial troops and minorities in propaganda camps, and recruiting Allied soldiers for wartime military efforts.¹

For the purposes of this paper, propaganda is defined as the process of negotiation which is designed to persuade states and people to behave in a certain way through methodical and planned strategies to achieve specific objectives. This approach is more aggressive than simply attempting to manipulate and persuade other agents regarding beliefs, values, and behavior, even if these agents consider these ideas to be controversial, since this process would benefit the party implementing this strategy. During World War I, the German War Ministry used propaganda to negotiate with Allied soldiers to convince them to surrender or, after becoming prisoners, to fight in foreign legions to gain their national independence; with Entente governments to force these states to improve prison camp conditions for German POW's or alter military strategies; and with the German people to continue their support for the war effort against overwhelming odds.

¹ Robert Doyle, *The Enemy in Our Hands* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 161; Kenneth Steuer, *Pursuit of an "Unparalleled Opportunity"* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 4; and Conrad Hoffman, *In the Prison Camps of Germany* (New York: Association Press, 1920), ix.

German propaganda was controversial, subtle, and complicated, and sought to achieve both wartime and post-war goals.²

POW Propaganda and German Civilians

After German forces failed to break through the Western Front by December 1914, the imperial government sought to bolster the morale of the German people. Pre-war newspapers and journals ran stories on the Central Power war effort and the victories achieved by the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Turkish armies. In addition, wartime magazines, such as *Der Weltkrieg* (*The World War*) and *Der Krieg* (*The War*), printed articles and images (photographs, drawings, and paintings) which provided an overview of the conflict. Allied soldiers surrendering and POWs marching to railroad stations for transportation to prison camps made compelling photos. While the first photographs illustrated British, French, and Belgian POWs captured on the Western Front in August 1914, the German press focused on Russian prisoners captured at Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes in September 1914. Though the German Army lost the war in the West, which became a three-year war of attrition, German forces in the East had halted the Russian invasion of East Prussia. As the war progressed, photographs of Kaiser Wilhelm II or various army corps commanders reviewing dejected Allied prisoners filled German papers. The imperial government commissioned paintings reflecting the subservience of Entente POWs, art work designed to stimulate patriotic fervor and faith in a German victory. The German people could embrace the victories of their armies against numerically superior Allied forces, underlining the might of the German Empire.³

The vast flood of Allied POWs into the *Reich* affected the German war economy. Until the summer of 1915, prisoner labor constructed facilities for their incarceration. The War Ministry anticipated a swift end to the conflict and not millions of POWs. By 1918, the Allied prisoner population in Germany exceeded the populations of all of the German states except Prussia, Bavaria, and Saxony. Journals publicized the vast array of Allied soldiers captured in combat. Photographs depicted British, French, Russian,

² Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day*, 3rd ed., Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2003, 6-7.

³ William L. Hull, *The Two Hague Conferences* (Boston: Athenaeum, 1908), 223; *Der Krieg* 1 (1914): 48 and 123; *Der Weltkrieg* 1 (1915): 95; *Der Weltkrieg* 2 (1915): 11, 55, 109, and 301; *Der Weltkrieg* 3 (1915): 257; *Der Weltkrieg* 4 (1916): 161; and *Der Weltkrieg* 7 (1917): 71.

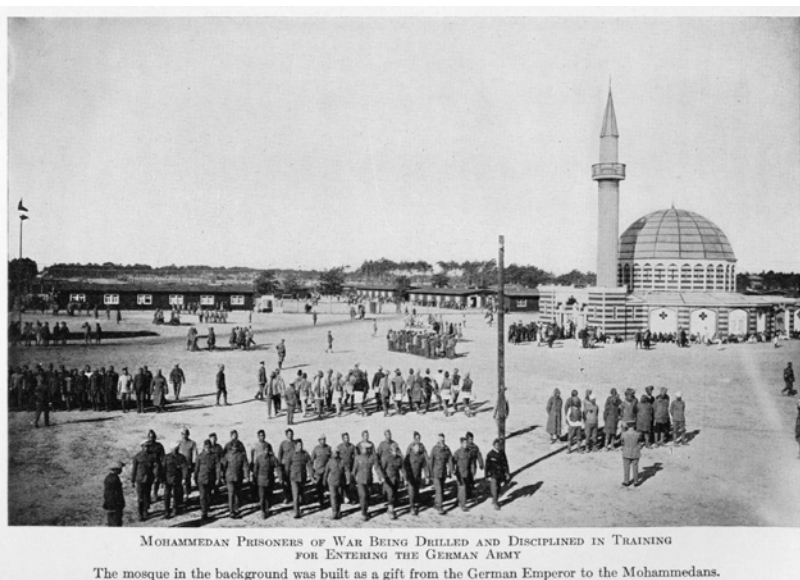


Figure 7.1. Zossen: Muslim Brigade Drilling. Volunteers for the Muslim Legion drill in front of the mosque, donated by Kaiser Wilhelm II to Islamic POWs at Zossen-Wünsdorf. Armed and trained by the Germans, these men agreed to fight for the Caliph in the Turkish Army in support of the jihad against the Allies. Source: Conrad Hoffman, *In the Prison Camps of Germany* (New York: Association Press, 1920), 256B.

Belgian, Serbian, Italian, Romanian, and Portuguese prisoners, both individuals and in groups. Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and South Africans reflected the might of the British Empire against the Germans. The most popular photographs featured colonial troops from Africa, South Asia, and East Asia, depicting the wide range of Allied nationalities in particular camps. Publishers printed journals for foreign audiences to disseminate German war news such as *The Great War in Pictures* with photo captions in English, German, Spanish, French, and Italian. To undermine Allied morale, the German press ran countless pictures of Entente soldiers surrendering. While many were clearly posed, the number of Allied POWs was overwhelming. Ironically, these images might have demoralized the German population, illustrating that most of the world was fighting the Central Powers. Instead, German editors pointed out that despite these odds, the German Army was winning and that victory was inevitable given the huge numbers of prisoners. Propagandists focused on captured Allied



Figure 7.2. Osnabrück: Allied POW-Officers. German magazines and newspapers often ran photographs of Allied war prisoners from around the world such as this photo of Entente officers at the prison camp at Osnabrück. These officers represented the French, Belgian, Russian, and British armies, including colonial troops from North Africa, Canada, and India. Although the German Army faced incredible odds, Germans could be reassured that their forces were victorious due to the incarceration of a large number of POWs. Source: D. Backhaus, *Die Kriegsgefangenen in Deutschland* (Berlin: Verlag Hermann Montanus, 1915, 112.

colonial soldiers to undermine the Entente claims that the Allies were fighting for democracy and freedom. Instead, as imperialists, the Allies shamelessly deployed subject peoples to fight on their behalf. To add further insult, the Germans routinely accused Entente colonial troops of a wide range of atrocities.⁴

⁴ Joseph Schuhmacher, *The Great War in Pictures*, No. 7 (1915):17; *Der Weltkrieg* 3 (1915): 3; *Der Weltkrieg* 5 (1916): 239 and 313; *Der Weltkrieg* 8 (1918): 222; *Der Weltkrieg* 9 (1918): 100 and 166; *Der Krieg* 8 (1917): 32; *Der Krieg* 12 (1918): 47; Schuhmacher, No. 9 (1915): 9; D. Backhaus, *Die Kriegsgefangenen in Deutschland*, Walter Stein, ed. (Berlin: Verlag Hermann Montanus, 1915), 101–112; *Times History of the War* 6 (1915–1916): 275; and Hoffman, 152 and 160.

This sense of defiance and military superiority was manifest in the assignment of POWs to *Arbeitskommandos* (work details) by the summer of 1915. As the resources of the *Reich* became increasingly strained by the Royal Navy blockade, the Germans used war prisoner labor. For the first time, especially in rural regions, German farmers and workers encountered POWs from Africa and Asia, who replaced men for military service, and experienced cultural shock. Fighting between German workers and POWs occurred in factories and mines as wartime animosities spilled into the workplace. Women often supervised Allied prisoners on farms. Despite minimal security in rural areas, escapes were rare since prisoners had better food on farms than in prison camps and few missed the trenches. POWs performed menial labor, like cleaning and reconstructing villages in East Prussia, underscoring their lowly status. Such work justified the sacrifices made by the German people, and they assumed that prisoners would continue working after the war.⁵

The German War Ministry did not assign captured Americans to work detachments but concentrated them at Rastatt in Baden. In February 1917, the imperial government resumed unrestricted submarine warfare to isolate the British. The sinking of American merchant ships resulted in the U.S. declaration of war against Germany on April 6. In response, the German Navy vowed that American ships would not reach British or French ports. Despite German submarines, the number of U.S. soldiers in Europe increased dramatically by early 1918, and the Germans began to capture doughboys. American prisoners in factories, mines, or agriculture would have undermined German propaganda, especially claims about the U-boat war against troop transports. The arrival of American laborers would have been counter-productive to morale, so they remained incarcerated at Rastatt.⁶

Allied POWs became common in German cities as the war progressed. The Germans transported prisoners to *Durchgangslagern* (distribution camps) in the empire and then assigned Entente POWs to permanent *Stammlagern* (main camps) until the end of the war. Early in the conflict, Allied prisoners marched through German cities, often to make train con-

⁵ Thomas Cecil, *They Also Served* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1939), 306–315; Lothrop Stoddard and Theodore Jones, eds., *Harper's Pictorial Library of the World War, Volume VI* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), 184 and 217; and Malcolm Hay, *Wounded and a Prisoner of War* (New York: George H. Doran, 1917), 178–179.

⁶ Hull, 224 and 230–231; Tighe Hopkins, *Prisoners of War* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, and Kent, 1914), 89; Carl Dennett, *Prisoners of the Great War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), 40–44; and Hoffman, 146 and 156–166.

nections, and suffered public abuse. Civilians hurled stones and shouted invectives, contrary to the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, which governed the treatment of enemy prisoners. As the fighting continued, the presence of Allied POWs resulted in less attention from civilians because many Germans had family and friends held by the Allies, and Entente prisoners became commonplace, on the streets of cities, on farms, in mines, and in factories as POW labor replaced German workers. The influx of Entente POWs engaged in labor projects eroded their uniqueness and propaganda value.⁷

The delicate balance between ensuring the good treatment of German war prisoners in Allied captivity with the generous care of Entente POWs in German prisons was reflected in POW diplomacy and propaganda. The Principle of Reciprocity, where services provided to prisoners in one country were to be extended to POWs in belligerent hands, addressed spiritual care, sports, entertainment, and educational opportunities beyond the minimal levels required for POWs. Because many Germans were concerned about friends and family held in Western and especially Russian camps, the Germans demonstrated the good living standards in their prison camps through publications. Simultaneously, civilian living standards declined, especially nutrition, from the British blockade. Charles Correvo, pastor of the French Reformed Church in Frankfurt-am-Main, published *Aus deutschen Kriegsgefangenenlagern* (*From German Prison Camps*) in 1915 to highlight prison camp life. The first edition focused on daily life in prison camps in Hesse. Correvo designed the book for domestic and foreign audiences with text and photograph captions in German and French. Readers viewed living quarters, nutrition, health care, parcel and letter delivery, religious services, entertainment, and sports. The book featured menus from two prison camps to counter Allied claims that the Germans provided insufficient food. Two additional editions appeared in 1916 with expanded texts and images from camps across the German Empire. Correvo sought to allay any accusations of poor or inadequate provisions for Allied POWs in Germany and establish high standards for the treatment of German prisoners.⁸

⁷ Hull, 222–232; “Abuses in German Prison Camps,” *Current History*, 8:2 (July 1918): 100; *Der Weltkrieg* 1 (1915): 97; and *Der Weltkrieg* 5 (1916): 133.

⁸ The expanded second edition of *Aus deutschen Kriegsgefangenenlagern*, in both text and number of photographs, was published only in German but the third edition was printed in French and in German. Charles Correvo, *Aus deutschen Kriegsgefangenenlagern/Les Prisonniers de Guerre en Allemagne* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Literarische Anstalt Rütten und Loening, 1915); Charles Correvo, *Aus deutschen Kriegsgefangenenlagern: Zweite Folge*

In 1915, D. Backhaus, an authority on POW nutrition, published a similar book in German with 242 photographs of Allied prisoners and activities with captions in German, French, English, Italian, and Russian. Intended for an international audience, Backhaus discussed POW issues including security, living conditions, nutrition, health care, religious practices, and the nationalities of POWs. Others published books about individual prison camps. Carl Stange, a professor at the University of Göttingen, wrote *Das Gefangenelager in Göttingen* as an overview of that facility. Stange was active in camp life and established an educational system with the assistance of the American Young Men's Christian Association which allowed POWs to continue their studies. In 1918, the authorities at Münsingen, a prison camp in Württemberg, published a book with photographs and watercolor paintings by prisoners of camp buildings and activities. While abuses did occur, the proper health and care of Allied prisoners was a major concern for the German government and civilian organizations during the First World War.⁹

Challenging Enemy Government Behavior—The Policy of Reprisal

Once war is declared, governments have little influence on enemy behavior beyond the battlefield. Both the German and Allied governments used reprisal policies against POWs to change enemy policies. Under international law, belligerents must provide a minimal level of support for captives. When a government determined that the enemy was violating international treaties, POWs often became hostages and were punished to force the enemy to end illegal practices. Executing captured prisoners for military expediency in battle was illegal, but reprisals against prisoners, including executions, "are by custom admissible as an indispensable means of securing legitimate warfare."¹⁰ At the strategic level, the Germans used capital punishment or sent POWs to *Strafenlagern* (punishment camps) in retaliation for illegal Entente weapons or policies. At the tactical level, camp commandants withdrew privileges in response to Allied POW practices.¹¹

(Frankfurt-am-Main: Literarische Anstalt Rütten und Loening, 1916); Charles Correvon, *Aus deutschen Kriegsgefangenenlagern: Dritte Folge: Eindrücke eines Seelsorgers* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Literarische Anstalt Rütten und Loening, 1916); and Steuer, 68.

⁹ D. Backhaus, 5-24; Carl Stange, *Das Gefangenelager in Göttingen* (Göttingen, Germany: Verlag Louis Hofer, 1915); and *Hinter dem Stacheldraht: Kriegs-Gefangenen-Lager Münsingen* (Stuttgart: Verlag von Hugo Mathias, 1918).

¹⁰ Hopkins, 88.

¹¹ "The Ethics of Reprisals," *The Spectator* 117 (23 December 1916): 796-797.

At the beginning of the war, the War Ministry integrated British, French, and Russian POWs in prison camps in shared barracks. Although legal, the British and French governments protested against this practice. Russian soldiers often carried epidemics and their presence threatened Western POWs with contagious diseases. The integration of different cultures and languages resulted in friction and open hostility. The Germans responded that as allies, Entente prisoners should get to know each other better. From a propaganda perspective, this policy preempted accusations of favoritism for particular nationalities since all Allied POWs received the same housing, food, and medical care. The Russians responded to "integration" with their own reprisal policy. Early in the war, the Russians sent Central Power prisoners to isolated villages in Siberia, where they enjoyed greater personal freedoms than their incarcerated comrades in Western facilities. In response to German policies, the tsarist government decided to follow Western practices and assigned German and Austro-Hungarian POWs to concentration camps.¹²

The Germans tried to use interned civilians to control enemy action and pacify occupied territories. Captain James Fryatt, master of the S.S. *Brussels*, a cross-Channel steamer, attacked a German U-boat in March 1915. Under Admiralty orders, Fryatt attempted to ram the submarine, which escaped in a crash dive. Fryatt reported that he had sunk the warship and became a national hero. Under international law, the captain of a merchant ship can be treated as a *franc-tireur* for attacking a warship. To discourage Allied captains attacking U-boats, the German Navy intercepted the *Brussels*. Fryatt was court-martialed at Bruges and found guilty of violating international law. The Kaiser approved his sentence and Fryatt was executed on 27 July 1916 as a warning for merchant masters. For the German public, Fryatt was a pirate, but he became a martyr in Britain.¹³

¹² Central Power war prisoners, who had been captured early in the war and sent to Siberia, often returned home with a Russian family. Hoffman, 67; Hugh George Durnford, *The Tunnelers of Holzminden* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 103; Hopkins, 98–99; and Richard Speed, III, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 65–66.

¹³ "The Fryatt Case: A British Sea Captain Executed by the Germans for Trying to Ram a Submarine," *Current History* 4 (September 1916): 1017–1020; William Harwell, "Murder of Captain Fryatt: Official Report by His First Officer," *Current History* 9:1 (October 1918): 116–118; "Britain Honors Captain Fryatt," *Current History* 10:2 (August 1919): 232; Phyllis Hall, "Pirate or Patriot? The Strange Case of Captain Fryatt," *History Today* 38 (August 1988): 43–48; and Henry C. Mahoney, *Sixteen Months in Four German Prison Camps* (New York: McBride, 1917), 7.

A notorious case of German efforts to use prisoners for military and propaganda goals was Edith Cavell, an English nurse who served as the supervisor of the Berkendael Medical Institute in Brussels. After the German occupation in August 1914, the institute became a Red Cross hospital. Cavell nursed many nationalities and helped approximately 200 British, French, and Belgian wounded escape to the Netherlands between November 1914 and July 1915. The Germans arrested Cavell and charged her with assisting POWs escape. She was to serve as an example. At her court-martial, Cavell proudly admitted her guilt and was condemned to death. She was shot on 12 October 1915, which resulted in an international uproar against German barbarity. Her memory supported war loan and recruitment drives in Britain, especially for medical volunteers. After signing the Armistice in November 1918, the British Army retrieved and buried Cavell with full military honors in Westminster Cathedral. In this case, German policy backfired and bolstered Allied propaganda efforts.¹⁴

Both the Germans and Allies set up reprisal camps and used war prisoners as pawns. The Germans established *Strafenlagern* (punishment camps) with limited accommodations, poor food, and no recreation. Reprisal camps in Germany included Arys, Beeskow, Burg, Clausthal, Halle, Havelberg, Holzminden, Neisse, Neunkirchen, and Soltau in Prussia; Chemnitz in Saxony; and Friedberg in Hesse-Darmstadt. Some of these camps were in castles or fortresses which were cold and cramped. Other camps had abusive commandants who encouraged guards to abuse prisoners, such as Clausthal and Holzminden. In general, men in reprisal camps did not have sports programs, libraries, or entertainment, which alleviated boredom. POWs feared reprisal camps. The British press equated camps with medical deficiencies with punishment camps. In January 1915, a typhus epidemic broke out at Wittenberg which caught German medical authorities unprepared. The Germans withdrew from the facility, isolated the camp, and left the sick to Allied medical officers. Thousands of POWs died before the disease ran its course by May 1915. British newspapers branded Wittenberg as the worst prison camp in Germany and demanded retribution. In response, the German Ministry of War overhauled the prison camp medical system and imposed quarantine and strict sanitation regulations.

¹⁴ Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Correspondence with the United States Ambassador Respecting the Execution of Miss Cavell at Brussels*, *Miscellaneous No. 17* (1915), Cd. 8013 (London: Stationery Office, 1915); Mahoney, 7; "Nurse Cavell Buried in England," *Current History* 10:1 (June 1919): 420–421; and Philip Gibbs, "Britain's Tribute to Miss Cavell," *Current History* 10:2 (July 1919): 143–146.

While the initial response was appalling and epidemics broke out in other camps, the German government's improved hygienic standards kept mortality rates low for the rest of the war.¹⁵

The Allies attempted to end U-boat warfare by using POWs as hostages. Under international law, warships had to intercept merchant ships, determine their nationality, and inspect the cargo. If the merchantman was an enemy ship or a neutral carrying contraband to an enemy port, the warship could seize the freighter or sink the captured ship after providing its crew with food, water, and navigational aids so they could be rescued. The Royal Navy blockade and the loss of German colonies meant U-boat commanders could not take Allied merchant ships as prizes and the cramped interiors of submarines limited the number of prisoners submarines could carry. At the beginning of the war, U-boat commanders tried to intercept and inspect Entente merchantmen. Steamer ramming of submarines and the development of warships disguised as merchant ships made torpedo attacks without warning the safest way for U-boats to conduct warfare. Such "unrestricted" submarine warfare was illegal, but effective in undermining Allied maritime trade. In 1915, Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, announced that German submariners would be considered pirates. The British sent German naval personnel to reprisal camps under deplorable conditions. In response, the German government dispatched 37 British officers, most from prominent families to solitary confinement in Cologne, Magdeburg, and Burg. Churchill's successor, Arthur Balfour, reversed this policy and reassigned German submariners to prison camps. The Germans then released the British hostages from solitary confinement. After the Germans resumed unrestricted submarine warfare in January 1917, the French enacted POW reprisals. In April 1917, a U-boat torpedoed a hospital ship and the French Navy began to carry German POWs on these ships. Attacks on hospital ships were illegal, but so was assigning POWs to combat situations. The Germans responded by tripling the number of French officers on the Western Front in labor detachments. The French

¹⁵ Durnford, 26–36; Arthur Green, *The Story of a Prisoner of War* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1916), 40–48; Dennett, 11 and 218; Great Britain, Government Committee on Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War, *Horrors of Wittenberg. Official Report to the British Government* (London: Pearson, 1916); "Hutchinson, 'The Deliverance from Wittenberg,'" *Atlantic Monthly* 119 (March 1917): 401–412; and "The Wittenberg Horror," *The Spectator*, 116 (15 April 1916): 488–489.

and Germans eventually recognized that reprisals had little effect and reached a tacit understanding to end them.¹⁶

Strategic POW policies were also designed to improve the treatment of troops held by the enemy. At the beginning of the war, the British kept German POWs on ships moored in ports. The English used unseaworthy ships as prisons since the 18th century and space constraints forced the British to revive the practice. Conditions were crowded and unhealthy. In retaliation, the Germans sent British POWs to reprisal camps or dismal locations in Russian Poland. With the construction of POW camps, the British transferred Germans from prison ships and the Germans ended their retaliatory practice. In 1915, the Germans accused the Allies of harsh treatment of POWs captured in colonial campaigns. The German government claimed that the French held prisoners from Togoland under dismal conditions in Dahomey and Niger while the British-controlled POWs captured in German East Africa suffered in India. French assignment of POWs to camps in Algeria and Tunisia aroused German indignation, especially after reports of security abuses by colonial troops. When the British sent German POWs from England to work in "hard labor camps" at Le Havre, the Germans sent four times as many British prisoners to Libau in Latvia. The British press focused on the abysmal conditions in German salt and coal mines where POWs put in long hours.¹⁷

Conditions in German prison camps declined during the war because of the British naval blockade. Allied propaganda exaggerated or even invented German atrocities. British newspapers routinely ran stories and cartoons about the terrible conditions in the camp for British civilians at Ruhleben, outside of Berlin. The Germans rounded up British subjects and imprisoned them at this race track in November 1914. While the facility was not ideal, the British press railed against incarcerating civilians even though the British imprisoned German nationals at Alexandra Palace in

¹⁶ James Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany* (New York: George H. Doran, 1918), 168–172; Edwyn Gray, *The U-Boat War, 1914–1918* (London: Leo Cooper, 1972), 183; "Sea-Power and Sea-Law," *Manchester Guardian History of the War II—1914–1915* (Manchester, England: John Heywood, 1915), 97–103; and "The Submarine "Blockade" and the Law," *Manchester Guardian History of the War II—1914–1915* (Manchester, England: John Heywood, 1915), 105–116.

¹⁷ Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Report on the Employment of Coal and Salt Mines of British Prisoners of War in Germany*, *Miscellaneous No. 23* (1918), Cd. 9150 (London: Stationery Office, 1918); Cecil, 238–315; "Activities among the German Civilians Interned at Ahmednagar," *For the Millions of Men Now Under Arms* 1:4 (15 September 1915): 31–32; Wilhelm Doegen, *Kriegsgefangene Völker* (Berlin: Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 1921), 127–131; Dennett, 205–216; Edward John Bolwell, "P-O-W in the Kaiser's Salt Mines," *History Today* 38 (November 1988): 20–29.

north London. Cartoonists depicted German children pleading to visit the "Ruhleben Zoo" to see English prisoners starve. In practice, British prisoners received adequate rations, substantial food parcels from home, and enjoyed athletic, entertainment, and educational activities. British propagandists fabricated abuses by the Germans. The press claimed that German troops had crucified a Canadian prisoner on the door of a barn in Belgium. The Canadian government commissioned a sculpture to memorialize an atrocity that never occurred. While incarceration in German prisons was physically and mentally challenging, the survival rates for Allied POWs was over 93 percent, including severely wounded men. The public would become extremely skeptical of Allied propaganda during the Second World War.¹⁸

In addition to imperial government reprisal policies, German prison camp commandants often implemented punishments in response to perceived Allied abuses. The practice of instituting a wide range of punishments was known as "strafing" by British POWs (based on the German word *strafen*, or to penalize). For punishments allegedly imposed on German prisoners in Britain and France, German commandants denied Allied POWs smoking privileges or cancelled athletic events, theatrical performances, or walks outside of camp. Delayed mail distribution, a violation of the Hague Conventions, undermined morale. The Germans harassed POWs with roll calls every few hours, counting prisoners outdoors in bad weather or at night. Sometimes commandants imposed more drastic penalties like denying food parcels from home or limiting shower access, but these actions affected the health of prisoners. The commandant at Wittenberg warned British POWs that one of every ten of them would be shot if the British mistreated German war prisoners. Commandants believed reports about the treatment meted out to their comrades in Allied POW camps and tried to change Allied abuses with penalties in their own camps. The British Foreign Office complained through official diplomatic channels and the British press reported the mistreatment. Neutral diplomats from the U.S., Spain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands visited where strafing was reported. If charges were unfounded, they immediately reported to

¹⁸ Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Correspondence with the United States Ambassador Respecting Conditions in the Internment Camp at Ruhleben*, Miscellaneous No. 3, Cd. 8161 (London: Stationery Office, 1916); Alec Waugh, *The Prisoners of Mainz* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1919), 117–118; "The Ruhleben Zoo," *Current History* 5 (October 1916): 183; *Freedom's Triumph* (Chicago: Women's Weekly, 1919), 45; Doegen, 56–57; and Speed, 73–74 and 204.

prevent additional reprisals; if found, the inspectors worked through diplomatic channels to ameliorate the situation and end the policy quickly.¹⁹

Manipulating Enemy Troop Behavior—The Role of Propaganda

Both sides used propaganda to encourage enemy combatants to surrender. Leaflets dropped over the front lines promised good food, comfortable accommodations, and survival if they surrendered their arms. These leaflets served as safe conduct passes for individuals or groups to encourage large-scale defections. Unfortunately for soldiers surrendering, theory differed from practice. Defecting troops experienced great difficulty crossing no man's land without getting entangled in barbed-wire while avoiding snipers or machine gunners, despite the guarantees of propaganda leaflets. As the war progressed, soldiers on both sides became reluctant to take POWs except for intelligence information. Approaching troops could be trench raiders and it was far safer to "shoot first and take prisoners later." The death of comrades in battle led to revenge, especially as enemy soldiers advanced. In addition, Allied officers investigated the condition of surrender of POWs after repatriation. The British Army determined how men were captured and voluntary surrender was a court martial offense. Death by one's comrades, having survived captivity in a German prison camp, was an ironic end.²⁰

The management of information within a prison camp controlled POW populations. A major theme in German propaganda was the superiority of *Kultur* (culture) to Allied civilization: German customs, laws, and institutions produced a unique and inevitably superior culture. German duty to extend this culture across Europe would be accomplished through military conquest. As a result, propagandists emphasized military victories and downplayed Allied advances through publications designed for Entente POWs. In theory, German military authorities prohibited foreign newspapers in prison facilities. In practice, prisoners smuggled in British and

¹⁹ Durnford, 106 and 127; Green, 64; Hay, 179; Geoffrey Pyke, *To Ruhleben—and Back* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1916), 139–140; "Treatment of British Prisoners," *Current History* 8:1 (June 1918): 479–483; Doegen, 194–214; and James Gerard, *Face to Face with Kaiserism* (New York: George H. Doran, 1918), 78B.

²⁰ J.B.W. Gardiner and Thomas Ybarra, eds., *Harper's Pictorial Library of the World War, Volume II* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), 321; Joseph Lee, *A Captive at Carlsruhe and Other German Prison Camps* (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1920), 107; Doyle, 161–163; and Frederick William Harvey, *Comrades in Captivity* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1920), 316.

French newspapers. Most radical German presses were shut down by the government, so newspapers carried war news from the War Ministry which could be obtained by POWs. The most popular German papers were the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Berliner Tageblatt*. Despite censorship, prisoners found the reporting impartial. In addition, military authorities produced works designed specifically for POWs. The most famous was the *Continental Times*, which was printed in Berlin and distributed to British prisoners. Initially, German authorities attempted to sell the newspaper at 2 1/2 pence an issue or for a monthly subscription rate of 2.70 Marks, but few issues were sold. Lacking reading material, prisoners eagerly read the first editions but disposed of them imaginatively. To support their propaganda campaign, the Germans decided to distribute the newspaper gratis. The paper highlighted German military and naval victories and adverse war news such as the shell shortage in the British Army, military recruitment problems, and the uprising in Ireland. It finally attracted a larger readership by printing the names and locations of British POWs in German facilities and general articles from British newspapers by famous authors. Enterprising prisoners used material from the *Continental Times* to write plays. Most British POWs found the newspaper foolish and amateurish, but many found humor in the German attempt to manipulate prisoner loyalty. The Germans also provided the *Anti-Northcliffe Times* for British POWs; the *Gazette des Ardennes*, and the *Nouvelles Hebdomadaires* for French POWs; the *Gazet van Brüssel* for Flemish prisoners; *Freiheit und Selbstständigkeit* for Russian Asians; *La Belgique* for Belgian captives; and *Der russische Bote* for Russians.²¹

While some POWs suffered in reprisal camps, select groups of war prisoners received special treatment. Both the Germans and the Allies established propaganda or political prisons to sway the allegiance of subject nationalities. Prisoners in these camps enjoyed superior accommodations, excellent fare (designed to meet regional tastes), extensive recreational programs, native entertainment, large libraries, and educational opportunities. A strong indoctrination program emphasized the injustice of imperial rule and potential greatness with the support of the Central Powers. While political prisoners received better physical treatment, they were

²¹ H.A.L. Fisher, *The War, Its Causes and Issues* (London: Longmans, Green, 1914), 16; Green, 48–50; Harvey, 281; Hay, 180; Lee, 75 and 106; Waugh, 222–223; Pyke, 139–140; Theodore Koch, *Books in the War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), 242 and 273–281; and Doegen, 92–96.

subject to psychological stress due to the intense pressure applied by their captors.²²

In Germany, the War Ministry assigned political POWs to *Sonderlagern* (propaganda camps).²³ Authorities focused on subject nationalities in multinational Allied states and colonial people in the British, French, and Russian empires. The Germans gathered Flemish, Ukrainian, Russian-Germans, Azeris, Georgians, and Muslims for indoctrination. Political propaganda focused on the inevitable victory of *Kultur*, preparing the foundation for German post-war plans of economic domination in newly occupied lands and recruiting Allied POWs to support revolutions in subject lands or serve in Central Power armies. By emphasizing the superiority of *Kultur* and battlefield victories, German propagandists sought to convince political prisoners that they could be part of the ultimate victory. In the long-term, the Germans sought friendly relations with POWs to encourage them to support German interests in occupied territories after the war. The most controversial and difficult propaganda effort was to recruit volunteers to fight for the Central Powers. These men would liberate their homelands, eject imperial forces, or prevent infidels from seizing the Holy Lands in the Middle East. Converted prisoners would stir up dissent behind the Allied lines. Political prisoners who joined the Germans faced the stark reality of execution for desertion if they were captured by the Allies.²⁴

The German vision of a postwar *Mitteleuropa* meant annexing new territory into the *Reich*, such as Belgium, northern France, northern Italy, and Russian Poland, and establishing economic dominance over the Baltic region, the Ukraine, Finland, and Georgia. Political camps for Flemish POWs at Giessen and Göttingen, for Ukrainians in Hammerstein and Rastatt, and for Volga Germans in Rastatt worked to convince these nationalities that the Germans supported their post-war nationalist interests and economic development. These prisoners would be the nucleus of nationalists who supported German political and economic goals after the war. The Germans provided special language and cultural instruction often outlawed in the Tsarist Empire because of that government's russification campaign.

²² Daniel McCarthy, *The Prisoner of War in Germany* (New York: Moffat, Yard, 1918), 134–135.

²³ *Sonderlagern* was the German military term for special political or propaganda prison camps.

²⁴ Steuer, 233–235 and; William Howard Taft, Frederick Harris, Frederic Houston Kent, and William Newlins, eds., *Service with Fighting Men, Volume II* (New York: Association Press, 1920), 290–293.

Tutors taught Ukrainians and Georgians to read their native languages using books prohibited in Russia. Prisoners enjoyed national music, attended theatrical performances in their own languages, and celebrated minority holidays. While the results could not be gauged until after the war, there were some wartime benefits. After the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918, Russian POWs expected to return home. The Germans instead shipped troops, food, and natural resources from the Eastern Front and most Russians remained in prison camps. Some Russians volunteered to serve as guards at prison facilities which allowed the Germans to redeploy *Landsturm* troops to other duties.²⁵

The Germans used propaganda camps to recruit Allied POWs, such as the Irish, to join Central Power forces. Sir Roger Casement, an ardent Irish nationalist, traveled to Berlin in 1914 to gain support for an Irish revolution. On 28 December 1914, the German Foreign Office established the Irish Brigade, composed of Irish POWs, to fight for their national independence. Fighting between Irish and English prisoners convinced the Germans that the Irish were ready volunteers. Casement urged the Germans to form the brigade to support Irish independence. The Germans provided members with a special Irish uniform, training, arms, and ammunition. As volunteers fighting for their independence, they were no longer prisoners of war. Under the agreement, German officers provisionally led these troops until Irish officers arrived from Ireland or the United States. In the event of a German naval victory, the Germans would transport the Irish Brigade and auxiliary German forces to the Irish coast. If the Irish achieved victory, the Germans promised to support the new government. If a German naval victory never materialized, the Irish Brigade might be sent to the Sinai Front to help the Egyptians gain independence from the British. In the event the war ended without an opportunity for military deployment, the Germans would provide free passage to the U.S. and sufficient funds to satisfy American immigration laws. As a result of this convention, Casement began to recruit volunteers in January 1915.²⁶

The Germans immediately canvassed prison camps across the *Reich* for Irish Catholic POWs with Casement's patriotic call for volunteers, includ-

²⁵ Fritz Fischer, *Germany's War Aims in the First World War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), 201–208, 310–324, 444–473, and 583–608; Fisher, 16; Oleh Fedyshyn, *Germany's Drive to the East and the Ukrainian Revolution, 1917–1918* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1971), 18–41; and “Russian Guards at Langensalza,” *Times History of the War*, 12 (1917): 237.

²⁶ *To Make Men Traitors: Germany's Attempts to Seduce Her Prisoners-of-War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918), 4–9; Hopkins, 99; and McCarthy, 121.

ing promises of better food and treatment. The Germans decided to establish an Irish propaganda camp at Limburg where these POWs received greater liberties. The Vatican dispatched Irish priests for spiritual comfort, although some clergymen disapproved of the nationalist plan. Casement presented historical lectures and pressed his recruitment drive. Unfortunately for Casement and the Germans, the call to arms fell on deaf ears. Fighting broke out between the nationalists and the Unionists and the majority of the Irish POWs had enlisted in the British Army before the war. Volunteering for the Irish Brigade made these men traitors and condemned to execution if captured by the Allies. As a result, Casement recruited only 55 volunteers. Because of deteriorating morale at Limburg, the members of the Irish Brigade were deployed to Zossen-Wünsdorf in June 1915. With the failed recruitment effort, the Germans imposed rigid discipline on Irish POWs at Limburg and revoked their privileges. Many were dispersed across Germany and assigned to labor detachments while Casement's most vocal critics went to reprisal camps or punishment barracks.²⁷

The Irish Brigade began training at Zossen under German officers and NCOs who had orders to treat the volunteers as comrades in arms and not as prisoners. The brigade members received instruction in German small arms and machine guns in preparation for their landing. The Irish resented German command and their housing assignment in the "coloured" compound led to racial tensions (Zossen was also a *Sonderlager* for colonial and Muslim POWs). The small number of volunteers forced Casement to turn to more conventional forms of subversion in Ireland. The Germans sent arms and ammunition by U-boat to Ireland and Casement returned in April 1916 for the Easter Uprising. Casement was captured, tried, and executed and the Irish Brigade did not fight in the revolt. During the war, the Germans landed only one member of the brigade in Ireland. On 12 April 1918, Lance-Corporal Dowling was captured on the coast of County Clare after leaving a German submarine. The German propaganda campaign to persuade Irish POWs to defect was a dismal failure, especially in support of an Irish revolution.²⁸

²⁷ McCarthy, 121–130; and L.J. Austin, *My Experiences as a German Prisoner* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1915), 109.

²⁸ *To Make Men Traitors*, 10–14; McCarthy, 130; and "Ireland in the Fourth Year," *Manchester Guardian History of the War, Volume VIII (1917–1919)* (Manchester, England: John Heywood, 1919), 262–263.

The Germans were far more effective in convincing Muslim POWs to join the *jihad* against the Allied infidels. The British, French, and Italians ruled millions of Muslim subjects in overseas empires while the Russians incorporated Muslims in Central Asia into the Tsarist Empire. The Germans did not seize Islamic lands during their colonial expansion. Instead, Wilhelm II proclaimed eternal friendship for Muslims in Damascus in 1898, which marked the beginning of German support for Pan-Islamism. This political policy was preceded by German economic interests in the Middle East when the Deutsche Bank invested in a new Turkish railway system in 1888. This railroad established a strong German financial foundation within the Ottoman Empire. With the German and Turkish concerns regarding British expansion in the Persian Gulf region, the two powers reached a military agreement after the Great War began. The Germans wanted to divert British troops from the Western Front to protect Egypt and the Persian Gulf while the Ottomans saw the conflict as an opportunity to regain lost territory. The Germans provided military advisors, troops, and equipment as the Turks prepared for war. In November 1914, the Turks joined the Central Powers and Sultan and Caliph Medmed V issued a *fatwa* declaring a *jihad* against Britain, France, and Russia.²⁹

Germany's special relationship with the Ottoman Empire inspired the plan to mobilize the Muslim world against the Allies. The German Foreign Office established the *Nachrichtenstelle für der Orient* (*NfO*) (News Service for the Orient) early in the war to propagate an Islamic Holy War against the Allies utilizing overt and covert methods of propaganda dissemination. The Foreign Office policy statement, *Revolutionizing the Islamic Possessions of Our Enemies*, issued in October 1914, was a blueprint for a concerted propaganda campaign in the Muslim world. This strategy encouraged Ottoman subjects to support the war effort, promoted insurgency among Islamic populations under Allied control, and recruited Muslim soldiers fighting for the Allies by disseminating propaganda on the front lines and in German prison camps. This strategy had a number of political-military ramifications. Unlike the Allies, who controlled the world's sea-lanes, the Germans were strapped by manpower limitations. By raising a Muslim Brigade composed of Islamic POWs, the Germans could bolster the Turkish

²⁹ Gottfried Hagen, "German Heralds of Holy War: Orientalists and Applied Oriental Studies," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 24:2 (2004): 147–151; Dris Maghraoui, "The 'Grand Guerre Sainte': Moroccan Colonial Troops and Workers in the World War," *Journal of North African Studies* 9:1 (Spring 2004): 8–12; and Martin Kroger, "Revolution als Programm. Ziele und Realität," in *Der Erste Weltkrieg* (Weyarn, Germany: Seehamer Verlag, 1977), 366–391.

Army. This force would encourage nationalist movements in the Allied colonies, creating political instability and future revolution. The NfO sent secret missions to Muslim lands to provoke uprisings, commit sabotage, and secure alliances with Muslim rulers. Egypt was a prime target since the Suez Canal represented the heart of the British Empire. The Germans hoped to exploit the nationalist aspirations of the people of India and subjugated people of Russia. By promoting nationalist propaganda among the Bengali, Baluchi, and Northwest Frontier POWs (Muslim Indians) and the Tartar, Kazakh, and Azeri prisoners (Russian Muslims), the Germans would undermine the political stability of the British Raj and Russian Tsar.³⁰

While German propaganda began by demonstrating German friendship for Muslim peoples, the message soon expanded as the war continued. The Germans used Muslim POWs to counteract Allied wartime propaganda. The Allies depicted the Great War as a conflict of the Western democracies (especially after Russia became a republic in 1917) against the autocratic Central Powers. Photographs of colonial soldiers in German captivity demonstrated that the Allied war effort did not rely on citizen volunteers but on colonial subjects ordered to fight for their imperial masters. Even if the Germans could not convince large numbers of Muslims to volunteer on behalf of the Caliph, they envisioned a postwar world where these prisoners would return home and report the good treatment they received in prison camps. The repatriated POWs would be more apt to accept German economic and political penetration, especially if new independent countries emerged.³¹

The War Ministry concentrated Muslim POWs in two *Sonderlagern* at Zossen near Berlin. The NfO staff made sure that these prisoners were well treated and received privileges. Over 12,000 Russian prisoners, primarily Kazan Tartars, Kirgiz, Kalmyks, and Bashkir, lived in *Tartarenlager* at Zossen-Weinberge. The Germans set up a second propaganda camp at Zossen-Wünsdorf, known as the *Halbmondlager* (Crescent Moon Camp). The Germans incarcerated approximately 4,100 French North Africans (Berbers, Moroccans, Algerians, and Tunisians) and British Indian POWs

³⁰ Kroger, 366–391; Gerhard Höpp, “Frontenwechsel: Muslime Deserteure im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg und in der Zwischenkriegszeit,” in Gerhard Höpp and Brigitte Reinwald, *Fremdeinsätze: Afrikaner und Asiaten in europäischen Kriegen, 1914–1945* (Berlin: Verlag das arabische Buch, 2000), 130–132; Donald M. McKale, *War by Revolution* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1998), 67–68; Hagen, 150–154; *Times History of the War*, 6 (1915–1916): 273; Hoffman, 72; *To Make Men Traitors*, 16–17; and Albert Beveridge, “As Witnessed in Germany,” *Review of Reviews* 51 (May 1915): 568.

³¹ *To Make Men Traitors*, 24–26; and Backhaus, 105.

(Baluchis, Bengalis, Arabs, and non-Muslims such as Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Hindus) at Wünsdorf with the latter assigned to the *Inderlager* (Indian Camp). They were joined by British and French POWs and the members of the Irish Brigade. The Germans assigned officers with military service in India and the East to these camps because they spoke native languages and understood their cultures.³²

The Germans provided superior accommodations and better dietary privileges in both Zossen facilities than standard prison fare. The barracks were well-constructed and clean and the Germans offered special housing for different racial and religious groups. Prison kitchens followed dietary restrictions, prohibiting pork and alcohol (POWs enjoyed beer and wine in other German prison camps). Muslim prisoners celebrated religious feast days, especially Ramadan, and camp authorities scheduled daily routines to allow POWs to pray to Mecca. Muslims freely practiced their faith and the Turkish government sent imams to lead prayer and supervise instruction in the Quran. Most importantly, Wilhelm II constructed the first mosque in Germany for divine services at Zossen-Wünsdorf. This mosque featured a special bathing facility to allow worshippers to wash their feet, elaborate decorations, a spacious white-tiled interior, and a minaret to call the faithful to prayer. The Germans also built a wooden minaret at Weinberge, but did not construct a mosque for worship.³³

The Germans distributed special newspapers with war information to Muslim POWs in their own languages. The two facilities at Zossen printed and distributed the bi-monthly newspaper *El Dschidhad* (*El Jihad*). Later, the Germans disseminated picture albums of the war, originally designed for European readers, and printed captions in Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Urdu. Literary forms of propaganda included Arabic poetry written by the Young Egyptian National Committee in Berlin which called for Islamic unity and support for the *jihad*. The Germans also distributed epic poetry in Persian which praised German military might. The Ottoman government sent high-ranking officials to visit Zossen to make political speeches and urge POWs to support the Turkish war effort. German propagandists attacked colonialism and the imperial powers. The Germans described

³² Doegen, 30–35; *To Make Men Traitors*, 14–15; McCarthy, frontispiece and 130–131; Schuhmacher, No. 9 (1915): 31; and Correvon, *Zweite Folge*, 148.

³³ Gerhard Höpp, *Muslimen in der Mark* (Berlin: Verlag der arabische Buch, 1997), 35–60; Marghot Kahleyss, “Muslimische Kriegsgefangene in Deutschland im Erste Weltkrieg – Ansichten und Absichten,” in Höpp and Reinwald, 80–87; McCarthy, 131–134; *To Make Men Traitors*, 18–19; Doegen, 99–100; Backhaus, frontispiece and 96; Correvon, *Zweite Folge*, 131–132; and Schuhmacher, No. 10 (1915): 37–39.

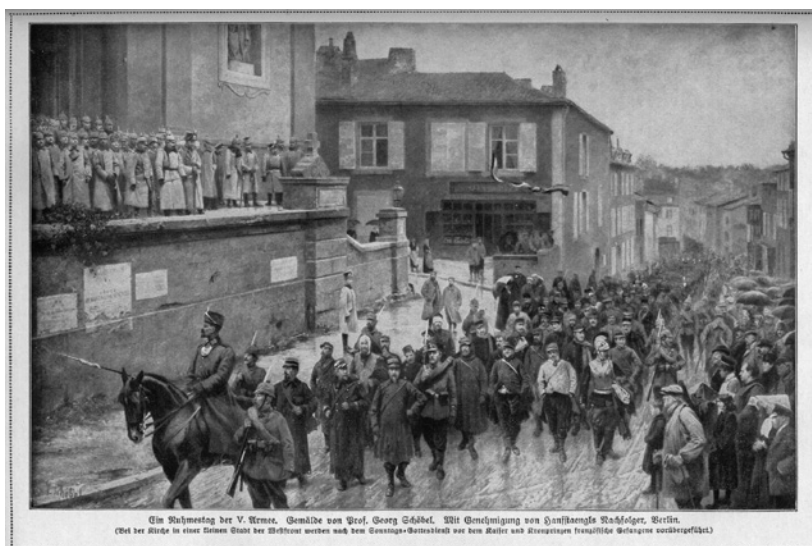


Figure 7.3. Kaiser Reviews French POWs. The painting shows Kaiser Wilhelm II and Crown Prince Wilhelm, standing in the center to the left in front of a church after a Sunday service, reviewing recently captured French troops in 1916. The image of the emperor inspecting dejected Allied prisoners was a common theme in wartime paintings and photographs. Source: *Der Weltkrieg* 4 (1916): 161.

atrocities committed by the colonial occupiers: they accused the French of discrimination against Muslims and the British of impoverishing India. The imperial masters were anti-Muslim and the faithful had to fight a holy war to defend Islam. The British, French, and Russians had robbed Muslims of their lands and the only salvation for the oppressed was through revolution. Prisoners were asked: should you fight for the imperial powers and maintain Muslim subjugation or should you join your Muslim brethren in *jihad* and win your independence? The Germans also drove Muslim POWs around Berlin and brought them to industrial complexes to demonstrate the strength and prosperity of the German Empire. These activities were designed to prove that Germany was strong and destined to win the war.³⁴

Compared to the efforts to create the Irish Brigade, the Germans were far more successful in recruiting Muslims to fight for the Sultan on the Palestinian and Mesopotamian Fronts. The two Zossen facilities became military training grounds as prisoners joined the Muslim Brigade.

³⁴ Höpp, *Muslimen in der Mark*, 101–109; McCarthy, 133–134; *To Make Men Traitors*, 16; *Der Krieg*, 9 (1917): 502; and Backhaus, 26.

Commanded by German officers and NCOs, the volunteers were drilled and armed. The Germans also provided medical teams and interpreters. In February 1916, the first 200 Muslim recruits, primarily French North African troops, left for Constantinople. The numbers increased by 1,900 troops by May 1916, raised from French and British Muslim prisoners from the Crescent Moon Camp and Russian Muslims from Zossen-Weineberge. A cholera epidemic in the camps in spring 1916 slowed training and transportation and the last troops trains carrying Muslim volunteers departed in April 1917. Over 2,000 Muslim Tartar, Arab, and Indian POWs, manning 15 battalions, volunteered for Turkish military service from German prison camps. Under the agreement between the German and Turkish governments, these units served voluntarily in the Turkish Army. Ironically, Enver Pasha, the Turkish Minister of War, was dubious of the Muslim Brigade and planned to integrate these men individually into Ottoman units rather than as a cohesive force. He considered them deserters or cowards who chose captivity rather than death. German officers had to persuade the Turkish War Minister that many had been captured in combat, often wounded, or were persuaded by German propaganda to join the Sultan's forces. Enver Pasha subsequently reversed his decision and accepted the Muslim Brigade units.³⁵

Conclusion

A broad interpretation of POW propaganda includes efforts to sway the opinion and behavior of prisoners and the use of POWs to influence the opinion or control the behavior of domestic populations and foreign governments. Clearly, propaganda pertaining to war prisoners in Germany during World War I had a number of audiences beyond POWs themselves and extended to soldiers, populations, and the leadership of belligerent nations. Propaganda related to prisoners in the *Reich* was used in complex ways by German authorities, but was also used by the Allies to advance their goals.

Propaganda directed at POWs was the simplest and most obvious to develop, because the German military controlled the information prisoners received. In many ways, German propaganda was relatively ineffective among the general population of Allied POWs, due to its unprofessional

³⁵ Höpp, *Muslime in der Mark*, 80–84; McCarthy, 132–133; Hoffman, 256; and *To Make Men Traitors*, 19–22.

and inexperienced execution. Despite German propaganda, the vast majority of Allied prisoners remained loyal to their homelands, yet, most were content to remain in captivity, and few POWs escaped into neutral Denmark, Switzerland, or the Netherlands. Theoretically, war prisoners on farms would seem the most likely to escape, since they were deployed in small groups and lightly guarded, but access to ample food and the danger of returning to the fighting were more significant factors in keeping them at work than German propaganda.³⁶

Propaganda camps, designed to influence specific groups of prisoners who might be persuaded to work for German wartime and post-war objectives, had mixed results for a variety of reasons. The complexity of the Russian Civil War undermined German efforts to achieve a long term impact in Russia, the Baltic lands, and the Ukraine after the Central Power victory in March 1918. Domestic food shortages and dwindling resources and the urgency in transferring divisions from the Eastern Front to France ahead of the American Expeditionary Force undermined German efforts to consolidate their conquests in the East. Releasing "friendly" nationalist POWs might have allowed the Germans to become politically and economically successful, but most Russian minorities languished in *Sonderlagern* or in war work instead of returning home to solidify German control. As a result of the Russian Civil War and at Allied insistence that the Germans retain Russian POWs to avoid expanding the Red Army, most Russian prisoners remained in German prison camps until 1921.³⁷

The Germans were clearly unsuccessful in recruiting Irish POWs to enlist in the Irish Brigade before the Easter Rebellion in 1916. Irish prisoners, early in the war, were professionals in the British Army or volunteers who signed up to "fight for King and country." They were unlikely to desert the colors to support a rebellion. If the Germans had begun their recruitment campaign after Parliament passed the controversial Military Service Act in January 1916, which conscripted large numbers of Irishmen, they might have enticed more recruits. More problematic was Royal Navy control of the English Channel, which prevented any invasion of Ireland. If the German Navy defeated the British, the Irish revolution would still have been unnecessary. As the dominant naval power, the Germans would gain the resources needed to win the war and cut off Britain from foreign trade.³⁸

³⁶ Durnford, 191–192.

³⁷ Steuer, 341–347 and 362–368.

³⁸ Fischer, 131–132.

The effort to enlist POWs in the Muslim Brigade was more successful. The “special relationship” between the Germans and Ottomans convinced Muslim prisoners to join the *jihad* against the Allied infidels. Some historians argue that Pan-Arabism began in German prison camps as Arab soldiers responded to the call to overthrow the imperialist powers. This ideology developed more fully when Arab troops incarcerated in Germany during the Second World War were exposed to National Socialism. The Germans recruited Muslims during World War II, this time as Auxiliary Forces and for the *Schutzstaffel* (SS). The *Wehrmacht* organized Russian Muslim volunteers into Azeri and Turkistani units to fight against Soviet forces. The SS recruited Muslims from Bosnia and Albania to form special mountain SS divisions by the end of the war. Most importantly, German-planted nationalism sparked independence movements that ended British, French, and Italian colonialism in the Middle East and South Asia in the late 1940s and in North and West Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. Despite these gains, the Germans failed to foment revolution in Egypt or bolster the Ottoman Empire in World War I as Turkish armies disintegrated in Syria by the end of the conflict. The relatively small number of Muslim volunteers did not divert Allied forces from the Western Front.³⁹

Beyond the barbed wire, German propaganda also attempted to use promises of good treatment and an ultimate German victory to convince Allied troops to surrender, but the impact of these efforts remains unclear. Deteriorating morale, especially in Italy and Russia, contributed to mass surrenders by 1917. Bolshevik propaganda, designed to destroy the Russian Army to overthrow the Tsar, undermined Russian morale by encouraging soldiers to desert. In most cases of capture, troops were cut off by the Germans or debilitated by wounds so propaganda was not a primary reason for surrender.

Aimed at foreign governments, reprisal policies attracted enemy attention but encouraged counter-reprisals and potential escalation of punishments for POWs on both sides. While nations implemented reprisal policies in protest of violations of international law, these actions were not instrumental in forcing violators to stop. In most cases, neutral diplomats convinced governments that reprisals adversely affected their own nationals

³⁹ Iskander Giljavož, “Die Muslime Rußlands in Deutschland während der Weltkriege als Subjekte und Objekte der Großmachtpolitik,” in Höpp and Reinwald, 145–147; Sebastian Cwiklinski, “Die Panturkismus-Politik der SS: Angehörige sowjetischer Turkvölker als Objekte und Subjekte der SS-Politik,” in Höpp and Reinwald, 149–166; and Eva-Maria Auch, “Aserbaidschaner in den Reihen der deutschen Wehrmacht,” in Höpp and Reinwald, 167–180.

in enemy hands. Allied policy-makers concluded that postwar war crime tribunals were more appropriate to try alleged violators. Provisions for a trial were included in the Treaty of Versailles, but the Germans insisted that the cases be heard in the Weimar Republic. The Allies produced a list of 45 defendants, including German officers and enlisted accused of brutal treatment of POWs, and the German Supreme Court tried the cases in Leipzig between May and July 1921. The Leipzig Trials did not include any major political or military leaders and fell far short of Entente expectations. The Allies revised this approach at Nuremberg in 1946 with far different results.⁴⁰

At home, German propaganda complemented successful general war-time propaganda among the general population until the collapse of the German Army on the Western Front in August 1918. When Allied prisoners flooded the *Reich* and Germans encountered Entente soldiers in industry and on farms, it provided evidence that the Central Powers were winning. The Germans defeated the Russians and Romanians by March 1918 and German troops still occupied French and Belgian territory after the Armistice, convincing many that Germany had not lost the war. This successful propaganda and the failure of the war-weary Allies to prosecute the war to total victory led to the *Dolchstoß* legend in which Germany was "stabbed in the back" by Socialists on the home front and did not lose on the battlefield. This perspective would contribute to the rise of Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists in the 1930s.⁴¹

On the other side of the conflict, Allied propaganda exaggerated bad conditions in German prison camps with unintended consequences. The food shortages Entente POWs experienced were a result of the British naval blockade. German authorities introduced rationing in 1915, which decreased nutritional standards as food went to soldiers and industrial workers. Allied prisoners received the same food rations as non-war related classes (children and the elderly), which fell below subsistence levels by the end of the war. American, British, and French POWs enjoyed regular food parcels to supplement their diets. The Russian and Romanian governments lacked the resources to support their nationals in Germany and the Italian regime refused to send provisions to Italian prisoners, especially after the Battle of Caporetto in 1917, declaring that these men had deserted. While food supplies declined, the Germans strove to keep Allied POWs alive to the best of their ability. With prisoner repatriation in November 1918, the peo-

⁴⁰ Claude Mullins, *The Leipzig Trials* (London: H.F. and G. Witherby, 1921).

⁴¹ Fischer, 609–638.

ple in the West learned about the actual conditions and concluded that Allied propaganda had distorted the situation in prison camps. When the National Socialists set up concentration camps in Germany, many skeptics challenged accusations of brutality as wartime Allied propaganda.⁴²

Some historians have, for several decades, treated the Great War and World War II as one conflict. In the case of prisoner of war propaganda, the experiences of the POWs and the efforts of propagandists clearly link these wars. In overall effectiveness, propaganda based on captives in German prison camps had radically different effects on different groups during World War I and some had long-term effects during the Second World War. German propaganda was effective in convincing subjects of their national strength, contributing to the willingness of the German people to enter into a second conflict, but had little impact on their other intended audiences, due either to ineffectiveness or conditions which prevented the imperial government from using its influence over specific national groups to implement political events. Most significantly, the generally fair and positive conditions in Great War POW camps, despite propaganda to the contrary, made individuals in the West suspicious of reports of conditions in concentration camps under the National Socialists. Giving the Nazis the benefit of the doubt, in part, enabled the atrocities which occurred in World War II.

⁴² Hoffman, 110–118.

CHAPTER EIGHT

INDIAN AND AFRICAN SOLDIERS IN BRITISH, FRENCH AND GERMAN PROPAGANDA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Andrew Jarboe

During the First World War, empires and wartime exigencies facilitated the migration of millions of human beings to and from every corner of the globe. Britain and France drew heavily on the manpower of their vast overseas territories. Senegalese riflemen joined in the abortive counterattack on Alsace-Lorraine in late August 1914. In total, France supplemented its metropolitan army with nearly 500,000 soldiers from Africa and Southeast Asia. Another 1.4 million Indian soldiers served the British Empire in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. These men belonged to a truly global army. At any given time along the British sector of the Western Front, one might have encountered Anglo and First Nation Canadians, Muslims and Sikhs from the Punjab, Afghan Afridis from the Khyber Pass, Gurkhas from the foothills of Nepal, Newfoundlanders, Jamaicans, Australians, New Zealanders, Maoris, South Africans and Egyptians.¹ Although the German Reich was unable to draw on the manpower of its overseas empire to the extent of its rivals, African riflemen known as *askaris* fought alongside German soldiers, defending Germany's colonial possessions on the African continent.²

In light of the significant presence of colonial subjects in the armies of the major powers, it ought to come as little surprise that “colonial soldiers” became a subject for wartime propaganda. This chapter compares British, French and German propaganda featuring African and Indian soldiers—both that produced for European audiences and for colonial audiences. For all three of the major powers fighting on the Western Front, colonial soldiers sustained popular support for the war and imperial policy. The

¹ See the podcast by Santanu Das, “The Indian Sepoy in the First World War,” <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/indian-sepoy-first-world-war-video> (accessed 2 January 2013).

² See Michelle Moyd, “We don’t want to die for nothing’: *askari* at war in German East Africa, 1914–1918,” in Santanu Das, ed., *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 90–107.

first part of this chapter examines British and French propaganda about colonial soldiers. It demonstrates that newspapers, with very little direction from home authorities, took the lead in employing colonial soldiers in a broad propaganda campaign affirming British and French imperial rule. The second part of this chapter weighs the effectiveness of propaganda meant for colonial audiences. As casualties depleted the ranks of African and Indian units, British and French military authorities believed propaganda could fortify the loyalty of colonial soldiers. The German Foreign Office, meanwhile, busily promoting pan-Islamic and revolutionary movements abroad, believed propaganda might be used effectively to “convert” the loyalties of African and Indian troops opposite German frontline soldiers. The third part of this chapter focuses on the prominence of racial stereotypes in propaganda about colonial soldiers produced for audiences on both sides of no-man’s-land. Especially in Germany, wartime propaganda intensified racist attitudes and set the stage for policies during the Third Reich that promoted racial inequality.

An Imperial War: Colonial Soldiers and the British and French Empires

Europe hosted soldiers from the farthest reaches of the British and French empires from the very first weeks of the war on the Western Front. On 4 August, the French War Minister mobilized ten West African battalions for deployment to France. These Senegalese riflemen participated in the disastrous attacks on Alsace-Lorraine on 21 August.³ Across the Channel, the Secretary of War, Lord Kitchener and the commander of the British Expeditionary Force’s I Corps, Douglas Haig, envisioned a war of several years, provided of course that something could be done to halt the rapidly advancing German army. At an emergency war council meeting at 10 Downing Street on 6 August, they persuaded the council to deploy the 3rd and 7th Indian divisions—renamed the Lahore and Meerut divisions—to Egypt for eventual use in Europe.⁴ The two infantry divisions and an additional cavalry division arrived at Marseilles in late September and early October. Ill-equipped, they went into the lines outside Ypres.⁵

³ See: John Howard Morrow, *The Great War: An Imperial History* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁴ George Morton Jack, “The Indian Army on the Western Front, 1914–1915: A Portrait of Collaboration,” *War in History* 13.3 (2006): 337–338.

⁵ See: J.W.B. Merewether and Frederick Smith, *The Indian Corps in France* (London: John Murray, 1918).

Newspapers in Britain and France responded to these developments with a flurry of articles about colonial soldiers. While there had been nothing uniform about the response British, French or even German newspapers offered to outbreak of the war, presses voiced almost universal excitement about the arrival of Indians and Africans in France in 1914. When Indian soldiers disembarked at Marseilles in October, a correspondent to *The Times* exclaimed that to witness the event was to have assisted “at the making of history.” He wrote, “I have seen the troops of one of the world’s most ancient civilizations set foot for the first time on the shores of Europe. I have seen proud Princes of India ride at the head of thousands of soldiers, Princes and men alike fired with the ardour of the East, determined to help win their Emperor’s battles or die.”⁶ Through the close of that year, *The Manchester Guardian* littered its pages with photographs of Maharajas atop mighty war horses, barefoot Indian troops preparing food in French camps, or regiments of North African Turcos, “the famous French colonial troops,” passing through towns on their way to the front.⁷ French newspapers issued their own steady stream of overtures to “*nos enfants du soleil*.” In late August 1914, *Le Siecle* claimed that Algerian Turcos—“*terreur des allemands*”—“burn to avenge their fathers who fell in 1870 under Prussian bullets.”⁸

This sort of sensational reporting was not the product of any coordinated effort directed by the British or French governments or military authorities. Indeed, it is not altogether clear that the Allies or the Germans even attempted to establish uniformity.⁹ Especially at this early stage in the war, governments were more concerned with preventing the publication of military information that could be of potential value to the enemy. In Britain, the Defense of the Realm Act banned reports that might undermine loyalty to the King or deter recruitment. In France, the Ministry of War set up a Press Bureau which enforced similar codes while in Germany, the 1851 state of siege law gave military commanders the authority to issue nearly 2,000 censorship rules by the end of 1916.¹⁰ In 1914, therefore, the press barons and their staff took the lead in framing the discussion about colonial soldiers, issuing a steady stream of propaganda intended to fortify domestic resolve (and sell newspapers) at a time when the outcome of the war

⁶ “The Indian Troops at Marseilles,” *The Times*, 2 October 1914.

⁷ “A Party of Turcos,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 14 September 1914.

⁸ “Les Turcos terreur des allemands,” *Le Siecle*, 25 August 1914.

⁹ Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War: Explaining World War I* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), 219.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 219–220.

was anything but certain. "One of the first [Indian] regiments to go into action was badly shelled while entrenching," reported *The Times* on 5 November. "An officer who was present particularly observed the indifference of the men to this—to them—novel experience. It was noticed that after the first few shells they hardly troubled to look around."¹¹ The exploits of Nepalese Gurkhas became a favorite topic for British and French newspapers. "In battle, the Indian troops were once again covered in glory with the *kukri* of the Gurkhas playing, as always, its terrible role," reported *Le Siecle* in November 1914.¹² African troops proved themselves just as much an asset in the lines, showing "the most complete contempt for anything so trivial as a bullet or shell."¹³ German frontline troops reportedly dreaded the coming of night when "the Senegalese, gliding forth into the dark and climbing over the ramparts of unburied dead, often leaped down from the glacis like cats and cut the throats of the sentinels."¹⁴

Propaganda also used the context of the war and the participation of colonial soldiers to cultivate a broad commitment to imperialism and imperial policy. *The Times* told its readers that the presence of Indian troops in France was itself a rebuttal of "all the foul slanders which have been circulated in the past years regarding British rule in India."¹⁵ In a penny pamphlet on *India and the War*, Sir Ernest Trevelyan asserted that Britain's loyal Indian troops fought on the behalf of the entire (loyal) Indian nation. Never, he wrote, "has there been an occasion when India has been more united than at the present time.... Every class and every race have shown their loyalty and their anxiety to take their share of the burdens and duties of citizens of the Empire."¹⁶ Bhupendranath Basu, President of the Indian National Congress, assured British audiences that despite some of the disappointments and shortcomings of British imperial rule, India was "heart and soul" with its colonial master in the present crisis. The war had swept away all doubt, all hesitation, and all question, so that in all of India "there was but one feeling—to stand by England in the hour of danger."¹⁷

The effectiveness of this kind of propaganda is perhaps best illustrated by the enthusiastic reception of home audiences to films about colonial

¹¹ "Valour of the Indian Troops," *The Times*, 5 November 1914.

¹² "Les Indiens et les Ecosais," *Le Siecle*, 14 November 1914.

¹³ "Germans Beaten Back Near Reims," *The Times*, 22 October 1914.

¹⁴ "The Battle of Aisne," *The Times*, 13 November 1914.

¹⁵ "Indian Troops in France," *The Times*, 2 October 1914.

¹⁶ Ernest J. Trevelyan, *India and the War* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), 6.

¹⁷ Bhupendranath Basu, *Why India is Heart and Soul with Great Britain* (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1914).

soldiers. In 1915, for example, Dr. H.D. Girdwood requested and received permission from military authorities to take photographs and films of the Indian Corps in action. He compiled his reels into a propaganda film, *With the Empire's Fighters*, and took his film on tour throughout Britain in 1917.¹⁸ In September, Girdwood showed his film to all 120,000 children in the Liverpool schools. Teachers instructed their students to write response essays. John Slater, an 11 year-old student, wrote, "In pre-war days our Indian soldiers were looked upon merely as picturesque figures by the majority of the English people. This war has drawn East and West together more closely."¹⁹ At the St. Paul's Girls School, 11 year-old Constance Fletcher wrote, "India is famous. For the courage and bravery her soldiers have displayed during this terrible war. The soldiers are loyal to the Motherland, for all she has done for them, dating back far back, during the growth of the British Empire. They cannot repay her for all her help."²⁰

Wartime policy and propaganda about colonial soldiers therefore nurtured Britain's next generation of imperial advocates and caretakers. To be sure, the First World War also set in motion powerful currents of change. In the closing years of the conflict, the "Wilsonian Moment" fueled the demands of anti-colonial movements that aptly wielded the rhetoric of national self-determination and Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points.²¹ Yet at the peace proceedings in Paris, Nguyen Tat Thanh and so many other colonial subjects discovered that the war had not eroded the commitment of Britain and France to imperialism. It took the devastation of another world war for Britain to finally relinquish its claims on India. France fought an increasingly brutal war through 1962 to keep Algeria within the imperial yolk. Wartime propaganda about colonial soldiers played a key part in extending the lease of European imperialism well into the twentieth century.

The Empire's Call: Wartime Propaganda and Colonial Audiences

The war on the Western Front affected places and peoples distant from the actual fighting. By the close of 1914, the French Army had already suf-

¹⁸ After the war, Girdwood showed his film in Canada, the United States, and India to audiences that included members of government, civilians, soldiers and students.

¹⁹ India Office Records [hereafter IOR] L/PJ/6/1454, File 3569.

²⁰ IOR L/PJ/6/1454, File 3569.

²¹ Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

ferred more than 500,000 casualties and the fatherland required soldiers just as fast as it could find them. In France's African colonies, Republican ideology provided recruiters with the justification they required for drawing extensively on colonial manpower. Colonial subjects owed a debt—the “blood tax”—to the metropole for the benefits they had supposedly accrued from France's *mission civilisatrice*.²² The situation was not dissimilar for Britain. As of 12 August 1914, when the single cavalry division and four infantry divisions belonging to the British Expeditionary Force began landing at Le Havre, Boulogne and Rouen, the only additional regular troops immediately available to the Empire were those of the Indian Army. That year, imperial authorities demanded 13,490 recruits from the Punjab. Starting in early 1915, British recruiters instituted a series of reforms enabling them to draw more extensively on the region's manpower. By the end of the war, out of a total of 683,149 combat troops raised in India, 349,688 came from the Punjab.²³

Recruitment in Africa and South Asia did not affect colonial subjects evenly. Instead, policy targeted the so-called martial races, or “*les races guerrières*.” The idea that certain races in South Asia had a natural proclivity for military service first received currency as early as 1819 when a Briton by the name of Hamilton began referring to Nepal's “martial tribes.”²⁴ By 1900, recruiting biases in India had shifted consistently in favor of the Punjab, the North West Frontier, and Nepal. In January 1893, these three regions provided 44 percent of the Indian Army's manpower. By 1914, nearly 75 percent of the Indian Army came from the Punjab, the Frontier, and Nepal.²⁵ In France, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Mangin, Chief of the General Staff of French West Africa, outlined his case for the recruitment of “*la force noire*” with a bestselling book by the same name in 1910. West Africa, he posited, not only contained sufficient reservoirs of men to offset France's demographic deficiencies, but West African men were particularly suited to making good soldiers. Constant exposure to warfare in Africa, he argued, had honed the innate “warlike qualities” of West Africans. The

²² Richard Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914–1918* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 25.

²³ Tan Tai-Yong, “An Imperial Home-Front: Punjab and the First World War,” *The Journal of Military History* 64.2 (2000): 374.

²⁴ Lionel Caplan, “Martial Gurkhas: The Persistence of a British Military Discourse on ‘Race’,” in Kaushik Roy, ed., *War and Society in Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 228.

²⁵ David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860–1940* (London: Macmillan Press LTD., 1994), 19.

Senegalese and Sudanese especially had “acquired a keen sense for warfare and likewise a keen sense for maneuvering.” An underdeveloped nervous system meant that the Senegalese would be less sensitive to pain than Europeans. Mangin held that this would pay dividends for the Senegalese “*dans le choc final*” when “his fury, long accumulated in his blood,” would not be tempered by “nervous breakdown.” Mangin added for emphasis, “In future battles, the blacks, for whom life counts so little and whose young blood boils with such ardour and who are eager to spill it, will certainly attain the ancient ‘French Fury.’”²⁶

Contrary to what European audiences believed about the innate enthusiasm of the martial races for combat, there was nothing natural about the willingness of colonial subjects to participate in the war. In French Guinea in West Africa after the outbreak of war, Kande Kamara noticed, “the only people you saw in the village were old people and women; all the young men of my age were in the bush—in the mountains, in forests, and in the valleys where it was safe.”²⁷ From the first months of the war, recruiters in Africa and India relied alternatively on voluntary enlistment, coercion, and conscription to get colonial subjects into uniform. As news of the fighting in France reached audiences in the colonies, recruiters noticed even greater resistance to enlistment. One recruiting officer in the Punjab noted in November 1914 that wives and mothers had taken to following recruiting parties for miles to dissuade their menfolk from enlisting.²⁸ Colonial units at the front suffered devastating losses, and some soldiers lost any hope of returning home alive. The letters they wrote home created more obstacles for recruiters. One wounded Indian soldier wrote in January 1915, “I have no confidence of being able to escape [death]. In a few days you will hear that in our country only women will be left. All the men will be finished here.”²⁹

Imperial authorities had to manufacture enthusiasm for the war. If not that, at the very least, they had to sustain the flow of men (and money) from the colonies to the frontlines. One way to do that was to downplay the contributions of colonial soldiers at the front. While propaganda in Britain and France trumpeted the exploits of colonial soldiers, in June 1915 Field Marshal French cautioned against giving Indians the impression that

²⁶ Charles Mangin, *La Force Noire* (Paris: Hachette, 1910), 254–258.

²⁷ Quoted in Joe Lunn, “Male Identity and Martial Codes of Honor: A Comparison of the War Memoirs of Robert Graves, Ernst Jünger, and Kande Kamara,” *The Journal of Military History* 69.3 (Jul., 2005): 728.

²⁸ Tan Tai-Yong, “An Imperial Home-Front,” 383.

²⁹ IOR L/MIL/17347, letter from a wounded sepoy to a relative.

the sepoys were bearing the brunt of the fighting in Europe. "Thus reports of heroic deeds by British and Allied troops, the cinematographs showing the power of the allied forces are fully as important as those which show the achievements of Indians."³⁰ The India Office heeded French's advice, suppressing propaganda that made too much of India's contribution to the war effort in Europe. In 1916, Lieutenant Edward Long began collaborating with the publishers Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton to write a book dealing with the part played by Indian soldiers in the war. "It would take the form of gallant deeds, performed by Indian soldiers, and would be published possibly in Urdu, as well as in English, for circulation in India, as well as here, and in neutral countries," he wrote to Arthur Hirtzel at the India Office.³¹ The India Office, however, did not share Long's enthusiasm for the project and refused to offer its support. "Neither from a military nor from a political point of view does it seem desirable to encourage exaggerated ideas of Indian valour, which is certainly the effect which a book devoted entirely to the subject would have," read one internal memo.

To judge from the vernacular press, & from the censors' reports in France, there is already no lack of self-esteem, & to separate the 'black pepper' from the 'red pepper'—to use a metaphor common in the letters from Indian soldiers—may give further currency to the belief that most of the fighting has been done by Indians. A book of brave deeds done by British & Indian troops in the proportion of about 3 to 1 would do no harm.³²

Of course, there was very little the British (or French) could do to prevent wounded soldiers invalided home from telling stories about the war. In Jhelum, in the Punjab, the *Siraj-ul-Akhbar* reported in March 1915,

In these days the wounded, who come to the hospitals of our country, narrate before the common people or their relatives strange stories of what they have witnessed with their own eyes, which conflict with the contents of official newspapers. They should be prohibited from telling anything about the war, as such rumours especially raise obstacles in the way of recruiting new men for the army.³³

The British hoped that propaganda could mitigate the problem to some degree. The Commissioner of Indian Hospitals, Walter Lawrence, noted in a letter to Lord Kitchener, "I think it is of the highest political importance

³⁰ IOR L/MIL/7/17517, Field Marshal French to the War Office, 22 June 1915.

³¹ IOR L/PS/11/107, letter from Lieutenant Edward Long to Sir Arthur Hirtzel, 2 June 1916.

³² IOR L/PS/11/107, India Office memo, 22 June 1916.

³³ IOR L/R/5/196, *Siraj-ul-Akhbar*, 15 March 1915, p. 692.

that [Indian soldiers] should return to India as regiments, armed and equipped, and that the spectacle of wounded and sick men in Hospital clothes will have a very depressing effect in India, and a very bad effect on recruiting.”³⁴ In 1915, the Corporation of Brighton published a book in English, Gurmukhi and Urdu describing the use of the Royal Pavilion at Brighton as a hospital for Indian soldiers. The Government of India purchased 20,000 copies of the book for distribution in India. “Everything has been done to make the wounded Indians as comfortable and happy as possible,” the book declared. “Not only do they live in a Royal Palace, but the splendid grounds which surround it have been reserved for them, which goes far to promote their quick return to health and strength.”³⁵

German propaganda also targeted colonial audiences. The promotion of independence of large portions of the British and French colonial empires was one of Germany’s war aims.³⁶ Turkey was a key partner in this strategy, and when the Kaiser’s ministers secured Turkey’s allegiance on 2 August, propagandists employed by the Foreign Office set to work promoting jihad in Africa and South Asia. At the center of this activity was Baron Max von Oppenheim, recalled to the Foreign Ministry that very day. Oppenheim turned the Foreign Office into the headquarters of a global jihad targeting the British, French and Russian empires.³⁷ Fronting his own fortune, Oppenheim’s agents distributed anti-Entente pamphlets and pan-Islamic propaganda written in every conceivable language. His Intelligence Office for the East (*Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient*) also coordinated the activities of agents and expeditions to the far corner of the globe intended to provide the spark—in addition to the guns—for revolution.³⁸

Oppenheim’s team targeted colonial audiences abroad and colonial soldiers stationed in Europe. Partnering with Ghadar revolutionaries, Oppenheim had agents visit the frontlines in France where they took photographs of dead Indian soldiers for publication in Indian presses in the

³⁴ The National Archives, Kew [hereafter TNA] WO 32/5110, Lawrence to Kitchener, 15 June 1915.

³⁵ Corporation of Brighton, *A Short History in English, Gurmukhi and Urdu of the Royal Pavilion Brighton and a Description of it as a Hospital for Indian Soldiers* (Brighton: King, Thorne and Stace, 1915), 9–18.

³⁶ Fritz Fischer, *Germany’s Aims in the First World War* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1967), 120.

³⁷ Tilman Lüdke, *Jihad made in Germany: Ottoman and German Propaganda and Intelligence Operations in the First World War* (Munich: Lit Verlag, 2005), 116.

³⁸ Donald M. McKale, *War by Revolution: Germany and Great Britain in the Middle East in the era of World War I* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1998), 50–52.

United States and Asia.³⁹ The Indian National Party, headquartered in Berlin, issued a pamphlet on *India's "Loyalty" to England* in 1915, dedicated "to the memory of those Indian soldiers who were brought out of India by force to be butchered for the selfish interest of Great Britain."⁴⁰ As casualties in African battalions mounted, German propaganda claimed that the French were deploying colonial soldiers as cannon fodder. In 1915, a North African deserter working in the services of the German Foreign Office, Rabah Abdallah Boukabouya, wrote a pamphlet called *L'Islam dans l'armée française*. The pamphlet was published in Constantinople to lend it greater credibility among Muslim communities throughout the French Empire. Boukabouya wrote, "We are compelled to ask the [French] authorities if the native soldiers were sent to *le feu* as patriotic defenders voluntarily committed for the duration of the war, or as livestock led to the slaughter beneath the merciless baton of arabophobic officers."⁴¹ Meanwhile, at a prisoner of war camp outside Berlin, Ottoman officials worked alongside Ghadar revolutionaries to persuade interned colonial soldiers to renounce their allegiance to the French and British empires.⁴² Upon learning about these activities at the prisoner-of-war camp, the Government of India warned, "In the event of exchange becoming practical question or of Indian prisoners being permitted to escape, mental attitude of such Indians will require consideration."⁴³

The Boundaries of Imperial Citizenship: Racism and Imperial Rule

Racism was foundational to the stability of imperial rule and during the First World War Indian and African soldiers were subject to more rigorous controls than white soldiers.⁴⁴ North African NCOs recovering from their wounds at hospitals in France were only allowed to leave the hospital grounds chaperoned by a French soldier.⁴⁵ In Britain, the *Daily Mail* caused

³⁹ Political Archives of the Foreign Office, Berlin [hereafter PAAA] R21076, Zimmermann to the Chief of the Army General Staff, 29 December 1914.

⁴⁰ Indian National Party, *India's "Loyalty" to England* (1915).

⁴¹ Lieutenant El Hadj Abdallah, *L'Islam dans l'armée française: guerre de 1914–1915* (Constantinople: 1915), 4.

⁴² See PAAA, R21244, Foreign Office memo by Oppenheim, October 1914.

⁴³ TNA FO 383/62, telegram from the Government of India to the Foreign Office, 7 May 1915.

⁴⁴ Philippa Levine, "Battle Colors: Race, Sex, and Colonial Soldierly in World War I," *Journal of Women's History* 9.4 (Winter, 1998): 106.

⁴⁵ Fogarty, *Race and War in France*, 121–122.

an uproar at the War Office when it published a photograph in May 1915 showing a white nurse standing at the bedside of a wounded Indian at a hospital in England. Alfred Keogh ordered the withdrawal of all nurses from the Indian hospitals, noting, "Anyone who knew anything about Indian customs would have prevented this scandal by forbidding the services of women nurses with Indian troops."⁴⁶ Not every corner of French and British society supported such overtly racist policies, of course. The *Paris-Journal* championed representative Blaise Diagne's efforts to win veteran pensions for Senegalese troops. "The same contribution of blood, the same sacrifice must be eligible for the same titles and the same recognition," argued a September 1915 edition of the newspaper. "It is a question not only of humanity, but of equality and justice."⁴⁷ Colonial subjects became some of the most vocal proponents of racial equality as compensation for the services of colonial soldiers during the war. In Lahore, the English-language newspaper *Panjabee* exclaimed in September 1914, "The employment of Indian troops in the present war is to be commended principally for the reason that it is a step towards the eventual obliteration of existing racial prejudice, so essential to India's self-fulfillment as a nation and an integral part of the Empire."⁴⁸

To be sure, racial stereotypes permeated representations of African and Indian soldiers in British and French newspapers.⁴⁹ Racism was especially pronounced in German propaganda about colonial soldiers. *The Continental Times*, an organ of the Foreign Office intended for English language audiences in Europe, accused France's African soldiers of committing atrocities as early as October 1914. Senegalese riflemen, it claimed, returned from the frontlines wearing necklaces of ears cut off the heads of German soldiers. Later that winter, the newspaper argued that England's reliance on Indian troops undermined any claim the allies had to the mantle of civilization. "Ah, Civilization, how thy name has been polluted!" read a February article.

In the name of civilization, the Allies have, so far, brought into the field, to fight against Christian white races, such types of uncivilized mercenaries, as savage Senegalese, negroes of various wild types, callous heartless Hindus, Sikhs, Turcos, Mongols, Khirgise and other colored and untutored people.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ IOR L/MIL/17/5/2016.

⁴⁷ "Pour nos soldats noirs," *Paris-Journal*, 13 September 1915.

⁴⁸ IOR L/R/5/195, *Panjabee*, 5 September 1914, p. 853.

⁴⁹ See Christian Koller, *Von Wilden aller Rassen niedergemetzelt: die Diskussion um die Verwendung von Kolonialtruppen in Europa zwischen Rassismus, Kolonial- und Militärpolitik, 1914–1930* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2001).

⁵⁰ "Alas, poor Civilization!" *The Continental Times*, 1 February 1915.

In the summer of 1915, the German Foreign Office distributed a pamphlet on the *Employment, contrary to International Law, of Colored Troops upon the European Arena of War by England and France*. Translated and distributed internationally, the pamphlet argued that the “large number of colored troops” from Asia and Africa, “who grew up in countries where war is still conducted in its most savage forms,” had brought to Europe “the customs of their countries.” Sworn testimonies of approved witnesses as well as extracts from the diaries and letters of French soldiers alleged that “colored troops” carried “as war-trophies” the “severed heads and fingers of German soldiers” and wore “ears which they have cut off” as “ornaments about their necks.” On the battlefield, “they creep up stealthily and treacherously upon” wounded German soldiers, “gouge their eyes out, mutilate their faces with knives, and cut their throats.” The atrocities perpetrated by colonial soldiers “under the eyes of the highest commanders of England and France ... set at defiance not only the recognized usages of warfare, but of all civilization and humanity.”⁵¹

Racist depictions of Indian and African soldiers also fueled propaganda intended to fortify the resolve of German audiences. A 1915 book, *Die Kriegsgefangenen in Deutschland*, featured photographs of various colonial soldiers, the “rabble against which Germany must fight.” The book chimed, “The thought of a highly educated, hopeful German brother meeting his end by the bullet or knife of these hordes must fill one with bitterness and anger.”⁵² Such racism became especially pronounced later in the war as shortages contributed to a humanitarian crisis in Germany. As bad as conditions were for Germans by 1917, propaganda insisted that things would only get worse if England, France, and their colonial soldiers won the war. “We are compelled to fight to the last!” declared a 1917 broadside. French senators, it announced, had made plain their intention to enslave the Germans in the event of an Allied victory. The broadside’s accompanying illustration implied that France intended to use its menacing Senegalese soldiers as enforcers of the policy—a complete reversal of the racial hierarchies Europeans had come to expect from the colonial encounter.

This wartime propaganda carried into postwar propaganda campaigns decrying the occupation of German soil by France’s African soldiers. When the Treaty of Versailles went into effect on 10 January 1920, the victorious

⁵¹ Foreign Office, *Employment, contrary to International Law, of Colored Troops upon the European Arena of War by England and France* (Berlin: 1915).

⁵² Professor Dr. Backhaus, *Die Kriegsgefangenen in Deutschland* (Siegen, Leipzig, Berlin: Verlag Hermann Montanus, 1915), 23.



Figure 8.1. 'Zum Kampf auf's Letzte sind wir herausgefordert!' by Anton Hoffmann, München 1917. Reproduction Number: LC-USZC4-11630 (color film copy transparency) / Call Number: POS – Ger.H621, no. 1 (E size) [P&P]. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA, bookmark: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004665973/>

powers formally occupied Germany up to the left bank of the Rhine. France's force comprised 30,000–40,000 colonial soldiers mostly from North and West Africa. An outcry against the "Black Horror on the Rhine" began in earnest. Calling attention to the behavior of French colonial soldiers in Germany discredited the Treaty of Versailles and postwar British and French policy vis-à-vis Germany. The propaganda campaign went international in April 1920 with the publication of E.D. Morel's *The Horror on the Rhine*, which lambasted France's decision to use "the manhood of Africa—of all Africa, even the most primitive regions of the continent—for the

pursuit of Imperial ends in Europe and elsewhere.”⁵³ Protests in Germany, meanwhile, transcended political boundaries and party lines as conservatives and liberals, unions and social democrats, Catholics and Protestants rallied against what they called “the dishonoring of the white race.”⁵⁴ Women’s groups issued pamphlets purporting that they were at the mercy of France’s African soldiers. One pamphlet, *Farbige Franzosen am Rhein: Ein Notschrei deutscher Frauen* (1920) offered,

The representatives of French militarism and imperialism in whose power we are held, they proclaim derisively that our claims are all lies, that white women on the Rhine do not need protection from yellow and black French soldiers, but instead that Negroes from Madagascar need protection from the immoral influence of German women! The same Negro, treated as second-class in France and held on a bridle, is allowed to behave in the Rhineland as a conqueror and master.⁵⁵

After the Nazis came to power, propaganda about the Horror on the Rhine lent a sense of urgency to their racial program. The French occupation ended in 1930, but somewhere between 600–800 offspring of sexual unions between African soldiers and German women remained in the Reich. These Afro-German children had been dubbed “Rhineland Bastards” at the height of the Horror on the Rhine campaign in the 1920s, a campaign in which the Nazis had enthusiastically participated.⁵⁶ In early 1937, the Nazis established “Sonderkommission 3” at the headquarters of the secret police in Berlin to oversee the task of forcibly sterilizing the children, in violation of the regime’s own 1933 sterilization law which did not allow for sterilization based solely on race.⁵⁷ Threatened by Gestapo officers with imprisonment in concentration camps, mothers of 385 of the children signed the “necessary” consent forms.⁵⁸ Later, after the outbreak of the Second World War and especially in the months prior to Germany’s invasion of France, Joseph

⁵³ E.D. Morel, *The Horror on the Rhine* (London: Union of Democratic Control, 1920), 8.

⁵⁴ Iris Wigger, *Die “Schwarze Schmach am Rhein”: Rassistische Diskriminierung zwischen Geschlecht, Klasse, Nation und Rasse* (Munich: Westfaelisches Dampfboot, 2007), 14.

⁵⁵ *Farbige Franzosen am Rhein: Ein Notschrei deutscher Frauen* (Berlin: Verlag Hans Robert Engelmann, 1920). Translation my own.

⁵⁶ Raffael Scheck, *Hitler’s African Victims: The German Army Massacres of Black French Soldiers in 1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 101.

⁵⁷ Clarence Lusane, *Hitler’s Black Victims: The Historical Experiences of Afro-Germans, European Blacks, Africans and African Americans in the Nazi Era* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 138.

⁵⁸ See Reiner Pommerin, *Sterilisierung der Rheinlandbastarde: das Schicksal einer farbigen deutschen Minderheit 1918–1937* (Düsseldorf: Dorste, 1979).

Goebbels encouraged journalists to revive memories of the Horror on the Rhine. In June 1940, German soldiers routinely massacred captured African soldiers, resulting in casualty rates far in excess of those for white French units.⁵⁹

Conclusion

To be sure, the First World War contributed significantly to the expectations for change that spread in its wake. And yet propaganda about colonial soldiers contributed to an intensification of ideas about racial difference and about the inherent inequality of Europeans and their African or Indian colonial subjects. It also renewed Europe's commitment to imperialism. The contributions of Britain and France's colonial subjects to the war were not lost in the jubilation of the Allied victory. When the French Army marched through the Arc de Triomphe on 14 July 1919 to celebrate Bastille Day and the formal end of the war, Colonel Réquin reminded readers of *The Times* of the valor of France's African soldiers. "Their part was certainly an important one," he began, "for without the help of our colonies and of the countries under our protectorate France's Army in 1914 would not have been so strong, nor that of 1918 so large." The contributions of "the world-famous Zouaves and 'Turcos'"; or the Senegalese, "bronzed with the bronze of ages"; or the soldiers from Morocco, "with their keen faces and muscles of steel"—indeed, "from all the corners of the earth where France has planted her flag and established the outposts of civilization"—justified "the policy adopted by the Third Republic, and the colonial methods carried out by its most prominent chiefs."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Raphael Sheck, "The Killing of Black Soldiers from the French Army by the 'Wehrmacht' in 1940: The Question of Authorization," *German Studies Review* 28, 3 (Oct., 2005): 596–606.

⁶⁰ "French Colonial Soldiers," *The Times*, 6 September 1919.

SECTION THREE

PROPAGANDA AND NEGOTIATING OCCUPATION

CHAPTER NINE

OF OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND LOST PROVINCES: GERMAN AND ENTENTE PROPAGANDA IN THE WEST DURING WORLD WAR I

Christopher Fischer

The image of Alsatian and Lorraine, often embodied by two women garbed in traditional regional dress, became a fixture of French wartime propaganda, a reminder of one of the highest tasks the French would fulfill once they had claimed victory: the return of the lost provinces of Alsace-Lorraine.



Figure 9.1. Alsace-Lorraine: A patriotic poster by Auguste Leroux from 1918 urging citizens to subscribe to the war loan. The two women wear the traditional dresses of Alsace and Lorraine (taken by Germany in 1871) with the caption *Pour hâter la Victoire, et pour nous revoir bientôt. Souscrivez!* Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, Paris (1918)

If Alsace and Lorraine formed one of the key elements of French propaganda, images from the German invasion and occupation of Belgium and northern France formed another; rape, arson, brutality, and murder became the stock in trade of posters and postcards geared at stirring up Allied patriotism and neutral sympathy in the war against the Germans. More broadly, wartime propaganda in the allied countries, as well as in many of the neutral powers, was derived from actions, real and alleged, on the Western Front. For the Germans, the propaganda terrain of the Western Front proved difficult to master.

The territories of Alsace-Lorraine, northern France, and Belgium represented both the battleground and prize of World War I, at least on the Western Front. While combat over the Western Front remained largely static from late 1914 to 1918, the propaganda war over these territories took on a much more dynamic character. Here, both Allied and German propaganda efforts had three distinct targets: the populations of these regions, the respective homefronts of each belligerent, and a broader international audience. Alsace-Lorraine, northern France, and Belgium emerged in posters and postcards, learned tracts and incendiary brochures, and representatives' stump speeches as key to winning the propaganda. Indeed, the symbolism and imagery about these areas often took on a greater importance than propaganda directed at the populations of the territories themselves.

Unlike in the real conflict over these territories, the Allies enjoyed a decisive advantage over Germany on the propaganda front. Whether in the poor "lost provinces" of Alsace and Lorraine, the ravaged departments of northern France, or the despoiled but "gallant" Belgium, the Allies could paint a picture of German depredation in the face of steadfast bravery. The Germans were compelled to make a more difficult case that pointed to the perfidy of Belgian franc-tireurs or the desire of Alsatians and Lorrainers to be German. German policies in these regions often aided the cause of Allied propaganda as Alsatians and Lorrainers lived under a strict martial regime, and the occupation of Belgium was marred by numerous misdeeds on the part of the Germans. In addition, the German government faced logistical challenges. The French and Belgians, for example, could more easily send representatives to their allied partners and to neutrals to plead their cause; German representatives, especially in the US, had no such easy access. In a general sense, Germany's propaganda organization—military or civilian, national or local—rarely proved as nimble or insightful as that of its allied counterparts. Moreover, as David Welch has argued, it was on the defensive

from the outset of the war, especially in terms of what a modern campaign might call “messaging.”¹ What is more, as this chapter will examine in the case of Alsace-Lorraine, the French proved far more focused in propagating the idea that the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine should be returned to France after Germany’s defeat.

This chapter explores propaganda during World War I with primary reference to Alsace and Lorraine, but uses Belgium as a useful touchstone. In particular, this chapter will examine how each side tried to appeal to the people of Alsace and Lorraine, then turn to how each dealt with propaganda with their domestic audiences as well as foreign constituencies. Germany’s actions, or the perceptions of German actions, made it easy for allied propagandists to weave a demand for a return for Alsace and Lorraine into a broader tapestry of German brutality and oppression during the war; moreover, Allied, and especially the French, proved far more deft and focused at articulating and disseminating their case with regard to the two provinces.

Gallant Belgium and German Atrocities

Before turning to the case of Alsace-Lorraine, it is useful to take a slight detour into the realm of propaganda concerning Belgium, and to a lesser extent, the north of France. The German invasion of these regions helped to create a framing narrative for the propaganda: the Germans had invaded Belgium and France, and had acted shamefully in the process; the French and Belgians, in contrast, were the aggrieved parties, valiantly seeking to defend their home soil. Combined with the structural imbalances in access to the larger world audience, this narrative framework left Germany on the defensive. The Germans attempted to counter such arguments by laying the blame at the feet of French and Belgian actions; the German view gained little traction. Indeed, the dominant narrative among both the western belligerents and many neutral countries was one of German aggression and barbarity, a narrative Germany never managed to offset.

The German war plans, embodied in the Schlieffen Plan’s vast sweep through Belgium into France, generated the first grave challenge for German propaganda. Germany had broken with international norms to

¹ F. Altenhöner, “Total War – Total Control? German Military Intelligence on the Homefront, 1914–1918,” *Journal of Intelligence History* (Winter 2005): 55–7; and see more generally David Welch, *Germany, Propaganda, and Total War, 1914–1918* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2000), 2–7, 21.

attack a neutral country; the Belgian decision to stand resolutely against German forces further galvanized opinion not just in France and Britain, but in many neutral countries. Thus, one narrative strand of wartime propaganda was created, that of poor, valiant Belgium defending itself from the militaristic Germans. The German advance into northern France only served to complement this view. The French could claim the role of noble defenders of their territory. As Jean-Jacques Becker and Gerd Krumeich have noted, the German transgression of the French border in the opening weeks of the war stirred French patriotism, not the long-standing ideas of revenge for the defeat of 1871 or the hope of regaining Alsace-Lorraine.²

If the fact of invasion shaped early wartime propaganda, it was both the real and alleged nature of German behavior during the attack and in the subsequent occupation which allowed the Germans to be painted not just as criminal invaders, but as barbarians without mercy. Lurid tales of German troops burning towns and villages, taking and killing hostages, raping women, and committing other atrocities became a stock element in accounts of the German advance. In later years, especially in the interwar decades, such tales would be dismissed in large part as wartime propaganda. But as John Horne and Alan Kramer have shown, German troops did indeed engage in acts of violence against Belgian and French civilians. German troops often acted out of a firmly held belief that Belgian and French franc-tireurs, sharp shooting irregulars, were illegally engaged in combat against German regular troops; the confusion and excitement of the early stages of the war exacerbated such fears.³ Thus, Germany's propaganda problems were rooted in both real and imaginary atrocities; conversely, the experience of martyrdom and suffering that marked the French and Belgian understanding of the war also shaped the arc of their propaganda narrative.⁴

Even so, German troops did not commit many of the worst acts attributed to them, nor did they engage in as widespread atrocities as Allied propaganda alleged. The rumors, panic, and fear which accompanied the German invasion forces gave birth to some of the worst allegations such as the firm belief that German troops punished civilians by chopping of

² Jean Jacques Becker and Gerd Krumeich, *La Grande Guerre. Une histoire franco-allemande* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008), 78.

³ John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914. A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 140–225.

⁴ Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices Rouges 14–18. France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), 21–39, 295–315. See also Annette Janzen, *Priester im Krieg. Elsässische und französische-lothringische Geistliche im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010).

their hands. German attempts to set the record straight, or to put undeniable acts of violence in a context that put the onus on the Belgians or French, often came to naught. Belief in such misdeeds, recounted in the press in 1914 and revisited at later stages of the war, came to shape the narrative, and above all, the imagery of wartime propaganda.⁵

The propaganda windfall for the Allies was paid out almost immediately. The Allied press, as well as representatives from Belgium, used the invasion to promote the righteousness of their cause, punctuating their arguments with reminders of German wrongdoing. French and British papers used and recycled tales of atrocities, while only occasionally questioning their sources. A solid stream of pamphlets and war memoirs published during the conflict likewise reinforced such images.⁶ Official propaganda and news reports were aided by efforts to raise funds in support of Belgium.⁷ For example, *King Albert's Book*, written in support of the Belgian cause, included letters, poems, and even sheet music that praised Belgian bravery. Contributors to the edition included a roster of well-known personalities ranging from cultural luminaries such as Sarah Bernhardt, Rudyard Kipling, and Edith Wharton, to political figures such as Winston Churchill, William H. Taft, and Alexandre Ribot, to assorted others including Andrew Carnegie, Aga Khan, and Guglielmo Marconi. Lord Roseberry captured the general spirit of the contributions in comparing the Belgians to the Spartans at Thermopylae fighting the "German barbarians" who had "ravaged, plundered, and destroyed the country they had sworn to protect."⁸ Sympathetic voices took up the Belgian cause in neutral countries as well. For example, James Beck, former U.S. Attorney General, wrote a long "indictment" of Germany by examining the competing arguments and "evidence" from the early stages of the war to conclude that Germany was indeed acting in criminal fashion.⁹

⁵ Horne and Kramer, 140–225. For examples of the lurid character of wartime visual propaganda, see Laurent Gervereau, *Images de 1917* (Paris: BDIC, 1987), especially 100–107.

⁶ Becker and Krumeich, 169; Martin Schramm, *Das Deutschlandbild in der britischen Presse 1912–1919* (Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2007), 377–83. See also Annette Becker, "From War to War: A Few Myths," *France at War in the Twentieth Century: Propaganda, Myth, and Metaphor*, eds. Valerie Holman, Debra Kelly (New York: Berghahn, 2002), 16–19.

⁷ Becker, *Cicatrices*, 140–45.

⁸ *King Albert's Book: A Tribute to the Belgian King and People from Representative Men and Women throughout the World* (New York: Hearst Book Publishing, 1914), 7.

⁹ James Beck, *The Evidence in the Case; An Analysis of the Diplomatic Records Submitted by England, Germany, Russia, and Belgium in the Supreme Court of Civilization, and the Conclusions Deducible as to the Moral Responsibility for the War* (New York: Putnam and Sons, 1914).

While the image of gallant Belgium faded over the course of the war, the issue of atrocities did not quickly dissipate. First, both sides issued "reports" offering partisan explanations of the events of the first months of the war. Allied reports, most notably the 1915 Bryce Report, offered evidence of German atrocities based on purportedly careful and unbiased studies. The Germans sought to counter such accusations with investigations of their own. On the whole, the Allied powers proved better at using reports and memoirs from those involved in relief work to highlight the suffering of Belgian and French populations under German rule. French accusations against Germany relied in part on the work of scholars who tried to explain German misdeeds in scientific terms. Neutral observers also proved useful sources for explicating the nature of German actions and rule during the war.¹⁰ German claims that they were fighting irregular troops hiding among the general population, or reacting sternly to illegal acts from the Belgian and French populations, fell short. Moreover, German efforts had trouble overcoming the access to international audiences enjoyed by Belgians, British, and French.¹¹ Finally, Germany's cause in refuting such claims was damaged as the war progressed by ties to other acts deemed outrageous. British newspapers, for example, linked early German activities to later acts such as the shooting of Edith Cavell in Belgium or the sinking of the *Lusitania*.¹²

Belgian representatives both helped foment and sought to take advantage of the torrent of sympathy and outrage. In the opening months of the war, representatives of the Belgian government-in-exile visited neutral and allied countries alike. In Italy, for example, a three man delegation met with Italian officials while also cultivating ties to sympathetic Italian journalists and opinion-makers, whom they hoped might publish on behalf of the Belgian cause.¹³ Belgian officials turned their attention to the United States as well. Belgian representatives worked hard to paint a positive portrait of their country valiantly resisting German rule. Charitable drives to aid occupied Belgium and Belgian refugees served as indirect propaganda, while continued German moves such as large scale deportations in 1916 only served to rekindle anger among segments of the American public.

¹⁰ Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre* (Paris, Hachette, 2004).

¹¹ Horne and Kramer, 229–261. See also Trevor Wilson, "Lord Bryce's Investigation into Alleged German Atrocities in Belgium," *Journal of Contemporary History* 14: 3 (July 1979): 369–384.

¹² Schramm, 390–97.

¹³ Michel Dumoulin, "La propaganda belge dans les pays neutres," *Revue Belge d'Histoire Militaire* 22 (1977): 246–277.

Indeed, after the American entry into the war, Belgian representatives found their efforts to reaffirm the notion of “gallant Belgium” thwarted by American propaganda agents who instead whipped up public sentiment by focusing on German atrocities.¹⁴ More generally, as the war progressed, the cause of Belgium lost some of its propaganda value. Over the course of the war, although the Belgians tried to remind people of their sacrifices, many British and French politicians mentioned the country in a pro forma manner. And while Belgium could serve as a useful rallying tool, for example in U.S. propaganda, the Belgians sometimes overstepped themselves, aiming for claims not just against Germany but even against the Netherlands.¹⁵

The German effort to counter Allied efforts fell short. German leaders certainly did not help themselves. Bethman-Hollweg’s oft cited remark that the treaty guaranteeing Belgian neutral was a merely “a scrap of paper” had to be defended or explicated by German authorities.¹⁶ German propagandists stressed Belgium’s alleged ties to England and France before the war, often intimating that some sort of an understanding existed among France, Belgium, and England about the defense of the country. Belgium was to have offered entrée to French and British forces; it had thus conspired against its own neutrality. In this telling, the Germans were merely launching a necessarily defensive move in order to defend their interests. German officials thus undertook a press campaign through interviews with neutral press outlets, brochures and pamphlets, and the limited release of documents, which called into question the neutrality—and the innocence—of Belgium.¹⁷ Citing scrupulously completed research, German scholars published tracts pointing to the collusion of France and Belgium.¹⁸ Outside of Germany, such arguments had limited reach.

¹⁴ Michel Amara, “La propaganda belge et l’image de la Belgique aux Etats-Unis pendant la première mondiale,” *Revue belge d’histoire contemporaine* 30, 1-2 (2000): 173–226.

¹⁵ Robert Devleeshouwer, “L’opinion publique et les revendications belges à la fin de la première guerre mondiale, 1918–19,” *Mélanges offerts à G. Jacquemyns* (Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1968), 207–238.

¹⁶ “‘A Scrap of Paper,’ The German Version,” *The New York Times* (25 Jan. 1915).

¹⁷ *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (13 October 1914), *Berliner Tageblatt* and *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* (14 October 1914) (running the NAZ article verbatim), *Kölnische Zeitung* (13 October 1914), *Frankfurter Zeitung* (13 October 1914). Cited in Troy Paddock, *A Call to Arms: Propaganda, Public Opinion and Newspapers in the Great War* (West Port, CT: Praeger, 2004) 131–32.

¹⁸ Sophie de Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique et la Première Guerre Mondiale* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2004), 136–39.

The patterns present in the propaganda war over Belgium parallel the difficulties Germany would have in arguing for its continued possession of Alsace-Lorraine. The German narrative of their actions and ambitions in the war had been thwarted by the situation in Belgium and northern France. The often brutal imagery—rape, mutilation, arson, and murder—surrounding the German invasion and occupation of these territories gave Allied propagandists evocative and emotional subjects and imagery with which to work. The Germans had little in the way of an effective counter-narrative. Moreover, the Allies proved more nimble in promoting their view of Belgium, both at home and abroad. Such difficulties would also plague the German propaganda effort with regard to Alsace-Lorraine. Moreover, the alleged German atrocities and mistreatment of the occupied territories of France and Belgium served as part of the broader framework surrounding the debates over Alsace-Lorraine.

The German Case for Alsace-Lorraine

The propaganda war over Alsace-Lorraine paralleled that over Belgium; Germany began with a number of clear disadvantages on the broader international stage and largely undermined its one major advantage—control over Alsace and Lorraine—with its treatment of the local population during the war. Even on this point, though, the German government started in a poor position. Strains between the local population and the Germans remained visible even after 40-odd years of a German Alsace-Lorraine. One flare-up, a 1913 parade ground clash between a lieutenant and some Alsatian recruits, blossomed into the notorious Zabern Affair, a political crisis in Germany and an international cause célèbre against German militarism. More generally this incident highlighted the degree to which Alsace and Lorraine had never been fully integrated into the German Empire; German officers, in particular, viewed the region as quasi-foreign territory. Alsatian and Lorrainers' apparent lack of enthusiasm for mobilization, coupled with the enthusiastic reception of French troops in Mulhouse in the opening weeks of the war, did nothing to allay such suspicions.¹⁹ Such attitudes led the Germans to pursue policies and a style of propaganda that did little to win over the hearts of average Alsatians or Lorrainers.

¹⁹ See Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Myth, Militarism, and Mobilization in Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6–7, 91–97, 112–13. The lukewarm response of the Alsatians to the war also parallels the reactions of the French. See Jean-Jacques Becker, *1914: Comment les Français sont entrés dans la guerre* (Paris: Académique, 1977), 259–344.

In contrast to the French efforts in occupied Alsace, German efforts were more diffuse, and more centrally, faced multiple challenges. From a propaganda standpoint, Germany had to explain a wider range of war aims than simply the retention of Alsace-Lorraine. It had to deal with difficulty of explaining the vagaries on the battlefield. And it had to deflect frustration in Alsace-Lorraine and across Germany about the increasingly difficult material circumstances during the war. Thus, German censorship and propaganda authorities had a full slate. Alsace-Lorraine was just one among a host of issues which the censorship authorities had to monitor, and Alsace-Lorraine was one among many issues on propaganda officials had to focus. Here, the declaration of a state of siege and imposition of military control of the region had darker inflections than across the Rhine. German authorities, for example, set out Germanizing the region more fully than had been accomplished in the previous 40 years. Authorities arrested those who allegedly spoke out against the German war effort. Troops from the provinces also came under suspicion, and after 1915 were barred from serving on the western front. Coupled with the material deprivations during the war, these measures created an increased set of challenges for German censors and propagandists.

Part of “winning over” Alsace-Lorraine, at least in the mind of German wartime officials, meant accelerating the process of the Germanization of the region. Individuals deemed to be anti-German were placed under surveillance or placed in *Schutzhaft* (“protective custody”) as a means of excising pro-French sentiment from the local population. Over the course of the war, over 1900 people were taken into custody or forced to live elsewhere in Germany.²⁰ In addition, French language papers and institutions came under fire. The former were mostly closed at outset of the war. Some Francophile institutions, such as the offices of the *Revue alsacienne illustrée*, were shuttered. Even the signage at Strasbourg’s *Musée alsacien* had to be uniformly German.²¹ Schools run by allegedly Francophile nuns likewise came under pressure. Such measures served to irritate, if not further alienate, segments of the local population; moreover, these efforts also became fodder for French propaganda about Alsace-Lorraine.

German attempts to control Alsatian opinion took two forms functioning in tandem. Alongside more positive efforts to shape local attitudes such

²⁰ Christopher Fischer, *Alsace to the Alsations? Visions and Divisions of Alsatian Regionalism, 1871–1939* (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 109.

²¹ Archives Départementales du Bas Rhin (hereafter, ADBR) 98 AL 700 and Archives municipales de Strasbourg (hereafter AMS) DIV IV 326/1799.

as posters and pamphlets, the government resorted to censorship avoid dissemination materials that might upset or agitate local sensibilities. In particular, the authorities sought to avoid discussions of the regions' future status in the German Empire and did not allow criticism of military rule in the area. Even the debates of the Landtag and Bezirkstage were limited in nature by official decree; the reportage of these bodies' discussions fell under great scrutiny. Attempts by local representatives to pass protest resolutions against the security measures in the region led to interventions by both civilian and military authorities. For example, local authorities sought to soften the language of a 1918 resolution of the Landtag's Second Chamber for fear that it would either generate problems in Alsace-Lorraine or serve as fodder for Allied propaganda.²² The government also vetted mail coming to and from Alsace-Lorraine, especially materials that seemed to question or undermine the German war effort.²³ Postal surveillance at times led to politically fraught moments; should, for example, the letters of Alsatian pastors, and especially the bishop, be opened?²⁴ While the bishop could push for better treatment, or at least a compromise on what mail was deemed sacred, average locals could face fines or imprisonment for the possession of questionable materials.²⁵ Artistic performances, even outside of Alsace-Lorraine, also met the power of the censor. René Schickele's play *Hans im Schnakenloch*, which portrayed the titular character, an Alsatian, torn between his dutiful German wife and charming French mistress, eventually ran afoul of authorities. Although not produced in Alsace during the war, its Berlin production faced heavy editing and later bans both by wartime censors and later the Berlin workers councils.²⁶

Not surprisingly, the press in Alsace and Lorraine suffered heavy censorship as well. Part of this was simply an extension of German wartime policies to the entire realm.²⁷ But local officials, both civilian and military,

²² Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart (hereafter, HStAS) M 30/1 Bü 92 "Tagung des reichsländische Landtagen," (29 April 1918).

²³ HStAS M 30/1 Bü 106.

²⁴ HStAS M 30/1 Bü 20 Letter from Ministerium für Elsass-Lothringen to the Heeresgruppe Herzog Albrecht (28 November 1917).

²⁵ Archives Départementales du Haut Rhin (hereafter, AHDR) 4 AL 1/1; Spindler, 151-2.

²⁶ Áine McGillicuddy, "Controversy and Censorship: The Debate on René Schickele's 'Hans im Schnakenloch,'" *German Life and Letters* 60:1 (2007): 60-74.

²⁷ F. Altenhöner, "Total War—Total Control? German Military Intelligence on the Homefront, 1914-1918," *Journal of Intelligence History* (Winter 2005): 55-7; E. Demm, "Propaganda and Caricature in the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 28:1 (1993): 163-192; and see more generally David Welch, *Germany, Propaganda, and Total War, 1914-1918* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2000).

kept especially close watch over the local press for hints of disloyalty or criticism of the German war effort.²⁸ Individual newspapers often came under heavy scrutiny. For example, the Catholic papers *Die Volksbote* and *Der Elsässische Kurier* both came under tight surveillance, its editors occasionally asked to explain themselves to authorities.²⁹ More centrally, criticism of the war, or protests of the measures in place in Alsace-Lorraine, rarely made it to press, and when it did, resulted in angry denunciations on the part of German officials. German officials sought above all to avoid discussion of the region's future; referring to the post-conflict status of the region in local papers brought the swift wrath of censors.

Regional officials feared a discussion of the future status of Alsace-Lorraine. This was especially true given that many in the higher echelons of the German government thought that after the war, the region should be parceled out among Germany's larger states, especially Prussia and Bavaria, as means of for once and all crushing the alleged disloyalty of the region's inhabitants. Events such as the Zabern Affair and the warm reception of French troops by the people of Mulhouse had served to drive this point home for German military leaders. When local papers spoke out for future autonomy for the region, or against the division of the region, they faced swift punishment. Even in other parts of Germany, Reichsland officials also urged censorship of the topic.³⁰ They feared such discussions would upset the local population, and give foreign powers ammunition for propaganda; therefore, mentions of Alsace-Lorraine's future partition in Saxony, Bavaria, or Baden drew swift criticism from military and civilian officials.³¹

German officials did seek to promote a more positive image of ties between Germany and Alsace-Lorraine. To this end, German officials received help from sympathetic locals or those born across the Rhine living in Alsace-Lorraine. Gymnasium professor Emil von Borries, for example, penned a tract entitled *Die Deutsche Seele von Elsass* which stressed the diminishment of local rights during the French Revolution.³² Likewise, local writer Friedrich Lienhard penned several brochures in support of a

²⁸ See generally ADBR 22 AL 32. See also, Pierre Vonau, P. "Saverne," *Boches ou Tricolores. Les Alsaciens-Lorrains dans la Grande Guerre*. Jean-Noël Grandhomme (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2008), 103–11.

²⁹ Christian Baechler, *L'Alsace entre le guerre et la paix. Recherches sur l'opinion publique* (1917–1918), (Thèse du Troisième cycle, Université de Strasbourg, 1969), 77–113.

³⁰ See generally ADBR 22 AL 32 and HStAS M 30/1 Bü 102.

³¹ HStAS M 30/1 Bü 92 "Tagung des reichsländische Landtagen," (29 April 1918).

³² Emil von Borries, *Die Deutsche Seele von Elsass* (Basel, 1918).

German Alsace-Lorraine. Yet it was a measure of German concern over a partial partisan bias to such an effort that the work was routed through a Swiss publisher and at first appeared in French rather than German; German authorities hoped to mask Lienhard's well-known pro-German proclivities. More generally, newspapers in the region with ties to the government such as the *Strassburger Post* worked to promote the German war effort among the local population.

A more focused effort to win over the Alsatians and Lorrainers developed in 1917 with the creation of the *Heimatdienst*, an organization that promoted the ties between the Reichsland and Germany. The organization held conferences and talks and even sponsored films with a special emphasis on the cultural linkages between nation and region.³³ In addition to the work of the *Heimatdienst*, local officials engage the patriotism of the region's population. In some communities, local priests were urged to convince their parishioners to give to loan drives, while children partook in the collection of materials for the war effort. Organizations such as the *Vaterländisch Frauenverein* encouraged Alsatian and Lorrainer women to support the German war effort.³⁴

It is difficult to glean precisely how deeply the Alsatians and Lorrainers felt drawn into the war by such propaganda and patriotic activities. The Landtag and Reichstag deputies appeared to be skeptical of the regime, tending, insofar as they were able, toward criticism rather than praise. Newspapers hardly tended to adopt an air of full-throated patriotism for the war. The brief instances when papers dealt with the future of the region likewise brought criticism of plans to divide the territory among larger German states. At the very least, some locals expressed a healthy skepticism of German propaganda. Memoirs of the period paint a picture that ranged from deeply critical of German both German policies as well as the clumsy German propaganda.³⁵

If censorship and a rather anemic propaganda effort marked Germany's efforts at home, the Germans also lacked the presence abroad that the French enjoyed in pushing their cause in general, much less with regard to Alsace-Lorraine. This does not mean that the Germans did not attempt to argue for the continued possession of Alsace-Lorraine. French attachés noted pro-German articles concerning Alsace-Lorraine in Turkish news-

³³ Baechler, "L'Alsace," 87–95.

³⁴ Vonau, 109–113. See also Elizabeth Vlossak, *Marianne or Germania: Nationalizing Women in Alsace, 1870–1946* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³⁵ Fischer, *Alsace*, 107.

papers; these contributions not only argued for the historical linkages between the region and Germany, but also blamed France for selfishly keeping its allies in the war simply to regain this territory.³⁶ Germany and its allies hoped by these means to persuade representatives of the then neutral United States that French insistence on regaining Alsace-Lorraine served as one of the principal stumbling blocks to peace.³⁷ German officials also promoted this view through neutral interlocutors in Switzerland in an attempt to convince an international audience; in later 1918, German authorities went so far as to underwrite conferences which promoted the idea of a neutral Alsace-Lorraine.³⁸ Yet the Germans faced a nearly insurmountable imbalance in access to foreign audiences. German propaganda in Alsace-Lorraine never had the full level of focus and organization as its French counterparts. Finally, Germany's arguments about the historical, economic, cultural, and linguistic ties between Alsace-Lorraine and the Kaiserreich measured up poorly against the ability of the French to point to the unfair and at times harsh treatment accorded the region's populace both before and during the conflict

In the closing weeks of the war, German officials continued to vacillate on the issue of Alsace-Lorraine. Across Germany and in Alsace-Lorraine proper, officials sought to place articles in newspapers stressing the cultural, historic, financial, and economic bonds between the Reichsland and Germany.³⁹ Military authorities were well aware that the local population assumed the French would soon take over the region.⁴⁰ Therefore, officials argued in favor of underwriting propaganda in the region calling on a plebiscite for Alsace-Lorraine, which they hoped might keep the region out of French hands. Indeed, some of the officers within the local army staff believed that the Germany had a good case; for example, the Alsatian-Lorraine economy would be damaged severely in the switch to French sovereignty. Yet even the officers in charge of such efforts realized it would be difficult for such an argument to look credible coming from the German

³⁶ Service Historique de la Défense (hereafter SHD) 7 N 1639 "La presse turque et l'Alsace-Lorraine" (7 novembre 1917).

³⁷ United States Department of State, *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1917. Supplement 1, The World War* (1917), p. 11–16, 58–9. Accessed at <http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/FRUS> (Oct. 12, 2011).

³⁸ ADHR AJ 30/40 paq 2/177 and ADHR AJ 30/40 paq 2/209.

³⁹ Kurt Koczysk, *Deutsche Pressepolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1968), 56.

⁴⁰ HStAS M 30/1 Bü 49, "Geheime Feldpolizei bei der Heeresgruppe Herzog Albrecht" (8 Nov. 1918).

military.⁴¹ If proponents expressed some concerns about the likely outcome of their efforts, they refused to engage with potential allies within the Alsatian populace. Indeed, when Charles Hauss, a Center Party deputy from both the Landtag and Reichstag tried to publish a pamphlet in Berlin on an autonomous, independent Alsace-Lorraine, not only did military authorities call on the censors to block its publication, but demanded tighter controls on the issue of the region's future more generally.⁴² In the end, both indigenous and German efforts toward such a movement sputtered out.⁴³

France and Alsace-Lorraine

In contrast to the Germans, the French gave Alsace-Lorraine a much more central role in their propaganda efforts; its recovery stood alongside the liberation of the north of France as a key French war aim. The French focus on Alsace-Lorraine should not have come as a surprise. Even if the provinces had not always stood at the forefront of French policies since 1871, they had never truly faded from view. Occasional crises such as during the Boulanger Affair in the 1880s (when the eponymous General Georges Boulanger threatened to overthrow the Third Republic while also threatening revenge against Germany for 1870), or the Zabern Affair in 1913, brought the region back front and center. The literary world of authors such as Maurice Barrès and a network of associations such as Souvenir Français likewise kept the memory of the lost provinces alive.⁴⁴ And many French towns and cities dedicated plazas and avenues to Alsace-Lorraine. Such

⁴¹ HStAS M 30/1 Bü 89, "Massnahmen für die Vorbereitung einer Volksabstimmung in Elsass-Lothringen," (18 Oct. 1918).

⁴² HStAS M 30/1 Bü 89, Memo for the General Staff, III p N. 13120 (4 Nov. 1918).

⁴³ Christian Baechler, "La Question de la neutralité de l'Alsace-Lorraine à la fin de la première guerre mondiale et pendant la congrès de paix (1917–1920)," *Revue d'Alsace* 114 (1988): 185–208.

⁴⁴ Laird Boswell, "From Liberation to Purge Trials in the 'Mythic Provinces': Recasting French Identities in Alsace and Lorraine, 1918–1920," *French Historical Studies* 23, no. 1 (2000): 129–62; Francois Dreyfus, *La vie politique en Alsace, 1919–1936* (Paris, 1969), 24–27; Stefan Fisch, "Dimensionen einer historischen Systemtransformation. Zur Verwaltung des Elsass nach seiner Rückkehr zu Frankreich," in *Staat Verwaltung. Fünfzig Jahre Hochschule für Verwaltungswissenschaften Speyer*, ed. Klaus Lüder (Berlin, 1997), 381–98; Michael Nolan, *The Inverted Mirror: Mythologizing the Enemy in France and Germany, 1898–1914* (New York, 2005), 67–85; Julia Schroda, "Der Mythos der 'provinces perdues' in Frankreich," *Konstrukte nationaler Identität: Deutschland, Frankreich, und Grossbritannien (19. und 20. Jahrhundert)* eds. Michel Einfalt et. al. (Würzburg, 2002), 115–33; William Shane Story, "Constructing French Alsace: A State, Region, and Nation" (PhD diss., Rice University, 2001), 18–33.

memories found expression in the initial French moves of the war as in which the French tried to retake Lorraine and Alsace under Plan XVII; the maneuver was a limited success, and the French captured only a small sliver of Alsace. Diplomatic efforts paralleled the military plans; the recuperation of the lost provinces quickly emerged key vector of French diplomacy.

French officials, often supported by private citizens, thereafter developed an organized, consistent program of propaganda about Alsace-Lorraine during the war. The French managed to direct propaganda at Alsatians and Lorrainers, at their own domestic audience, and abroad. The French had several advantages over the Germans in this regard. For example, the French could concentrate their efforts much more clearly on articulating a vision that included the return of all German-held territories, both the invaded northern departments as well as the “lost provinces” of Alsace and Lorraine. If these issues dovetailed neatly into a unified message of recovery, the issues at the heart of the German effort could not be braided together so easily. Alsace-Lorraine was just one of many key issues of German wartime propaganda. What is more, unlike German officialdom, French officials did not harbor deep suspicions against the Alsatians and Lorrainers. This more positive attitude infused French propaganda; the French narrative of liberating the region from German tyranny not only contrasted well with Germany’s more muddled message, but could use the difficult circumstances in wartime Alsace-Lorraine to help leaven its propaganda with an air of truth; to put a finer point on it, the French promised to deliver liberty, equality, fraternity, whereas the Germans offered martial law, *Schutzhaft*, and forced Germanization. Such an approach by the French also kept the Germans on the defensive. Structurally as well the French benefited from the fact that they had much easier access to their allies and neutral countries for pushing the linkages between Alsace—Lorraine and France.

In Alsace and Lorraine proper, the vast majority of which remained under German control, the French could do little to press their point of view. German officials certainly worried about French propaganda coming across the Swiss border, and postal controls sought to keep French propaganda entering Germany and even to stamp out any references to it. Indeed, the French had to rely on propaganda floated across the Vosges by balloon. Such propaganda championed fairly standard themes including Alsace-Lorraine’s long-standing ties to France, the horrors of German control, and

the desire of France to see Alsace-Lorraine returned to the French national fold. While it is unclear from either the German or the French files how effective pamphlets such as “Wie die Elsass-Lothringen während des Krieges behandelt werden” were with the local population, French officials felt it worthwhile to make the attempt, and German authorities expressed alarm at finding such materials both in Alsace and in neighboring *Länder*.⁴⁵

The French made stronger efforts with the Alsatians and Lorrainers under their control. This included not just those in the sliver of territory the French had occupied in the opening days of the war, but also German citizens from Alsace and Lorraine interned during the war, as well as Alsatian and Lorrainer POWs living in Allied camps. At all levels, the French undertook a multipronged approach to propaganda. French officials, and more often, Alsatians and Lorrainers living in France, sought to convince their regional brethren of the historic ties between France and the provinces. Simultaneously, French propaganda sought to remind Alsatians and Lorrainers of the cruelties of German rule before and during the war, at times by making the connection to German atrocities in Belgium or the north of France. French propaganda of course was not just trying to persuade the Alsatians and Lorrainers of the justness of their cause in the short term, but to lay the groundwork for the regions to return to France at the war's conclusion.

French officials used a number of tools at their disposal to inveigle those in the occupied territory of Alsace; at times, they in turn used the local population to promote the bonds between the region and France to outside constituencies. Children not surprisingly served as a key demographic to be won over. Schools, especially primary schools, were reopened with teachers drawn from the French military. In addition to instruction in French, students were taught French history and key French values such as the meaning of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*.⁴⁶ Occupation officials also took up the suggestion of a junior officer that French soldiers stationed in Alsace should pass out treats with patriotically themed wrapping paper to local children.⁴⁷ Schools served as a locus for French efforts in another way as well; talks were held at schools, open to both parents and children, on

⁴⁵ See generally HStAS M 30/1 Bü 89. See also AJ 30/40 (Purg, 11699) for exemplars of the pamphlets being floated over the border. For French work in Switzerland, see Gisèle Loth, “Le Docteur Pierre Bucher,” *Boches ou Tricolores. Les Alsaciens-Lorrains dans la Grande Guerre*. Jean-Noël Grandhomme, (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2008), 197–202.

⁴⁶ *Administration Militaire de l'Alsace*, 186–97; Harp, 166–67.

⁴⁷ SHD 7 N 1976 Ministère de la Guerre à Ministère de l'Instruction Publique. Direction de l'instruction primaire, 3ème bureau (16 Nov. 1916).

various topics linking France and Alsace, or simply praising Alsace such as in the artist's Maurice Bouchor's series entitled "The Alsatian Genius," which, according at least to observing officials, was met with great enthusiasm.⁴⁸ French officials also repeatedly requested copies of books and pamphlets to help promote their cause with the local population. In addition, they printed posters and pamphlets that painted Germany in dark tones, while promising a bright future with the return of France to the region. Alsations who had fled Germany fearing arrest also lent a hand. Henri Zislin, a political cartoonist whose paper *Dur's Elsass* had excoriated German nationalism and allegedly turncoat Alsations in the years before 1914, helped publish a local paper, *Kriegsberichte*, aimed at easing the task of the occupation officials while also militating against a German return to the region.⁴⁹ Zislin himself often contributed political cartoons as front page art. The paper took particular relish in pointing out the minor infractions for which Alsations in German Alsace were being punished, as well as publishing stories about Edith Cavell, German burnings of French villages, and other clear misdeeds that clearly linked the mistreatment of Alsations to other German evils. It is difficult to judge the impact of these efforts on average Alsations; French officials, evidenced by the reports of French occupation officials, generally viewed such work as either mildly efficacious or stunningly effective.

Alsations and Lorrainers outside the occupied territory were also subjected to French propaganda efforts. Some Alsations, for example, had to be evacuated from near the front for their own safety. Misunderstandings, and even clashes, between locals and their new guests impelled French officials to pursue a program of double education.⁵⁰ The local population had to be taught that the Alsations were not actually Germans, a task made difficult at times by the Alsations lack of proficiency in French. For Alsations, French occupation officials often made sure that they received the same lessons as those remaining in Alsace. Distributing pamphlets and other literature of course was one means.⁵¹ A traveling cinema also sought to depict French-Alsatian relations in a positive light. Officials even tar-

⁴⁸ ADHR AJ 30/6 Paq. 11/157-8.

⁴⁹ Much of the information in the paper was of a practical nature such as reminding locals when markets days were approved, of military rules about travel in the occupied zone, and other mundane matters. The four page weekly usually included at least one set of updates from the War's various fronts.

⁵⁰ Fischer, *Alsace*, 112-113.

⁵¹ ADHR AJ 30/40 Paq. 2/222.

geted priests from the region, hoping that they could spread the message of Franco-Alsatian amity in their Sunday sermons.⁵²

In addition to Alsatian civilians, thousands of Alsatians and Lorrainers who had fought in German uniform found themselves in Allied POW camps over the course of the war. Often separated out from German and Austrian troops, these POWs were privileged. Plying them with more generous rations of food and new (often French) uniforms, French officials hoped that these troops might help both in the current war as well as in the future integration of the regions into France. To this end, the POWs were also offered French language training, which often included lessons in French values and civic ideals. Such efforts, however, did not always succeed. At the St. Genest camp, reserved for those Alsatian POWs who wished to be treated like their German peers, a French colonel bitinglly referred to the POWs as “poor Alsatians and Lorrainers” and threatened to blacklist the soldiers and hound them out of the region if their attitudes did not improve.⁵³

French officials also took great care to remind the broader French public about the ties between the lost provinces and France; images of Alsatian and Lorrainer women in traditional dress adorned a good number of war-time posters and postcards. The French government felt compelled to undertake such work as it became clear in the early stages of the war that the general public’s understanding remained too inchoate; the occasional novel about the evils of German rule in Alsace-Lorraine before 1914, street names, or even newsworthy events like the Zabern Affair had not inculcated a deep awareness of the plight of Alsace-Lorraine among most Frenchmen.⁵⁴ Clashes between Alsatian or Lorrainer refugees and French citizens had driven home the need to educate the public.⁵⁵ French soldiers

⁵² ADHR AJ 30/40 Paq. 1/154.

⁵³ ADHR AJ 30/85 (Purg. 11745), “Régime des prisonniers de guerre alsaciens lorrains” signed Ed. Ignace; circular on the treatment of Alsatians, signed Verand; report entitled “Traitement réservé en France aux prisonniers de guerre alsaciens-lorrains: dépôts spéciaux.” This particular incident also found its way back to German authorities in 1918, when an interned German officer managed to send them a lengthy report on the special treatment of Alsatians. See ADBR 22 AL 59, “Die Behandlung der els.-lothr. Kriegsgefangenen in Frankreich: Die Spezialläger,” signed Gabriel Welter (June 1918). See also Reinhard Nachtigal, “Loyalität gegenüber dem Staat oder zur *Mère-Patrie*? Die deutschen Kriegsgefangenen aus Elsass-Lothringen in Russland während des Ersten Weltkrieges,” *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 154 (2006): 395–428.

⁵⁴ Jean-Jacques Becker, “L’opinion publique française et l’Alsace en 1914,” *Revue d’Alsace* 109 (1983): 125–38.

⁵⁵ See generally Archives Nationales (hereafter, AN) AJ 30/92. Also, see ADHR AJ 30/40 Paq. 1/89).

had likewise demonstrated a weak grasp of the bonds between the lost provinces and France. Officials censoring mail from soldiers in the occupied region of Alsace noted far too many references which suggested the Alsatians were German and the soldiers serving on foreign soil.⁵⁶ Finally, French officials wanted to make sure to generate support for one of the key French aims of the war, the eventual return of Alsace-Lorraine to France.⁵⁷

In order to address the broader public, the government decided in July 1917 to create a new organization, the Bureau d'Études d'Alsace-Lorraine (hereafter BEAL), in order to better organize and direct the propaganda efforts surrounding Alsace-Lorraine. Enconced within the Ministry of War, this office had as its ambition to propagate greater awareness about the ties between France and Alsace-Lorraine. Its founding documents foresaw a wide range of activities aimed at this end including the commissioning of new works, dissemination of existing literature, printing of posters and pamphlets, and sponsorship of conferences. The office over time would also underwrite speakers to crisscross France, usually drawing upon a pool of Alsatians and Lorrainers who had fled the region in 1914. The Bureau even foresaw the possibility of supporting the creation of films about Alsace-Lorraine.⁵⁸

BEAL focused much of its activities in winning over soldiers. Not only could the government more easily spread propaganda materials among the troops, they also hoped the *poilus* would carry proper ideas about Alsace-Lorraine home with them on leave. Therefore, BEAL sought to create postcards and posters that could be distributed or displayed to soldiers, especially at train stations as they made their way to and from the front. Illustrated journals and books on Alsace-Lorraine were also made available to troops. Moreover, BEAL sought to create a range of pamphlets which it hoped to get into the hands of junior officers and NCOs who, it was hoped, would in turn instruct their men on the proper way of understanding the issue. BEAL even sponsored travelling theatrical productions to entertain and educate the troops about the ties between Alsace-Lorraine and France.⁵⁹

For the broader public, publications, posters, and postcards, served as one line of propaganda. At times, the Bureau bit off more than it could chew. For example, BEAL officials, in doing the math, realized that their

⁵⁶ SHD 7 N 868.

⁵⁷ David Stevenson, "French War Aims and the American Challenge, 1914–1918," *Historical Journal* 22, N. 4 (Dec. 1979): 877–894.

⁵⁸ AN AJ 30/92 "Bureau des Etudes d'Alsace-Lorraine."

⁵⁹ AN AJ 30/106 "Diffusions aux armées."

goal for 1917 of distributing nearly a quarter million pamphlets and books among France's prefectures might be logistically challenging, not to mention its goal in 1918 of disseminating over 2 million postcards and 250,000 books; the office only was able to publish a fraction of these ambitious targets.⁶⁰ More successfully, BEAL relied on a stable of Alsatian and Lorrainer speakers who traveled around France decrying the mistreatment of the region at German hands and celebrating the links between region and nation. Leading Alsatians such as the priest, politician and publisher Emile Wetterlé, doctor and cultural activist Pierre Bucher, lawyer Paul Helmer, the caricaturist Hansi, and many others put themselves in the service of the French government. The itineraries of these men were staggering as they travelled from city to city meeting with local associations, regional Alsatian-Lorraine organizations, military units, and public officials to flog their cause. Often their talks and conferences had the added bonus of generating local press coverage which spread the message to a wider French public audience.⁶¹ And BEAL occasionally used Alsatians from the occupied territory in a similar vein, for example bringing a group of local leaders and veterans of 1870 to a March 1918 demonstration on behalf of a future French Alsace-Lorraine.⁶²

Even children were targeted by French propaganda officials. The suggestion, mentioned above, that children in occupied Alsace received patriotically themed candies and other goods by a junior officer was warmly received at BEAL headquarters and by French military officials.⁶³ Such efforts prompted a broader consideration of how the commercial sector might help with propaganda efforts through products adorned with Alsatian and Lorrainer themes. Regionally themed chocolates and tea boxes appeared. Even a new line of dolls, Yerri and Suzel, were created. Dressed in traditional regional garb, they could represent for children the two lost provinces. One enterprising puppeteer, Charles Heitz, even created an entire performance for the two new avatars of a French Alsace.⁶⁴

If BEAL pursued a vigorous and focused propaganda effort for a French domestic audience, the Foreign Ministry, working with BEAL, undertook a strong campaign to win over France's allies. Although France's allies

⁶⁰ See generally AN AJ 30/106 FOLDER "Diffusions aux armées."

⁶¹ AN AJ 30/112 for most of the representatives. ADHR 27 J 1-7 for the speeches of Emile Wetterlé.

⁶² ADHR AJ 30/40 Paq. 1 317.

⁶³ SHD 7 N 1976 Ministère de la Guerre à Ministère de l'Instruction Publique. Direction de l'instruction primaire, 3ème bureau (16 Nov. 1916).

⁶⁴ AN AJ 30/106.

might acknowledge a French claim to the region, French officials sought to ensure that there would be no doubts about the eventual control over Alsace and Lorraine. A committee working under the leadership of Henri Lichtenberger set out to educate an international audience—especially in the United States and Britain, but also in other neutral countries such as Switzerland—about the nature of German rule in Alsace-Lorraine, as well as the true French nature of the provinces.⁶⁵ Much as in the case of the domestic audience, French representatives sought to get printed materials and posters translated and into the hands of the American and British public, or more conveniently, American and British troops. In 1918, for example, the group ordered 500,000 copies of postcards with images from Hansi for distribution among Anglophone forces.⁶⁶

Starting in 1916, when it became apparent that France needed to be clear about its war aims, the Foreign Ministry began drawing upon Alsatian and Lorrainer representatives to travel abroad and promote the cause of a French Alsace. M. de Dietrich, for example, managed 4-6 meetings a day in hotel ballrooms, at high schools, and YMCAs in a trip through Scotland.⁶⁷ Much as with those who traversed France, these representatives generated press coverage for their cause wherever they traveled.⁶⁸ At times, these representatives could exercise a softer touch; Anselm Laugel, for example, helped prepare an extensive slide presentation aimed at Touring Clubs in both France and England. This tourist view of Alsace was punctuated by historical asides that helped link the region with the French nation.⁶⁹ French officials could also receive help from Alsatians and Lorrainers living abroad. The Ligue Patriotique d'Alsace-Lorraine, founded in 1914, disseminated literature and sponsored talks, concerts, and other events to foster the notion that Alsace-Lorraine belonged to France. The French government helped to underwrite such efforts in 1917 and 1918, though never as much as its London-based leaders wished.⁷⁰ The organization's founder even enlisted one Masterman Smith to lobby the British working class. He met with miners and laborers, garnering letters of support from local labor groups. A Sheffield letter is illustrative; "This meeting of the citizens of

⁶⁵ AN AJ 30/106 Diffusion à l'étrangère.

⁶⁶ AN AJ 30/104 Au sujet de la demande de mise en sursis de l'éditeur Gallais (9 Apr. 1918).

⁶⁷ AN AJ 30/106 Diffusion à l'étrangère.

⁶⁸ ADHR AJ 30/40/F (Purgatoire 11699) Propagande paq. 2/279.

⁶⁹ AN AJ 30/112 Folder 1917–1918. M. Laugel Missions et Conférences.

⁷⁰ AN AJ 30/113 Ligue Patriotique des Alsaciens Lorraines, Main office to Manchester branch (21 Feb. 1917); See also ADHR AJ 30/40 Paq. 2/176.

Sheffield [etc.] resolves that the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to our ally France, one of the essential conditions of peace."⁷¹ Part of the Ligue's concern was that British labor might demand a plebiscite for Alsace-Lorraine, a possibility French officials and their surrogates wished to obviate.

American representatives were also the subject of French efforts. In addition to sending representatives such as Daniel Blumenthal to the United States, French military officials worked hard to provide American troops with the appropriate literature, especially when American troops moved into Alsace near the end of the conflict.⁷² Locals could help in this effort as well; for Bastille Day 1918, several municipal councils in French occupied Alsace sent General Pershing and President Wilson effusive notes of thanks for their aid in returning Alsace to its proper national home. And American officials also did their part; the Archbishop of Cincinnati, William Anderson, reminded the American troops stationed in Alsace that they were there to undo the "wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871" and assure an "Alsace living under the auspices of France."⁷³

The overall impact of French propaganda in Alsace-Lorraine is difficult to judge. People in the region had many reasons including the end of martial law and the end of the war to cheer the arrival of French troops in late 1918. The quick grumbling that broke out in the provinces indicates that perhaps the French appeal was hardly overwhelming. But French efforts to convince its own population, and especially the international audience, seemed more sure-footed. The French hardly received everything they wanted in the negotiations at Versailles, yet the return of Alsace-Lorraine never seriously came into question.

* * *

The propaganda war in the West could hardly have been more dissimilar to the actual fighting on the Western Front. Whereas in reality two relatively even matched opponents slogged it out over four long years, in the realm of propaganda, the Western Front presented Germany with a series of defeats. Here Germany's own actions, or in the case of Alsace-Lorraine, past behavior, undermined German propaganda from the start. The truth of German actions here mattered less, ultimately, than the sum total of its

⁷¹ AN AJ 30/112 Folder 1917–1918. M. Ehrhardt Missions et Conférences.

⁷² ADHR AJ 30/41 (Purg. 11700) Paq. 2/72 "Commandant Henry Poulet à Service d'Alsace-Lorraine" (18 Juillet 1918).

⁷³ ADHR AJ 30/41 (Purg. 11700) Paq. 2/3-5 "Harangue de M. l'Evêque William P. Anderson" (30 Mai 1918).

perceived misdeeds. Germany's invasion of Belgium and France, taken in conjunction with its rather tough stance in Alsace-Lorraine, gave its enemies far too much ammunition. Moreover, the Allies occupied better terrain in the propaganda wars as they could travel among friendly belligerent and neutral countries pushing their cause. Finally, at least with Alsace-Lorraine, the Allies proved to be far more focused and organized. Germany thus lost the propaganda war over Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine long before it retired exhausted and defeated from actual field of battle.

CHAPTER TEN

THE CULTIVATION OF *DEUTSCHTUM* IN OCCUPIED LITHUANIA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Christopher Barthel

German military rule in occupied Lithuania during the First World War constituted an important step in the progression toward increasingly total war. The *Oberbefehlshaber Ost* (Supreme Commander in the East, abbreviated as Ober Ost) strove to keep the German war effort fueled by exploiting the occupied lands' material and human resources. To this end, a comprehensive system was put in place to maximize production in agriculture, forestry, and industry, and to ensure that the area's infrastructure could efficiently funnel food and materials back to Germany. Complementing this apparatus, however, was an extensive cultural program intended to facilitate the material aims but also to win over the Russian territory politically and culturally for long-term German control.¹ While foresters, economic officers, and gendarmes attempted to create the ordered conditions necessary for the full exploitation of the area's economic potential, administrators in the Ober Ost press section worked to forge less tangible but equally important changes in the minds of the Germans and local civilians in occupied Lithuania. The primary goal of German propaganda in the region was for both groups to "view the Germans not as conquerors but rather as the heralds of a rebirth of the land that bleeds from wartime wounds."² This close identification of German and local interests in the press served as a central propaganda motif; German newspapers in the occupied lands incessantly argued that the occupiers and the occupied civilians shared an equal interest in combating Russian influence.

¹ The authoritative work on the subject is Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000). See also A. Strazhas, *Deutsche Ostpolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg: Der Fall Ober Ost 1915–1917* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993); Jürgen Matthäus, "German Judenpolitik in Lithuania During the First World War," in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. 43 (London: Secker and Warburg, 1998), 155–74; Eberhard Demm, *Ostpolitik und Propaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2002).

² "Eine neue Zeitung im besetzten Gebiet," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 1, 1916.

Newspaper operations were vast; the cities Wilna, Kowno, Grodno, Bialystok, Pinsk, Mitau and Suwalki were all home to individual papers. These newspapers were the primary vehicle through which the administration disseminated propaganda in the occupied lands, and they consistently argued to Germans and local civilians alike that a nebulously defined set of essential national characteristics, methods and institutions—frequently associated with the concept of “Germanness” (*Deutschtum*)—provided the requisite legitimacy for Germany’s incipient wartime empire-building. Articles in *Kownoer Zeitung* and other newspapers set the stage by drawing on German stereotypes of Russia and the east through investigations of the historical and contemporary evidence for the superiority of Germanness. The frequent comparisons to supposed Russian characteristics—the establishment of the propagandistic dichotomy of German and Russian qualities—helped frame the German effort as the struggle for imperial control of the contested Russian borderlands. Moreover, the struggle between Germans and Russians was presented as an almost timeless battle between the groups’ respective, essential qualities.

The borderlands’ permanent inhabitants, however, were denied agency and importance, relegated to a subordinate role as the objects of competing imperial policies. The region was denuded of the Russian administrators who had exercised control from Petrograd, and the remaining population was far different from the more ethnically homogeneous civilians within Germany or behind the occupied Western Front. Whereas French and Belgian civilians were assumed to be hostile to the occupying Germans, civilians in the east (e.g., Lithuanians, Latvians, Jews, Poles, and Belarusians) were culturally distinct from their Russian political leaders and in many cases hostile or indifferent to the prospect of continued Russian rule. These two facts—the absence of Russian administrators and the lack of enthusiasm for the deposed rulers—contributed to the occupiers’ optimism for the permanent extension of German rule in the east.

Upon beginning operations in the wake of the German army’s occupation of Lithuania in 1915, the administration press’s foremost goals were to promote favorable political conditions in the occupied lands and to sustain the morale of German soldiers and administrators. Local civilians remained *de jure* subjects of the Russian Empire, ethnic distinctiveness and political resentments notwithstanding, and the press therefore worked to incite discontent with the Russian former rulers by reporting their alleged crimes and by painting every administrative action as the benevolent gift of the German conqueror. This approach also furthered the aim of supporting

the morale of German soldiers and administrators serving on the Eastern Front; charging the Russian former rulers with barbaric crimes was intended to convince both locals and Germans of the justness of the German cause. A major objective of German propaganda was to portray Russian Empire as cultureless and barbaric. In doing so, administration organs like *Kownoer Zeitung* channeled and heightened prewar stereotypes depicting Russia as fundamentally different, threatening, and non-European. Although the occupiers hoped to convince the Russian Empire's minority ethnicities that the German Empire represented a more attractive alternative, the newspapers promoted a strongly paternalistic agenda which ultimately functioned to discourage these groups from helping to shape their own futures. Publication of *Kownoer Zeitung* began in January 1916, shortly after the German Army conquered Lithuania. The paper certainly adjusted its message as military and political goals shifted, yet the establishment of key themes during the initial year of publication, 1916, proved to have lasting significance.

Laying the Groundwork for Press Operations in Lithuania

The ethnic and linguistic composition of the occupied borderlands naturally complicated German efforts to convey regulations and propaganda to the local inhabitants. To begin with, occupied Lithuania lacked a single universally comprehensible language. One response to this problem was to issue newspapers in a number of local languages like Lithuanian and Belarusian. The reach of these papers was nevertheless hindered by certain legacies of Russian rule, such as the lower rates of literacy in comparison to the German Empire. Moreover, the suppression of minority languages in the western borderlands following the Polish Uprising of 1863 had stunted the development of a universally accepted form of written Lithuanian.³ Partly as a result of this legacy, and partly as a result of the conquerors' desire to employ the most reliable propagandists available, ethnically Lithuanian Prussians served in key positions in the Ober Ost press, further emphasizing the role of Germany as the "carrier of culture" into the borderlands, even with regard to the local, non-German culture.⁴

³ Zigmas Zinkevicius, *The History of the Lithuanian Language* (Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopediju leidybos institutas, 1996), 289–294.

⁴ The precedent of Germanization in Prussian Poland did not escape the notice of contemporary observers. See William W. Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Richard

Beyond questions concerning the practical implementation of a newspaper program, publication in the Lithuanian language rankled nationalists who saw it as the surrendering of German preeminence to Lithuania's budding nationalism. In this context, even the mere expression of Lithuanian culture could be seen as the privileging of local ethnicities at the expense of Germany's authority and prestige. These issues assumed paramount importance but the uncertainty of Germany's comprehensive military situation yielded an equally clouded assessment of the best course of action. Extremists wished to annex parts of the occupied lands outright but the prevailing view accepted that such plans could not be implemented before the war's resolution on the Western Front.⁵ As a result, the Ober Ost press section began operations by attempting to gain the favor of the occupied peoples without actually making any promises for national autonomy or formal independence. This meant cultivating a sense that the German Empire stood ready to provide its eastern neighbors friendly assistance and support. The very existence of *Dabartis*, Ober Ost's primary Lithuanian language newspaper, was intended to signal a change in policy from the Russian Empire's ruthless suppression of Lithuanian culture, encouraging Lithuanians to trust the new occupier as a benevolent "protector." This message was part and parcel of the Lithuanian language newspaper program and entailed the cost of potentially feeding Lithuanian nationalist sentiment. It also became a recurring theme as the occupiers attempted a similar political balancing act throughout the occupation.

Complementing the mere handful of local language papers, however, was a panoply of German language papers. To some degree the imbalance also resulted from this ambivalent but patronizing policy; it was not only the difficulties and deficiencies attending the production of foreign language newspapers that drove Ober Ost to make German language papers the center of its media program in occupied Russia. Such papers were necessarily less effective reaching local audiences, but they had the advan-

Blanke, *Prussian Poland in the German Empire (1871–1900)* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1981). Philip Ther has remarked on the significance of the concept of *Kulturträger* as it relates to imperial German rule in the east. Philipp Ther, "Imperial instead of National History. Positioning Modern German History on the Map of European Empires," in *Imperial Rule*, ed. Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber (New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 47–66.

⁵ For political and military considerations affecting potential annexations in the east, see Imanuel Geiss, *Der Polnische Grenzstreifen, 1914–1918: Ein Beitrag zur Deutschen Kriegszieldpolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Lübeck: Matthiesen, 1960); Gerd Linde, *Die Deutsche Politik in Litauen im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1965); Volker Ullrich, "Die polnische Frage und die deutschen Mitteleuropa-pläne im Herbst 1915," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 104 (1984): 348–371.

tage of asserting the occupiers' cultural and political control over the lands. The war's uncertain end result prevented Germany from claiming the new lands as its own but it did not preclude the drenching of the lands in German culture. This "cultural work" (*Kulturarbeit*), as Ober Ost press Director Friedrich Bertkau chose to contrast it against wartime military work, took the form of an extensive German language media campaign.⁶ In addition to the two Ober Ost foreign language papers, one Lithuanian and one Belarusian, the military administration issued German language papers in a number of the other larger cities of the occupied area. All of these papers were intended to reach beyond an audience of German soldiers and administrators to communicate directly to the local civilians. Some, like *Kriegszeitung von Baranovitschi*, focused first and foremost on providing news and information to the German soldiers at the front and those helping to keep order in the occupied territory. *Mitausche Zeitung*, stemming from Kurland with its substantial ethnic German population, was exceptional for retaining private, local German ownership though it willingly served as a conveyor of Ober Ost decrees and news items.⁷ Other publications, namely those organized according to the deployment of particular German army units, such as *Zeitung der 8. Armee* (Newspaper of the Eighth Army), were not intended for wide distribution among the local population in spite of the substantial amount of content shared between them and other Ober Ost papers like *Kownoer Zeitung* or *Wilnaer Zeitung*.

Kownoer Zeitung stood at the nexus of German press operations in occupied Russia. Prior to the displacement of the German Administration for Lithuania's headquarters to Wilna, Kowno served as the center of the military administration, and the content of the city's newspaper reflected this position. Press Director Bertkau described this "special standing" as a function of its close connection to the administrative headquarters. While the Wilna, Grodno, and Bialystok publications served as "pure news propagators," the Kowno paper was "first and foremost an official organ."⁸ In fact,

⁶ Bertkau's framing of the issue in 1928 is indistinguishable from the way the Ober Ost press presented it during the war itself. The term *Kulturarbeit* was used in *Kownoer Zeitung* to describe German motives and actions in the Ober Ost region and Bertkau accepts its usage uncritically. In fact, he deploys it defensively in response to the terms of the peace settlement and accusations that Germany had waged a "barbaric" war. Friedrich Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen im Verwaltungsgebiet Ober-Ost* (Leipzig: Verlag Emmanuel Reinicke, 1928), v. On the German roots of the term, see Liulevicius, *War Land*, 45–47.

⁷ Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, 99.

⁸ Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, 55.

Kownoer Zeitung covered all types of material and serves as an excellent example of Ober Ost's German language press; unlike papers intended solely for the use of military personnel, or *Korrespondenz B*, which compiled articles on the occupied territories and forwarded them on to Germany's domestic press, *Kownoer Zeitung* sought to link Germans and occupied civilians through a common medium. *Kownoer Zeitung* was in this sense regarded to be as essential of an endeavor as the more tangible construction projects in the occupied area. The paper was a medium through which the administration could leave its cultural stamp on the lands, both by reaching the local civilians and by shaping the way that administrators and soldiers viewed and thus governed the land; in this conception, building bridges and spreading German culture were both forms of *Kulturarbeit*. The administrators' objectives for the occupied area's distinct audiences (i.e. the Russian Empire's various ethnic minorities) did not always coincide, however, and these discrepancies resulted in content which ran the gamut of possibilities.

One mission of German language papers like *Kownoer Zeitung* was to educate and to condition the values of Germans in occupied Lithuania. German administrators, doctors, nurses, soldiers and others working in the area received updates on the important political and military conditions throughout the world. This type of information was meant to "strengthen and maintain the necessary confident attitude" of those serving in the east.⁹ For entertainment, the paper provided serialized novels, illustrated historical or cultural articles, and advertisements and announcements pertaining to theater performances or public lectures. Beyond keeping the soldiers up to date and entertained when off duty, *Kownoer Zeitung* also extensively covered various aspects of local culture, history, geography, and science. According to Bertkau, such items were not intended to be merely informative, but also one aspect of creating a "good understanding" between the army and the enemy population. More specifically, the "careful study of [the lands'] particular nature" would help create a fruitful relationship between soldiers and civilians. Here, too, ambiguities in German intent abounded; soldiers and administrators were to learn to love the new lands as a "second *Heimat* (homeland)" by taking part in the population's "sufferings and joys," yet they were also to "prevent the excessive trustfulness to which German soldiers tend."¹⁰ Bertkau passed over this tension without further remark, additionally noting that if the newspaper were able to

⁹ Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, 17.

¹⁰ Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, 18.

educate the soldiers about the local population—whose “mental and political attitudes were very difficult for the soldiers to make out”—that “abruptness, arrogance, and, indeed, acts of violence against the population could be avoided.”¹¹ Publications like *Kownoer Zeitung* were tasked with helping soldiers to navigate the middle ground between treating the local population as though they were German subjects and lashing out at them because of their suspiciously inscrutable ways.

The task facing *Kownoer Zeitung* with regard to its local audience was if anything even more complex and equally vexed by the cultural differences separating the occupiers from the occupied. To begin with, the number of German speakers in occupied Lithuania was limited to perhaps a few thousand ethnic Germans, an even smaller number of well educated nobles, merchants with business contacts in the German Empire, bourgeois Lithuanians with exceptional education, and a few members of the clergy. An Ober Ost publication noted with pride that the local population had taken an avid interest in the German language publications, particularly in Kowno and Wilna where “hundreds of subscribers were reached, thanks in whole or in part to the use of the use of the Roman typeset.”¹² This dubious claim was intended to show the paper’s success, but even if the cited numbers were true they would still reflect the minimal number of locals that could be reached via the German language. As had occurred during debate over the Lithuanian language paper *Dabartis*, the possibility of using the distinctively German (and, for German newspapers, the commonly used) *Fraktur* typeset over a simpler Roman script created notable disharmony that culminated in a petition to Ober Ost from dissatisfied German subscribers on the home front.¹³ The German papers evaded this obstacle to local comprehension by settling on a simplified Roman script, but the portrayal of this decision as the surrendering of German interests indicated deeper cultural tensions.

Political difficulties played no less a role. Bertkau reflected in 1928 that the Germans’ wartime “cultural work” in occupied territory could have been more widely publicized to act as a counterweight to claims that the Germans had waged war in a “barbaric fashion.”¹⁴ In fact, the very objectives he cites as the Ober Ost press’s guiding principles evidence the con-

¹¹ Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, 18.

¹² *Das Land Ober Ost: Deutsche Arbeit in den Verwaltungsgebieten Kurland, Litauen und Bialystok-Grodno. Herausgegeben im Auftrage des Oberbefehlshabers Ost. Bearbeitet von der Presseabteilung Ober Ost* (Stuttgart: Verlag der Presseabteilung Ober Ost, 1917), 136.

¹³ Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, 58.

¹⁴ Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, v.

tradictory methods that ultimately alienated the occupied population. The objectives presented by the press section differed rhetorically from those administrators charged with directly implementing policy. The commonly repeated slogan intended to keep German soldiers and administrators on task, namely "for the army and homeland" (*"für Heer und Heimat"*), received an addition which obviously suited the press' propagandistic function: in the hands of press corps members like Bertkau, it became "for the army, homeland, and population" (*"für Heer, Heimat und Bevölkerung"*), privileging the local civilians' needs in word if not in deed. In the rhetorical world of *Kownoer Zeitung*, local civilians in the Russian borderlands had become members of the German war effort. In this sense, the paper worked to raise morale and inform the population of notable developments. In spite of this inclusion of the occupied population, the civilians remained subjects of the Russian Empire and had very few rights under German rule as compared to German civilians in Germany's wartime economy.

From its primary function as a means of maintaining strong morale among German military personnel to its ancillary but no less important goals of creating and winning over a local audience, *Kownoer Zeitung* was at once unique and representative of German propaganda in the occupied east. The paper's competing purposes could not be easily unified and the result was a typically confused mix of pandering to local civilians with praise of local culture while simultaneously informing them of policies repressing their cultural and professional activity. *Kownoer Zeitung* best represents these competing goals, evidencing the precariousness of the German political position. The first issue appeared on January 1, 1916 and succinctly formulated the occupiers' paternalistic attitude toward the local population; it would serve as the "carrier of German ideas" and "help to pass on the blessings of the German spirit and German work."¹⁵ Making the lands more German was not only to the occupiers' benefit, but also amounted to the gifting of superior methods to the poor inhabitants of the east. The editors' desire that the paper serve as the "mediator between the local population and those who intend to bring to the war-torn land a cultural and economic upswing" unselfconsciously cast the occupiers as the faultless benefactors.¹⁶ Attractive rhetoric notwithstanding, overarching political goals placed limits on winning over the locals. Keeping open the door to massive annexations while hedging bets in an attempt to pre-

¹⁵ "Eine neue Zeitung im besetzten Gebiet" *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 1, 1916.

¹⁶ "Eine neue Zeitung im besetzten Gebiet" *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 1, 1916.

pare for an incomplete military victory muddled the attempts to build the trust of the local civilians.

Portraying Russian Rule

Observations and impressions of Russian rule in Lithuania heavily conditioned German perception of the occupied lands. *Kownoer Zeitung*, in turn, used this derogatory assessment to emphasize the virtues of German policy in order to win local civilians' allegiance. The paper bombarded its audience with references to the injustices and atrocities that allegedly sprang from Russian practices. This message had the general purpose of convincing all readers of the necessity and value of German rule. More specifically, it informed German soldiers of the gross injustices committed by the Russian enemy that would be replaced by the German mission of creating order and peace. Local civilians, on the other hand, were reminded of their former government in an attempt to convince them of the virtues of German rule. This message could be pitched to German and Russian subjects alike without sending contradictory messages.

Naturally enough, many initial charges against the absent Russians related to wartime circumstances and events. Any observed irregularities in the Russian war effort became grist to the German propaganda mill. Numerous articles ascribed sinister motives to the enemy in an attempt to portray the Russian government as a devious malefactor. *Kownoer Zeitung* mocked the purported motive of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevitch as the Russian army invaded the German Empire in 1914, namely that "Russia fights for culture, which it is prepared to bring to the residents of East Prussia."¹⁷ The author ridiculed the idea that the Cossacks of all people could be considered "culture bringers" and denounced their "appetite for destruction."¹⁸ This emphasis on Germany's victimization at the hands of the Russians served in theory to conflate the interests and experiences of the occupier and the local civilians with regard to Russia and the first month of publication regularly featured articles which intended to prove this shared victimhood. A piece in January 1916 reminded readers that the Russians were responsible for burning the bridge in Kowno.¹⁹ Another article likewise highlighted the allegedly arbitrary destructive motive that

¹⁷ "Hunnen," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 9, 1916.

¹⁸ This supposed characteristic of the Cossacks was sometimes expressed with the German "*Zerstörungswut*". See also "Die Weißrussen," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 22, 1916.

¹⁹ "Winterspaziergang in Kowno," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 16, 1916.

triggered the Russian plundering of the Kowno municipal hospital.²⁰ The repressive indignities suffered by ethnic minority subjects continued even after the Tsarist army was driven from the western provinces. Poles and Jews who had been driven from their homes in bucolic Lithuania and Poland were forced to play the role of “cultural fertilizers” as they populated barren, imposing Siberia.²¹ *Kownoer Zeitung* set the record straight for soldier and civilian alike, stating that “the fight against us is in reality a fight against culture.”²² The dichotomy established early on and presented throughout the paper was not culture and civilization so much as culture and a nebulously articulated barbarism.²³ While articles more often than not stated that the Russian enemy represented a lower level of culture, it was frequently implied that Russian culture was trivial or even nonexistent in comparison to German culture. The reader—German or local—was beckoned to view the Russian Empire as an entity so nefarious and threatening that all non-Russians should unite against it.²⁴ German readers were preconditioned to receive this strongly anti-Russian message.

The administration press was able to call upon established cultural stereotypes in its attempt to cast the Russian Empire as a barbaric, cultureless land. Russia was frequently depicted in Wilhelmine Germany as fundamentally different; one German paper’s representative response to the outbreak of war in 1914 described it as “European civilization against despotism and barbarism.”²⁵ Russia’s alleged difference from Germany—it was often referred to as Asian, “half-Asian” or Oriental—was most consistently defined in terms of barbarism, which is to say an absence of the ordered and advanced conditions prevailing in the West.²⁶ Russia had been associated with “the East” and the Orient since the mid-nineteenth century and this means of signifying exotic Russian difference was solidified by the

²⁰ “Das Kownoer städtische Krankenhaus,” *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 23, 1916.

²¹ “Polen und Juden als Kulturdünger für Sibirien,” *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 17, 1916. For detailed analysis of the Russian Empire’s deportation of civilians in its eastern borderlands, see Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign Against Enemy Aliens During World War I* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003).

²² “Hunnen,” *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 9, 1916.

²³ For additional details on this dichotomy, see Liulevicius, *War Land*, 29–30.

²⁴ German stereotypes included the portrayal of Russia as home to a “destructive unculture.” See Hans Hecker, *Die Tat und Ihr Osteuropa-Bild 1909–1939* (Köln: Wissenschaft und Politik, 1974), 26.

²⁵ Excerpt from the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, quoted in Troy Paddock, “Creating an Oriental Feindbild,” *Central European History* 39 (2006): 239.

²⁶ Hecker, *Die Tat und Ihr Osteuropa-Bild 1909–1939*.

time of the First World War.²⁷ German schoolchildren in 1914 learned the identical information about Russia that their fathers and grandfathers had learned, namely that Russia was a barbarian land populated by indigent inhabitants who were occasionally fortunate to receive bits and pieces of western European culture and advancements.²⁸ Russians in particular and Slavs in general had been maligned in the German press in the decades leading up to the First World War. Though it is difficult to assess just how far Russophobia permeated the outlook of the individual writers and publishers working for the administration press, such anti-Russian tendencies were common among German observers in 1914.²⁹ The associated stereotypes presented Slavs as hopeless slaves who were “cultureless”, “incapable of being cultured”, or “hostile to culture”.²⁹ *Kownoer Zeitung* rendered the Russian Empire as a strange and exotic place that had little in common with Germany. The Ober Ost press did not need to create this portrayal, but rather tapped into the contemporary understanding of life in Russia. The main difference, of course, was that readers of the paper were now able to test what they had learned against the evidence in front of their eyes.

One of the primary means for *Kownoer Zeitung* to channel anti-Russian sentiment was to assail the Russian Empire’s alleged failure to govern in an ordered, organized manner. Deriding Russia’s inability to provide the materials, infrastructure, and technology necessary for a healthy economy provided the Ober Ost press the opportunity to contrast Germany’s manifold accomplishments with Russia’s gross failures. This criticism dovetailed with the dichotomy of culture and barbarism, asserting Russia’s backward-

²⁷ On the origins of German perception of Russia as part of “the East” rather than “the North”, see Hans Lemberg, “Zur Entstehung des Osteuropabegriffs im 19. Jahrhundert. Vom ‘Norden’ zum ‘Osten’ Europas,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 33 (1985): 48–91; Hans Lemberg, “‘Der Russe ist genügsam.’ Zur deutschen Wahrnehmung Russlands vom Ersten zum Zweiten Weltkrieg,” in *Das Bild “des Anderen”: Politische Wahrnehmung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Birgit Aschmann and Michael Salewski (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2000), 233.

²⁸ Claudia Pawlik, “Ein Volk von Kindern”—Russland und Russen in den Geographielehrbüchern der Kaiserzeit,” in *Russen und Russland aus deutscher Sicht: 19./20. Jahrhundert: von der Bismarckzeit bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Mechthild Keller (München: W. Fink, 2000); Troy Paddock, *Creating the Russian Peril: Education, the Public Sphere, and National Identity in Imperial Germany, 1890–1914* (Rochester: Camden House, 2010).

²⁹ Maria Lammich, “Vom ‘Barbarenland’ zum ‘Weltstaat’—Russland im Spiegel liberaler und konservativer Zeitschriften,” in *Russen und Russland aus deutscher Sicht: 19./20. Jahrhundert: von der Bismarckzeit bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Mechthild Keller (München: W. Fink, 2000), 150.

ness.³⁰ Critiques of the Russian Empire's former governance of occupied Lithuania littered the pages of *Kownoer Zeitung*, all of them in line with the preponderant stereotypes of chaotic Russian rule. Articles published in the first few days of the paper's existence railed against the indebtedness of Russian cities and the decline of Russian agriculture.³¹ The occupiers learned more about Russian practices and informed their readers about these facts and allegations in ways that reflected positively upon changes already introduced by the new administration. *Kownoer Zeitung* described the sturdiness of a bridge over the Venta River completed in February 1916. German soldiers built the 60 meter long bridge with the "strongest materials" and even fitted it with ice-breaking devices. The article failed to mention that such an investment in infrastructure would not have been made so swiftly without a pressing military and economic justification. Instead, it praised the usefulness of the bridge to the population of District Okmjany and many towns in the surrounding area. At the opening celebration, the army captain responsible for leading the construction noted that German hard work and drive had quickly completed a project which "during the long period of Russian control had never moved even past the initial stages [of planning]."³² The paper trumpeted this notion of Russian incompetence and incompleteness with regard to almost every aspect of life in Lithuania.

The coverage of Russian deficiencies portrayed all issues, regardless of their importance, as fundamental problems that needed to be and could be resolved with German assistance. As the warmer months approached, several articles documented the poor state of gardens in Kowno—this in spite of the city's status as the "fruit supplier for Petersburg," the capital of the Russian Empire.³³ The author contemptuously noted that the "Russian manner" had left the gardens in a state of dilapidation and praised the new German changes. The article ended with the patronizing assertion that the city's gardening would bloom if the residents would give up their ineffective Russian practices and take on the "new" methods taught by the "German masters [of gardening]."³⁴ On the one hand, the focus on gardening reflected the blockade-induced, ever intensifying need to cultivate all arable land. Such pieces, however, emphasized equally the aesthetic and

³⁰ This stereotype predated the war. See Hecker, *Die Tat und Ihr Osteuropa-Bild 1909–1939*, 26.

³¹ "Die starke Verschuldung der russischen Städte," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 4, 1916; "Der Niedergang der russischen Landwirtschaft," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 4, 1916.

³² "Eine neue Wenta-Brücke," *Kownoer Zeitung*, March 2, 1916.

³³ "Die Gärten von Kowno," *Kownoer Zeitung*, May 2, 1916.

³⁴ "Die Gärten von Kowno," *Kownoer Zeitung*, May 2, 1916.

symbolic but also fundamental changes wrought by German methods. An additional article on city gardens expressed this theme under the title "Beautification of the Cityscape."³⁵ The value of beautification was harder to measure than a major infrastructure project. Nevertheless, this beautification was explicitly stated to be an improvement over the Russian practices—an infusion of culture where there previously had been a deficit—and *Kownoer Zeitung* reported these garden improvements as earnestly as it did the construction of a new bridge or the introduction of more productive agricultural methods.³⁶

This tendentious thrust of the paper was in a sense self-sustained by the frequent reporting on *actual* fundamental improvements—whether they were improvements on Russian practices or simply fixing wartime damage; whether they were intended to improve the locals' lives or facilitated the German war effort. All of these issues, from the apparently minor to the undeniably major, were presented in a way that reinforced the dichotomy of old and new as well as of chaos and order; these characteristics were always presented as Russian and German, respectively. Article after article inculcated readers with the sense that the Russians simply could not govern Lithuania effectively in spite of their lengthy tenure. New German maps of Lithuania's major cities amounted to the completion of a long overdue task.³⁷ Maps from the Russian era were of not only "small scale and extremely incomplete" but also excluded information on properties owned by the Russian government and crown.³⁸ The explanations given for Russian failures were not always uniform. Some analyses focused on an incompetence that resulted from a deficient level of "culture." Other approaches directly engaged intentionality and more heavily weighted an inveterate ill-will. The reporting on Russian cartography encompasses these varying arguments; the Russian government had prevented the creation of a complete map of Wilna by deliberately excluding certain politically vulnerable information, but the many instances of "great imprecision" were implied

³⁵ "Verschönerung des Stadtbildes," *Kownoer Zeitung*, May 18, 1916.

³⁶ An article on 14 June 1916 questioned whether the Russians had planted as many flowers as the Germans and marveled at how many existed in spite of the wartime upheavals. See "Sonja über unsere Gärtnerei," *Kownoer Zeitung*, June 14, 1916. After the occupiers had improved an elevated area overlooking Kowno (which was dubbed Wilhelmshöhe, or "Wilhelm's Heights"), an article reported that soldiers and Kowno civilians alike were very happy about the "splendid" new area. See "Die Weissruthenen," *Kownoer Zeitung*, June 12, 1916. The emphasis of this article is on what the Germans have achieved.

³⁷ "Ein deutscher Stadtplan von Kowno," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 15, 1916.

³⁸ "Ein neuer Stadtplan von Wilna," *Kownoer Zeitung*, March 23, 1916.

to have simply resulted from Russian incompetence. This unintentional incompetence and the clearly displayed political ill-will were distinct but inextricable qualities which together hampered the Russian Empire's ability to organize its lands.

Stories of Russian deficiency drove the Germans' historical narrative of the life in the borderlands and the Ober Ost press directed attention to the consequences for the lives of Russian subjects. An article in January 1916 entitled "Chaos in Russia" informed readers that according to Moscow newspapers, the residents of St. Petersburg would "be facing hunger in a matter of days."³⁹ Another story highlighting Russian incompetence reported two months later that German gendarmes had managed to put an end to a "many headed band of robbers" that had terrorized parts of Lithuania for many years. Unlike the Germans, the Russians had never succeeded in "cleansing" the band of robbers. The population could now "breathe more easily" because of the effective German methods. The Germans succeeded where the Russians had failed in spite of the criminals feeling increasingly secure due to the newly introduced prohibition against civilians owning firearms.⁴⁰ Both cases demonstrated instances of the Russian Empire's unintentional helplessness resulting in frightful consequences for its people. Russian subjects in occupied Lithuania could now begin to adjust their attitudes and expectations. The legacies of years of Russian rule could not be erased so easily and *Kownoer Zeitung* noted that part of the population "still labors under true Russian views." The trials of two men accused of attempting to bribe German officials for preferred treatment illustrated this point. The men mistakenly thought that "the German official (*Beamte*) would be just as open to bribery as the Russian was in his day", but they learned otherwise. One of the two received a milder sentence because he was an "uneducated person who naturally had taken on Russian views and customs into his flesh and blood."⁴¹ Gone too were the days when corrupt Russian officials placed major obstacles in the way of commerce and industry.⁴² Fundamental changes were underway.

³⁹ "Chaos in Russland," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 12, 1916.

⁴⁰ "Säuberung der Räuberbände," *Kownoer Zeitung*, March 20, 1916.

⁴¹ "Im Banne russischer Anschauungen," *Kownoer Zeitung*, May 10, 1916.

⁴² "Kownos Handel und Industrie vor dem Kriege," *Kownoer Zeitung*, May 16, 1916.

Linking the German Past and Future in "the East"

Ober Ost press organs regularly issued articles on the history of ethnic German communities and German policies in the occupied territories. These stories illuminated obscure historical events and cultural details which otherwise would not have come to the attention of German soldiers and administrators. Most Germans knew very little of the Russian Empire and their firsthand impressions of Russian life sharply diverged from conditions within the German Empire. Repeated references to the history of Germans in the east helped to bridge that gap, fostering an artificial familiarity through the equivalence of German historical and present experiences. The main theme of the articles was to showcase continuity in German interest in the east from medieval times to the present by arguing for a leading role bringing advanced culture west to east. This theme was portrayed as being greater than any individual—it went beyond personal connections to the east such as those of Baltic Germans or merchants with commercial interests in Russia. *Kownoer Zeitung* implicitly forwarded the argument that all German soldiers, administrators, industrialists, and businessmen in the east continued the spreading of German culture, thereby improving the east. By simply performing their duties, German occupiers during the First World War fit into a proud history that included the Teutonic Knights, the Hanseatic League, the Baltic Germans in Kurland, and the thousands of German emigrants who in earlier times overcame great obstacles to form agricultural colonies in Russia.⁴³

The historical articles printed by *Kownoer Zeitung* covered the period from the earliest organized German presence in the east to modern times, providing evidence on the longevity of this relatively unknown German past. The articles on the oldest subject matter presented stories on the Teutonic Knights' crusades and statehood in the territory of the present day Baltic states in the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries. The Baltic lands did not appear to have any "cultured" history prior to the arrival of

⁴³ The influx of Germans to the east during the Middle Ages was, in fact, a historically significant phenomenon. The broader roots of this theme were often subordinated in nationalistic histories which instead suggested that it was an "elemental, primordial, inevitable and unified process, impossible to resist, and moreover defined essentially as a German phenomenon." This myth was well established prior to the First World War. See Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 19. For German interest in ethnic Germans abroad, see James Casteel, "The Russian Germans in the Interwar German National Imaginary," *Central European History* 40 (2007): 429–466.

the Teutonic Knights. The exclusive focus on perceived examples of German culture gave *Kownoer Zeitung* readers the impression that the area did not have any history prior to the arrival of the Germans. An exposition on the history of Lithuanian literature noted that a translation of a German catechism in 1547 was the oldest Lithuanian book.⁴⁴ An article on Daugavgrīva, the town and fortress located at the mouth of the Daugava River near Riga, explained that this “fortified harbor town of Riga developed from a castle built there by the Teutonic Knights.”⁴⁵ An article on Wilna’s architectural history even more directly argued that German culture provided the city’s cultural and architectural foundation.⁴⁶ Soldiers and administrators in the Ober Ost area were subjected to argumentation along these lines on a regular basis. One visitor to the Eastern Front, Professor Otto Bremer from Halle, argued that “all cities which arose in the east are German creations.”⁴⁷ According to *Kownoer Zeitung*, Bremer’s speaking tour through Ober Ost occasioned 43 lectures on the subject, some of which attracted large audiences.⁴⁸ An article on the history of trade and industry in Kowno noted that the city is well known in the history of the Hanseatic League as a “settled town and significant storehouse for goods.”⁴⁹ Medieval Germans created a cultural and economic achievement in Kowno but this all fell apart upon Russian arrival, the city’s naturally “favorable geographical location” notwithstanding. Without ever formally declaring the great caesura of borderlands history to be the creeping Russian influence, the Ober Ost press published article upon article attacking every aspect of Russian presence in the area. The portrayal of an idealized German past that predated Russian rule underpinned German efforts to administer some of those same lands during the First World War.

Explicitly and frequently drawn connections between medieval German achievements and the current administration of the Ober Ost region promoted the idea that Germans must fulfill their historical role by spreading culture to the east. They had and would continue to spread what would necessarily be *German* culture, but this concept rested on the more basic

⁴⁴ “Die Literatur der Litauer,” *Kownoer Zeitung*, February 22, 1917, sec. Beiblatt.

⁴⁵ The German words provide a more obvious linguistic connection between modern Germans, *Deutsche*, and the Teutonic Knights, *Deutschritter*, “Dünämünde in der Kriegsgeschichte,” *Kownoer Zeitung*, March 29, 1916.

⁴⁶ “Die Baudenkmäler Wilnas. Zweiter Lichtbildervortrag Prof. Dr. Webers,” *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 24, 1917.

⁴⁷ “Vortrag im deutschen Eisenbahnerheim,” *Kownoer Zeitung*, April 14, 1916.

⁴⁸ “Vortrag,” *Kownoer Zeitung*, April 24, 1916.

⁴⁹ “Kownos Handel und Industrie vor dem Kriege” *Kownoer Zeitung*, May 16, 1916.

dichotomy of culture and barbarism. Germans had not only brought their superior culture to the east, ushering in a new but unfortunately short lived period of history as they did, but had consequently established a historical German mission to raise the culture of their neighbors. In this formulation, Germans could not help but do so simply by living and working in the east, and the presence of Germans was the main prerequisite for vast improvement. Historical examples of German successes in this regard littered the pages of Ober Ost newspapers. German settlement in Kurland lent many attractive examples due to the presence of German settlers since the Middle Ages and the existence of German social elite that had created visible achievements. German institutions like the University of Dorpat (its Russification from the 1880s onward only proved the importance of its original German character) and structures like German nobles' magnificent estates provided visual evidence of the fruits of German culture. According to the logic of most pro-German articles in *Kownoer Zeitung*, however, such tangible reminders were merely the consequence of the less visible but absolutely essential qualities of German culture. The city Goldingen, which *Kownoer Zeitung* praised because it "has remained a center of *Deutschtum* through the whirl of past events," was the subject of an article on the importance of German education. Goldingen had a reputation for its excellent schools and the author traced this heritage back to Gotthard Kettler, a prominent German administrator for the Teutonic state in the sixteenth century. This historical example's lesson: "Good schools are the core of self-preservation, the eternal and inviolable foundation for holding out in all struggles."⁵⁰ Adherence to this principle had assured the Baltic Germans' place as the "cultural upper class" that seemed to retain an edge in education, employment and advancement over the surrounding non-German peoples.⁵¹ Notwithstanding the dubious logic of the argumentation, an array of such concrete examples reinforced the idea of Germans as the torch bearers of an idealized culture in the otherwise "backward" east.

The Ober Ost press did not invent the idea that serious, "culture-promoting" work was a staple of Germanness—it did not need to. Just as school-

⁵⁰ "Goldingen," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 5, 1916.

⁵¹ "Die deutsche Sprache in Kurland," *Kownoer Zeitung*, November 17, 1916, sec. Beiblatt. Additionally, Ober Ost press leader Friedrich Bertkau wrote on the use of the German intelligentsia in Kurland for administrative positions, a practice which rarely occurred with non-German civilians. He presented this as a function of the Baltic Germans' level of education and knowledge of the lands but the decision was undoubtedly influenced by the sense of camaraderie and national unity effected by the shared ethnic ties of Germans from both empires. See Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, 19–20.

children in Wilhelmine Germany learned that Russia was an exotic and vaguely threatening place, so did they learn that Germans had a history of creating impressive achievements through hard work. Moreover, Germans were credited with having brought civilization to eastern Europe to begin with.⁵²

Kownoer Zeitung highlighted the links between the German pasts and the present day by publishing articles on the historical forces and processes that had inspired German colonists to spread *Deutschtum* in eastern lands. These articles were founded on the idea that the salient, enduring characteristics of German culture could be traced through history and linked to modern Germans. An article on the Lutheran community in Kowno emphasized this trajectory. Kowno's Lutherans were almost exclusively ethnic Germans and they had maintained a strong presence since their arrival around the time of the Hanseatic League's activity in the region. Although the Germans in Lithuania did not have the deeply rooted community or economic station of their counterparts in Kurland, they too were able to maintain their Germanness because it guaranteed their capacity to perform "serious and culture-promoting work."⁵³ Thus they successfully sustained their communities in the face of "foreign" threats like the Russian "appetite for destruction" (the counterpart to Germans' "cultural work") and competition from Jewish immigrants.⁵⁴ According to the author, the pressure applied to the Germans by the Russian and Jewish aggressors belied the desire of the areas' authentic residents to welcome German colonists and all of the benefits that arrived with them. Proof of these interactions was supplied by reference to the local nobles who invited Germans to settle their lands.

Readers were reminded time and again that local political leaders had enticed German colonists to migrate eastward so that the borderlands would benefit from their superior level of culture. Although this form of colonization had operated on a basis which seemed foreign to the nationalism and economic systems of the early twentieth century, these stories

⁵² Troy Paddock, "Land Makes the Man: Topography and National Character in German Schoolbooks," in *Lived Topographies and their Mediatlional Forces*, ed. Gary Backhaus and John Murungi (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 79.

⁵³ L. Bergsträsser, "Die evangelischen Kirchengemeinden in Gouvernement Kowno," *Kownoer Zeitung*, March 23, 1916. Other articles also reported on Germans' maintenance of evangelical communities. "Kownos evangelische Gemeinde," *Kownoer Zeitung*, February 3, 1916.

⁵⁴ On Russian *Zerstörungswut*, see, for example, "Die Weißrussen," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 22, 1916.

supported the paper's argument that German intervention was desired by those who lived in the east and suffered its backwardness. Medieval and early modern German colonists were merchants and craftsmen whose advanced skills and knowledge, it was implied, allowed them to retain their particular religious customs in an otherwise Catholic area. German qualities were so attractive to those in the east who recognized their value that Germans had been entitled to civil rights that other groups did not have. It was these qualities, for instance, that enabled them to become the "true drivers of [Kowno's] economic activity."⁵⁵ Catherine the Great's invitation for colonists in 1763 showed that even the Russians had once acknowledged their need to rely upon the Germans. This Russian call was not addressed to any one particular group of foreigners, but *Kownoer Zeitung* noted that over 100 German colonies with around 27,000 residents were established along the Volga river before the end of the eighteenth century and had since grown to a population of 500,000. The colonists combated nomads, bandits, epidemics and the meddling of Russian governments who resentfully suppressed their Germanness. The areas nevertheless continued to display a particularly German "love of order" which corresponded to diligence and efficiency.⁵⁶ Whether middle-class merchants or simple farmers, German colonists allegedly possessed a unique capacity to "maintain their language and customs and work to rise up economically."⁵⁷

These stories promoted the idea that backward eastern lands flourished under German political leadership and stagnated under the Russians. The example of New East Prussia (*Neu-Ostpreußen*) entailed a particularly direct argument along these lines. As the article explained, New East Prussia was a province which the Prussian crown acquired during the third partition of Poland in 1795. This 50,000 square kilometer strip of primarily Polish lands (inclusive of the cities Bialystok and Plock) remained in German possession for only 11 years prior to Napoleon's reshuffling of the political order in east central Europe. Those 11 years, however, approached fateful proportions in the account provided by *Kownoer Zeitung*. In that short span the Prussian monarchy had supposedly managed to create a "model province" out of an area which had been "brought to the brink of ruin." The greatest "intellectual gift" which the new administrators gave the new ter-

⁵⁵ L. Bergsträsser, "Die älteste Verfassung der Stadt Kowno," *Kownoer Zeitung*, August 5, 1916, sec. Beiblatt. The article promotes the notion that ethnic Germans had played a role improving Lithuania's trade and economy since the Middle Ages.

⁵⁶ "500,000 Detusche an der Wolga," *Kownoer Zeitung*, October 14, 1916, sec. Beiblatt.

⁵⁷ "Vortrag im deutschen Eisenbahnerheim" *Kownoer Zeitung*, April 14, 1916.

ritory was the Prussian law code, which the article described as “one of the most superb and noble statute-books ever created by civilized humanity.”⁵⁸ The quote of one contemporary was intended to drive home the link between New East Prussia and the German administration of Ober Ost: “It is unbelievable how much progress in the prosperity of the province has been achieved since it became part of Prussia, especially by the farming community. The cities are unrecognizable. The dirt covering the streets has disappeared and there are now friendly houses in the place of miserable huts.”⁵⁹ This case of *Verwaltungsarbeit* (literally: administrative work) was presented as an example of the way Germans govern foreign lands in the east and therefore a forerunner to Ober Ost and the German Administration for Lithuania. The Prussian administrators were so effective that they easily won over the area’s non-German population, a task which the administrators in 1916 also hoped to achieve. Perhaps most tellingly, the contemporary witness’s report speculated at what the Prussian administration might be able to achieve with just a few more “uninterrupted years” of activity. Here is the German view of the east in a nutshell; German methods can always be counted on to succeed, but without enough time for them to blossom the east must remain backward. If the Prussian monarchy could accomplish this work in spite of “the wild, tumultuous spirit of Poland back in those times,” certainly the German administrators of the twentieth century could do the same.

The great wealth of historical examples appearing in *Kownoer Zeitung* fostered the view that these positive German characteristics were as historically conditioned and as widely shared as the malevolence and incompetence that predetermined Russia’s failures. German diligence and efficiency had steadily influenced the backward lands for centuries. The idealized cultural pioneer in the east struggled to retain his core German characteristics even if he did not always have sufficient time or resources to prevail over the hostile forces, namely “the Russian bear”, religious opponents, nomads, robber bands or diseases. Germanness could not help but

⁵⁸ Praise for the “gifting” of a new legal code to New East Prussia in the late eighteenth century was part of a theme in *Kownoer Zeitung*; articles covering German medieval presence in the East frequently remarked upon the importation of superior German law codes. Notwithstanding the interpretive biases of *Kownoer Zeitung*, these assertions were based on historical events. See Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East*, 26.

⁵⁹ “Neu-Ostpreußen,” *Kownoer Zeitung*, April 29, 1916, sec. Beiblatt. The association of the east with dirt and disease was a dominant theme which took on new meaning during the First World War. See Paul Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe, 1890–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

play a mitigating role in the struggle against eastern barbarism. The important function of these articles to the mission of the Ober Ost press was epitomized by Professor Bremer during his speaking tour of the Ober Ost territory; Bremer asserted that the Eastern Front during the First World War was the location of a fight “for a greater future for *Deutschtum*,” that is, for all Germans and for Germanness itself.⁶⁰ Friedrich Bertkau later discussed the way that this mentality affected the founding of the Ober Ost press. A German newspaper was seen as necessary in Wilna in order to represent German interests alongside those of local nationalities like Poles, Lithuanians and Jews. *Wilnaer Zeitung* was intended to serve as a “support for *Deutschtum* (Germanness and Germans)” in the east.⁶¹ This meant supporting Russian Germans who were native to the area, teaching German soldiers and administrators to love the occupied lands “as a second *Heimat*,” and, more generally, spreading German culture.⁶² Bertkau’s 1928 citation of now extinct Ober Ost documents evidences the administration’s long-term intentions: the establishment of *Kownoer Zeitung* was guided by “the assumption that Kowno would remain German after the war.”⁶³ Articles on Germany’s historical role in the east established continuity by citing essentialized German characteristics, in effect linking past and present. The past served to illustrate the potential futures awaiting the German nation and the occupied peoples. Readers were asked to choose between them and comport themselves accordingly.

The Occupied Population and the Limits of Ober Ost Propaganda

Emphasis on the dichotomy of benevolent, productive German rule and harmful Russian practices portrayed local civilians as essentially passive and incapable of shaping their own future. Notwithstanding the many articles in *Kownoer Zeitung* and other papers that highlighted the cultural distinctiveness of Lithuanians, Belarusians, Latvians, and Jews in order to undercut Russian imperial claims, portrayal of the local population in the German press emphasized the importance of *Deutschtum* filling the space vacated by the defeated Russians. Local civilians were liberated from the Russians to the extent that they would receive the alleged benefits of German rule, but the new occupiers were also prospective rulers unwilling

⁶⁰ “Vortrag im deutschen Eisenbahnerheim” *Kownoer Zeitung*, April 14, 1916.

⁶¹ Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, 13–14.

⁶² Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, 19.

⁶³ Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, 57.

to accord local civilians the political rights of an independent nation. As depicted in *Kownoer Zeitung*, locals were astute enough to prefer German rule to Russian rule—the imagery encapsulating the locals' response to the Russian withdrawal was that of a man crossing himself and defiantly wishing, "May they never return!"—⁶⁴but they were not capable of properly influencing the borderlands' future orientation. Ober Ost emphasized the locals' cultural distinctiveness to German and local audiences alike by presenting positive interpretations of subjects like Lithuanian folk songs, Belarusian dress, or the origins of local languages. Evaluations of other characteristics, notably the locals' "primitive" agricultural equipment and living conditions, were not nearly as positive. Paternalistic insinuations harping on the disadvantages of local "backwardness" suffused coverage of the local population. The editors could easily portray both Germans and non-Germans as victims of the Russian "appetite for destruction,"⁶⁵ but they could not praise the historical or present day role of Germans as "culture-bearers" without simultaneously implying the relative inferiority of all non-German groups. Many of the locals' deficiencies were indeed attributed to the Russians' harmful influence, but the Germans' emphasis on *Deutschtum* and their harsh restrictions on locals' political activity scuttled attempts to create goodwill.

The editors of *Kownoer Zeitung* rather openly expressed the theme of a German civilizing mission in the east.⁶⁶ It is doubtful that readers could have failed to discern the thread of cultural superiority that ran through so much of the paper. Local civilians were portrayed as helpless children who needed to be instructed on how to conduct themselves in the German manner, that is, as fully formed adults. The "education of the locals" conveyed basic, commonly understood knowledge on all manner of daily tasks and habits. A German member of the newly instituted health commission in Suwalki commented that "the most naïve views still prevail with regard to these minimal sprouts of culture," and he ended on the following sardonic note: "Though it surely sounds peculiar to German ears, it is necessary

⁶⁴ "Verwaltung im Gebiet Ober Ost," *Kownoer Zeitung*, March 3, 1916.

⁶⁵ See "Die Weißrussen," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 22, 1916; L. Bergsträsser, "Die evangelischen Kirchengemeinden in Gouvernement Kowno," *Kownoer Zeitung*, March 23, 1916.

⁶⁶ Robert L. Nelson argues that German perception must be understood in colonialist terms. See Robert L. Nelson, "Representations of the Occupied East in German Soldier Newspapers, 1914–1918," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 51, no. 4 (2002): 500–528; Robert L. Nelson, "The Archive for Inner Colonization, the German East, and World War I," in *Germans, Poland, and Colonial Expansion to the East*, ed. Robert L. Nelson (New York: Pargrave Macmillan, 2009).

that the education of the population must begin with instruction on the purpose and methods of public conveniences (lavatories, registering deaths/births etc).⁶⁷ Urgent wartime shortages of food and materials pushed the administrators to maximize productivity in the occupied area and they attempted to raise the area's level of culture—its technological, sanitary, and organizational standing—as quickly as possible. Friedrich Bertkau recalled in 1928 that the Ober Ost newspapers had issued numerous special instructions on different aspects of agriculture, including items on the care of local fruit tree varieties, the effective storage of potatoes, and the threat of harmful insects. To Bertkau, these examples showed “the demands that the administration placed on the enlightening activity of the occupied area's papers and how urgently [the instructions] required the press's support.”⁶⁸ This “upbringing and instruction,” as Bertkau referred to it ten years later, covered all sorts of practical economic, industrial and agricultural matters in an attempt to fundamentally and comprehensively raise the occupied peoples to a respectable level of culture. To be sure, this type of instruction ran parallel to some extent with wartime industrial and agricultural regulations back home in Germany. Unlike the domestic regulations, however, the occupiers' patronizing attitude toward the local civilians pitted advanced German methods against the east's threatening backwardness.

Rhetoric on the role of the Germans in the occupied east almost invariably framed the issue in reference to Germans' unique qualification to unlock the lands' full potential. The Ober Ost press insisted that the lands' natural value could be raised to modern standards only by following the German model. An article from August 1916 is typical of the way this contention was expressed: “Those who get to know [Kowno] today no longer see the many difficulties that had to be overcome, but rather just the friendly city with its beautiful setting; thanks to German work and the art of German administration, the city becomes cleaner and more beautiful each day and freer of the [burden] of Russian mismanagement.”⁶⁹ The improved, German version of the city simply exploited the location's natural beauty and potential. By explicitly recalling the deposed Russian administration's failure to take full advantage of the productive lands during their tenure, readers were reminded that the area remained contested territory that could either transition to a rosy future or return to the disas-

⁶⁷ “Gesundheitskommission,” *Kownoer Zeitung*, September 2, 1916, sec. Beiblatt.

⁶⁸ Bertkau, *Das amtliche Zeitungswesen*, 22–3.

⁶⁹ “Die Stadtverwaltung Kownos,” *Skizzen-Mappe der Kownoer Zeitung*, August 13, 1916.

ters of its Russian past. The brief period of German occupation had already left its mark: "We Germans have awoken a 'sleeping beauty land' from its slumber!"⁷⁰ The tendency to praise Lithuania for the future potential of its natural resources put a different spin on the generally negative view of the east as a backward land. This presentation fit comfortably, however, into the framing of the new lands as a space where Germans could make enormous advances. Occasional praise of the local conditions—always with reference to actions the German administration had undertaken to vastly improve them—inextricably linked future success with the absence of Russians and the presence of the guiding hand of Germans. German culture arrived to wipe away the "population's century-old habituation to dirt and disorder,"⁷¹ healing the land of its deficiencies and "attaining a greater level of prosperity than had previously been the case."⁷²

Among German administrators and soldiers, *Kownoer Zeitung* likely succeeded in tapping into stereotypes of Russia as a backward land in vast need of improvement. It is not improbable to imagine that the paper convinced its German readership that the raw simplicity of the occupied lands necessitated German control or at the very least custodianship. The core of Germanness, or *Deutschtum*, provided the unique mixture of superiority, benevolence, and generosity which the occupiers were certain was necessary for the lands' future success. Notwithstanding the mixed results in the paper's attempt to reach the local population, the manner of which *Kownoer Zeitung* attempted to further German interests over the course of the war is highly significant. The Ober Ost press helped Germans come to terms with their role as conquerors of vast amounts of "enemy" territory that was populated almost entirely by ethnically distinct non-Russians. The borderlands territories required the creation of a propaganda effort make sense of this ambiguous condition; administration papers did so by articulating a vision of benign German imperialism with virtuous *Deutschtum* at the center. If the First World War generally "radicalized all enmities and friendships, all phobias and affinities,"⁷³ the administration press in the east provides a telling example. The largely latent Russophobia gained a mass-scale audience and the project of making the former Russian lands German fomented a nebulously articulated sense of German cultural

⁷⁰ "Bilder aus Litauen," *Skizzen-Mappe der Kownoer Zeitung*, January 7, 1917.

⁷¹ "Zivil-Entlassung Ob.Ost," *Kownoer Zeitung*, January 12, 1917, sec. Beiblatt.

⁷² "Die Detusche Verwaltung Litauen," *Skizzen-Mappe der Kownoer Zeitung*, September 3, 1916.

⁷³ Koenen, *Der Russland-Komplex*, 20.

superiority that could be expanded upon in the future. The most conspicuous legacy of occupation in the east during the First World War was how quickly it seemed to be forgotten by the occupiers. If the particulars of Ober Ost policy in Lithuania seem to have been of little interest to future generations, the dynamic impressions of Russian rule certainly were not.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A DIFFERENT KIND OF HOME FRONT: WAR, GENDER AND PROPAGANDA IN WARSAW, 1914–1918

Robert Blobaum and Donata Blobaum

This chapter deals with a peculiar type of propaganda directed at and about women in Warsaw, itself a peculiar place during the First World War. Warsaw was not a typical capital city, nor did it bear the attributes of a typical home front during the years of the Great War. In fact, it was not really a capital city at all before the war and most of the city's Polish and Jewish residents had come to accept Warsaw's status as the third city of the Russian Empire. It was in this capacity that the city briefly took on the appearance of a wartime home front in 1914. However, Warsaw's close proximity to the fighting and limited access to available sources of food and fuel would eventually undermine the spirit of endurance and endeavor, proudly trumpeted in the fall of 1914 in the mainstream Polish press following the first unsuccessful German assault on the city.¹ With the passing of the front in the summer of 1915, Warsaw took on a new role, first as the seat of the German occupation regime, and slightly more than a year later, as the capital of successive quasi-state structures built and altered under German auspices.² As these products of German state-building became increasingly autonomous over the war's last two years, the city could envision itself as the once and future capital of a sovereign and independent Poland.

The unique features of Warsaw's wartime experience in turn did much to set and reset the "home front" as a stage for the city's female actors. Of particular importance was the chronic crisis of Warsaw's urban economy, which began immediately at the outbreak of the war and was subsequently exacerbated by the exactions of Russian evacuation and German occupa-

¹ For example, see Zdzisław Dębicki, "Warszawa," *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 44 (31 October 1914): 730–731.

² For a discussion of the origins and evolution of Imperial German thinking about Warsaw's role in these structures and its impact on the city's development, see Marta Polsakiewicz, "Spezifika deutscher Besatzungspolitik in Warschau 1914–1916," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 58, 4(2009): 501–537.

tion. The city's demographic feminization resembled that of other capital cities, although the increasing preponderance of women over men in Warsaw's population—which reached 32% by January 1917—owed less to military conscription than it did to voluntary and involuntary male labor out-migration.³

Elsewhere in Europe, as well as in the United States, the war promoted both the quantitative and qualitative growth of female labor force participation. This was the case in the capital of practically every belligerent state—more so in Berlin and Petrograd perhaps than in London or Paris—but proportionally significant regardless and the main source of women's social power during the war years.⁴ In this regard, Warsaw was dramatically different, as female participation in the industrial labor force declined precipitously in terms of numbers employed, and remained unchanged in proportion to men as a consequence of the collapse of industrial production in the city. Before the war, 18,420 women, 23.9 per cent out of a total of 77,809 industrial workers, were employed in Warsaw's factories. By early 1916, that number had already dropped to only 3650 women out of a total industrial labor force of 14,632, or 24.9 per cent of all workers.⁵

These basic realities form the backdrop to various wartime efforts to mobilize and influence Warsaw's women who, broadly speaking, can be divided into two categories. The first, to use Belinda Davis's term in reference to wartime Berlin, were the "women of lesser means,"⁶ who in the case of Warsaw as well as Berlin comprised the vast majority of women. This included the laboring poor, but more significantly the female unemployed, particularly former domestic servants who before the war comprised the largest number of employed women in Warsaw and whose jobs were lost due to the evacuation of Russian officials and the growing impoverishment of middle-class and intelligentsia households. Joining these "women of lesser means" were single mothers and wives left temporarily or permanently without male partners due to wartime circumstances.

³ Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, *Warszawa w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej* (Warsaw, 1974), 196.

⁴ See Thierry Bonzon, "The Labor Market and Industrial Mobilization," *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*, vol. 1, ed. Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge, 1997), 164–195.

⁵ Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (AGAD), Szef Administracji przy General-Gubernatorstwie w Warszawie (SAGGW) 5, Vierteljahrsschaftsbericht des Verwaltungschefs bei dem General-Gouvernement Warschau für die Zeit vom 1. Januar 1916 bis zum 31 März 1916, appendix III.

⁶ See Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill, 2000).

Among the most publicly and politically visible women in this category were the *rezerwistki*, soldiers' wives whose sense of entitlement was publicly acknowledged—that is, until it came to be perceived as a threat to the existing social order in their respective communities. Finally, there were the “women of loose morality,” as they were referred to in the press, occasional prostitutes whose numbers increased significantly in the midst of the city's economic destitution.

The second kind of women in Warsaw were similar to those identified by Maureen Healy in her study of wartime Vienna, defined as a vocal minority among women of affluence who spoke on behalf of “women” in general, including “women of lesser means.”⁷ Although the numbers of women of affluence if anything declined in Warsaw during the war years as economic misery traveled up the social hierarchy, the size of the minority speaking on behalf of women grew noticeably as a small number of prewar feminists of conviction were joined by a much larger group of feminists of wartime circumstance. The latter can be defined as the female members of prewar social and cultural conservative elites whose perspectives and, ultimately, demands were shaped by their wartime experience in philanthropy, social work and public assistance.

The Warsaw press, though far from speaking with one voice, was hardly neutral in the larger conflict among belligerent states. For example, the largest mass circulation daily in Warsaw before the war, *Kurjer Warszawski*, whose political profile could be described as Catholic and conservative-nationalist, strongly supported the cause of Russian arms until the Russian evacuation of the summer of 1915. Similarly, *Godzina Polski* emerged during the German occupation of the city and, although its ties to the German authorities remained semi-official at best, it has often been viewed in the historiography as a Polish-language daily supporting the interests of the Central Powers. In their own estimation, however, both *Kurjer Warszawski* and *Godzina Polski* represented Polish interests.

Virtually every Warsaw daily and periodical took up the “woman question” during the war, interpreting it from its own perspective. Given the rapid rise of female participation in the broadly-defined public sphere occasioned by the war, they had little choice. Thus, our examination of propaganda will not focus on governments, Russian or German, which when it came to the issue of women left the field open to local actors.

⁷ See Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge, 2004), especially Chapter 4: “Sisterhood and Citizenship.”

Instead, our chapter will concentrate on the stereotypes, images, messages, prescriptions and proscriptions promoted by various interest groups and their publicists in a Warsaw press which itself was far from uniform in its political outlooks, but by war's end belonged largely to the same chorus in its approach to women.

Setting the Stage

At the outset of the First World War in 1914, Warsaw had not been the capital of a nominally sovereign state since the Third Partition of Poland in 1795, or the capital of any kind of political/territorial entity since the formal abolition of the Congress Kingdom of Poland, whose autonomy itself had become a legal fiction long before its vestiges disappeared following Russian suppression of the January Insurrection in 1864. From 1874 on, the city served as the administrative center of ten imperial Russian provinces which together comprised something known officially as "Vistulaland." By the end of the nineteenth century Warsaw had become the "Third City" of the Russian Empire after St. Petersburg and Moscow, and although it would host Russian imperial institutions—for example, of higher education—the city was denied any institutions of local self-government comparable to the city dumas established in major Russian urban centers. Instead, Warsaw was administered, rather than governed, by a Magistrate, whose office oversaw capital construction and infrastructural development that accelerated in the last decade of Russian imperial rule but was ill-equipped to provide modern social services, which were left to a host of charitable and philanthropic organizations, both Polish and Jewish. Moreover, in the aftermath of revolution in 1905–1906, Warsaw had been under martial law and other, lesser forms of emergency rule, which further reduced the authority of the Russian civilian administration and, given the city's strategic location in a future war with the Central Powers, added to an already considerable Russian military presence. At best, Warsaw before the war was the imagined capital of a non-existent state. At worst, it resembled a city under military occupation.⁸

⁸ For more on Warsaw before the war, see Stephen D. Corrin, *Warsaw Before the First World War: Poles and Jews in the Third City of the Russian Empire, 1880–1914* (Boulder and Columbia, 1989). On the impact of martial law in Warsaw and other cities of the former Polish Kingdom, see Robert E. Blobaum, *Rewolucja: Russian Poland, 1904–1907* (Ithaca, 1995), 260–291.

Despite this recent history, at the beginning of the war Polish “society” in Warsaw mobilized in support of the Russian military cause and in cooperation with the Russian government. This effort was led by the Warsaw Citizens Committee (*Komitet Obywatelski miasta Warszawy*, hereafter referred to as the KO), a non-governmental organization created in the war’s first days on the initiative of conservative notables. Recognized by the Russian authorities on 3 August 1914, the Committee worked in conjunction with the City Magistrate. In its first press release, the KO declared that it would focus on issues related to the basic provisioning of the city, finding work for the unemployed, assisting the families of military reservists called up to the army, insuring public safety, and mobilizing financial resources to deal with the war’s expected hardships.⁹ Those hardships, however, would be far greater than expected, which would lead to a rapid expansion of the KO’s activities.

Among the Committee’s original eight sections was the Women’s Section, located on 32 Jasna Street and headed by Helena Weychert.¹⁰ Before the emergence of the Citizens Committee, the Christian Society for the Protection of Women had already set up seven sections which practically ran parallel to those eventually created by the KO.¹¹ Chaired by Weychert, this conservative Catholic organization of affluent women concentrated its efforts before the war almost entirely on fighting prostitution and pornography. Joined by other women of affluence involved in the charitable work of the Warsaw Philanthropic Society, the Women’s Section under Weychert’s direction clearly expected to move beyond the traditional activities of its constituent organizations in serving the Warsaw home front, even when its newly conceived roles overlapped and collided with those assigned to other sections of the KO by the Committee’s male leadership. Thus, from the very outset of the war, the definition of women’s roles in the public sphere, a sphere expanded by the demands of Europe’s first total war, led to controversy and conflict.

The Women’s Section quickly found itself under attack for overstepping jurisdictional and gender boundaries. An early conflict revolved around

⁹ “Z miasta,” *Kurjer Warszawski* 212 (3 August 1914, morn. ed.): 3.

¹⁰ “Komitet Obywatelski,” *Bluszcz* 32 (15 August 1914): 3. The KO originally consisted of eight sections: Provisions, Press and Information, Assistance to Soldiers’ Families, Finance, Medical, Women, Employment and Legal. Its ninth, or General Section, served as a committee of the whole; Archiwum Państwowe m. st. Warszawy (APW), Komitet Obywatelski Miasta Warszawy, 1914–1916 (KOMW) 1, protocol no. 1 of 3 August 1914.

¹¹ “Kobieta polska w Komitecie obywatelskim,” *Bluszcz* 32 (special supplement of 15 August 1914): 3–4.

the involvement of Women's Section in fundraising activities, which led to a dispute with the KO's Donations Section.¹² Despite the General Section's intervention in favor of the latter, the Women's Section stubbornly continued its practice of door-to-door solicitations to fund its own activities.¹³ The Women's Section would also be reprimanded for sending announcements directly to the press, rather than having them vetted through the KO's Press and Information Section.¹⁴ Such conflicts would lead in mid-September to the resignation of Weychert and other leaders of Women's Section, followed by the dissolution of the section itself and its replacement with a tellingly labeled "Commission for Women's Work under the Citizens Committee."¹⁵

Several weeks before its demise, the Women's Section received permission directly from the Russian authorities to organize nursing courses.¹⁶ Hundreds of women from all social classes but especially the Polish intelligentsia would subsequently respond to the Section's appeal toward the end of August 1914 to serve as nurses and nurses' aides in treating wounded soldiers after attending lectures on emergency care.¹⁷ *Kurjer Warszawski*, however, found fault with many of young nurses' aides who supposedly treated their work as "fashionable sport" and were called upon by the conservative daily to be "tactful, modestly attired and severe toward their colleagues who are interrupting their work."¹⁸ Such criticism was taken seriously by *Bluszcz*, the era's leading women's periodical with close ties to the leadership of the Women's Section. Treating the wounded was "not something to be taken lightly," confirmed Julia Kisielewska in its pages.¹⁹

Nonetheless, during the October 1914 siege of Warsaw, a *Bluszcz* editorial noted that care of the wounded in Warsaw's hospitals was being organized entirely by women, and that this constituted additional proof of women's expanding roles in the organization and execution of social policy. In response to the KO's efforts to curtail those roles by dissolving the Women's Section, *Bluszcz* argued that women should not surrender their newfound positions voluntarily, especially in those areas where they had been suc-

¹² APW KOMW 1, protocol no. 16 of 12 August 1914.

¹³ Ibid., protocol no. 25 of 20 August 1914.

¹⁴ Ibid., protocol no. 37 of 1 September 1914.

¹⁵ Ibid., protocols no. 49 of 18 September 1914 and no. 53 of 24 September 1914.

¹⁶ Ibid., protocol no. 11 of 9 August 1914.

¹⁷ "Sanitarjuszki warszawskie," *Kurjer Warszawski* 235 (26 August 1914, aft. ed.):2.

¹⁸ "W sprawie sanitariuszek," *Kurjer Warszawski* 250 (9 September 1914, aft. ed.): 2.

¹⁹ Julia Kisielewska (Oksza), "Do polskich kobiet," *Bluszcz* 34-36 (26 September 1914):

cessful.²⁰ In the event, the restrictions that the Committee's leadership sought to impose on its female social activists proved impossible to maintain as the numbers of those in need of public assistance and the types of public assistance that they needed continued to expand, as did the numbers of women involved in rendering such assistance. Consequently, the conflicts that the Warsaw Citizens Committee had thought it had laid to rest with the dissolution of its Women's Section reemerged quickly enough with the female leadership of the Commission for Women's Work.²¹

Originally set up to organize and provide direct assistance to women and children whose lives had been disrupted by the war, the Commission's activities rapidly expanded, leading to a division of labor and the establishment of seven sub-commissions—again according to the model earlier established by the Christian Society for the Protection of Women. By February 1915, *Bluszcz* could report with pride and satisfaction that "Women's energies, grouped in this commission, worked miracles of labor and industry, creating in a matter of days shelters for refugees, hostels for the intelligentsia, tearrooms, Sunday centers, a shelter for soldiers' children, etc."²² To be sure, the protection of mothers and especially children would remain at the heart of the Commission's activities during the first year of war and already by February 1915 it had registered over 19,000 children who qualified for assistance in Warsaw, while feeding and clothing 7000 directly.²³ The Commission also operated four refugee shelters, provided significant assistance to an increasingly impoverished and unemployed intelligentsia, and found work for some 3500 women through its employment office.²⁴

The fact of the matter, as later noted by KO activist Franciszek Herbst, was that public assistance in all of its forms during the Committee's existence (to the middle of 1916) was carried out almost exclusively by women.²⁵ Moreover, the Commission was largely dependent on its own resources derived from charitable giving. During the winter of 1914–1915, for example,

²⁰ "Wrażenie z chwili," *Bluszcz* 37–38 (10 October 1914): 378.

²¹ Eight of eleven members of the Commission's administrative board were women, and Helena Weychert returned to become one of its leading figures; "Opieka nad dziećmi," *Kurjer Warszawski* 11 (11 January 1915, aft. ed.): 2.

²² "Komisya pracy kobiet," *Bluszcz* 3–4 (6 February 1915): 1–3.

²³ "Komisya opieki nad dziećmi," *Bluszcz* 7–8 (20 February 1915): 1–2.

²⁴ APW KOMW 2, protocol no. 37 of the KO Presidium of 5 February 1915), protocol no. 71 of 28 April 1915, and protocol no. 167 of 7 May 1915.

²⁵ Herbst was secretary of the KO's Labor Section; see Franciszek Herbst, "Działalność społeczna i samorządowa" in *Warszawa w pamiętnikach pierwszej wojny światowej*, ed. Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz (Warsaw, 1971), 306.

1070 women participated in a fundraising campaign for the Commission, selling "gold stars" that raised thousands of rubles in support of its assistance to children.²⁶ Having received their baptism under the fire of war, *Bluszcz* proclaimed, "Polish women are good material for social work."²⁷

Such confidence, fed by the organizational and financial autonomy of existing women's organizations, was demonstrated in the Commission's refusal to subordinate its sub-commission on assistance to the intelligentsia to a recently created national commission, this despite KO demands.²⁸ In March, the Commission for Women's Work vigorously defended its position in *Kurjer Warszawski* by contesting erroneous published information that had belittled the Commission's long-standing aid to the intelligentsia, work that it had absolutely no intention of ending.²⁹ Unlike the situation in September 1914 when the KO dissolved the Women's Section, thus forcing female activists into a defensive stance, in the summer of 1915 nine women's organizations went on the offensive to demand greater representation of women in the work of the KO.³⁰

The social and political conservatives who comprised Warsaw's Polish elite were already too dependent on the efficacy of women's wartime social work to risk direct confrontation with the affluent female activists behind that work—often enough their wives, sisters and daughters. Instead, they focused on issues of morality represented by changing fashion, particularly among younger women who, as one reader pontificated in a letter to *Bluszcz*, "need to understand that the store, cashier's desk, office and editorial room is not a salon... and that clothing that is simple, modest and dark is more appropriate than some kind of dainty white shirt that is partially fastened." Otherwise, such women could be mistaken "for belonging to the category of women of loose moral standards."³¹ By invoking the specter and stereotype of prostitutes, whose increasing numbers ran parallel with growing economic impoverishment among lower-class women, conservatives sought to exploit an issue that had divided the women's movement before the war and could be used to redirect or rein in women's visibly growing ambitions that were starting to assume political form.³² Harkening

²⁶ "Z opieki nad dziećmi," *Kurjer Warszawski* 8 (8 January 1915, aft. ed.): 3.

²⁷ "Komisya pracy kobiet," *Bluszcz* 3-4 (6 February 1915): 1-3.

²⁸ APW KOMW 2, protocol no. 129 of 18 February 1915.

²⁹ "Komisya pracy kobiet," *Kurjer Warszawski* 66 (7 March 1915): 4.

³⁰ APW KOMW 2, protocol no. 84 of the KO Presidium of 7 June 1915.

³¹ "Głosy czytelniczek: Strój kobiet pracujących," *Bluszcz* 22 (29 May 1915): 174-175.

³² In the middle of May, the Commission for Women's Work began to discuss women's rights in the newly projected Warsaw municipal government, to the extent that those rights

back to the days when Weychert and her colleagues contented themselves with rescuing young women from the evils of the sex trade, Jan Czempieński called upon the female readership of *Bluszcz* to join a crusade against prostitution in wartime, a crusade that should include the fight against "prostitution literature" and "prostitution of the brain."³³

Apart from prostitutes, however, the Warsaw press under Russian rule presented positive and sympathetic images of women of lesser means. This was particularly true in the case of *rezerwistki*, who at the outbreak of the war began to receive social payments from the Russian government to support themselves and their families in the absence of male husbands and fathers taken into military service. A few weeks into the war, the Russian government enacted special regulations to protect *rezerwistki* from eviction for failing to pay rents, a move strongly endorsed in the conservative Warsaw press.³⁴ In fact, the sympathy of elite opinion for the wives of soldiers serving at the front was sufficiently widespread that professional beggars, with children in tow, successfully posed as *rezerwistki* in asking for handouts.³⁵ When Warsaw's refugee shelters were forcibly evacuated in June 1915, only *rezerwistki* offered effective resistance, as city authorities retreated from the use of coercive methods against them.³⁶ Similarly, a favorable portrait of lower-class women appeared in 1915 in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, whose anonymous reporter observed that each day he passed a public grocery store operated by the KO, its doors still closed, "a long line of poorly dressed women waits for the happy moment of its opening. No one is maintaining order here. Not a trace of the police."³⁷

The police would have to be called soon enough to maintain order in such lines. While still under Russian rule, however, the mainstream press perceived little danger posed to the social order by women of lesser means, be they *rezerwistki* or consumers of basic goods, so long as they remained calmly in line with elite expectations of their proper social place and behavior. Instead, the increased transgression of gender boundaries by affluent

were recognized at all by existing Russian legislation; "Prawa kobiet w samorządzie," *Kurjer Warszawski* 136 (18 May 1915, aft. ed.): 2. By the time the Russians began their evacuation of the city in early July 1915, a Delegation of Associations for Directing Electoral Action among Women had emerged from a consortium of Christian and conservative women's associations to participate in elections that were never held; "Do wyborczyń-polek," *Kurjer Warszawski* 182 (4 July 1915, Sunday ed.): 6-7.

³³ Jan Czempieński, "Krucjata. Do polskich kobiet," *Bluszcz* 29-30 (24 July 1915): 225-226.

³⁴ "O mieszkania rezerwistów," *Kurjer Warszawski* 233 (24 August 1914, aft. ed.): 3.

³⁵ "Wynajęte dzieci," *Kurjer Warszawski* 253 (13 September 1914, Sunday ed.): 3.

³⁶ APW KOMW 2, protocol no. 88 of the KO Presidium of 16 June 1915.

³⁷ "Z ulicy," *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 10 (6 March 1915): 152.

women, empowered by the imperative of social work, both framed as well as limited the discourse on women and their roles in the first year of the war. Under German occupation, the range of contested issues would expand considerably, while elite perceptions of the relative dangers posed to the existing order by the aspirations and demands of these two very different kinds of women would undergo a reconfiguration.

Propagating Women's Roles in the Wartime Warsaw Press

One of these issues concerned the place and purpose of women in education. Before the war, not a single woman was enrolled in Warsaw's two institutions of higher education, the imperial Russian Warsaw University and the Polytechnic Institute. Studies at both schools were suspended during the first year of the war due to the fighting. When they reopened as "Polish" institutions under German occupation in the fall of 1915, ten per cent of the students enrolled at Warsaw University were women. Two years later, the proportion of women studying at Warsaw University had increased to 18.2 per cent, while the student body at the Polytechnic Institute now contained 58 women.³⁸ Such enrollments were in part a response to the growth in employment of female teachers in the city's secondary schools, 56 per cent of the total by the end of the war.³⁹

Meanwhile, wartime economic conditions and the employment crisis revealed the bitter truth about the sorry state of women's vocational skills and thus raised questions about the direction of their education. The knowledge that female youth had acquired in middle schools was deemed inadequate to the requirements of the labor market. For Roman Catholic conservatives, the education of women was no longer socially dangerous. Instead, "real knowledge" was necessary to women, which they could also use to manage their households.⁴⁰ Conservatives were prepared to recognize that "a woman is a human being who has the freedom to shape her own life as she desires, with rights equal to men to draw from the knowledge of the ages."⁴¹

³⁸ "Uniwersytet w cyfrach," *Godzina Polski* 93b (6 April 1918): 2; "Ze statystyki politechniki," *Godzina Polski* 101a (14 April 1918): 3-4.

³⁹ Dunin-Łasowicz, 196; K.Z., "Dział kobiecy. Reforma wykształcenia kobiecego. Kobieta w szkolnictwie średnim," *Godzina Polski* 189 (9 July 1916): 6-7.

⁴⁰ Zofia Ruettówna, "Szkoła przyszłości," *Bluszcz* 15 (10 April 1915): 116 and 16 (17 April 1915): 123.

⁴¹ Ruettówna, "Szkoła przyszłości," *Bluszcz* 17 (24 April 1915): 130.

This does not mean that conservatives supported the democratization of education, even if they agreed to opening up higher education to women. "I am a proponent of women's higher education," maintained Zofia Reuttówna in *Bluszcz*, "but I do not want to encourage in any way the general population of women to take up university studies."⁴² A few years later *Godzina Polski* opined that "Thus far, a woman, as a student, feels constrained and uncertain in her role" and that a "typical" female student thinks mainly about marriage;⁴³ therefore it would be sufficient for society if annually "a hundred or two hundred girls were able to matriculate."⁴⁴ Some men considered female enrollment as dangerous proof of women's liberation and gender rivalry,⁴⁵ others that "A woman should have the same exposure to the universe as we do," treating it as a basis for happiness in marriage.⁴⁶ A strong patriotic thread ran through the debate about women's educational reform; training in civics was considered particularly necessary to "the preparation of the Polish woman for life's important tasks."⁴⁷

In practice, the directors of Warsaw's female middle schools initiated reform by changing the curriculum to prepare candidates for university studies.⁴⁸ According to *Bluszcz* the opening of Warsaw University and the Polytechnic Institute to women was an expression of equal rights, but it bemoaned the senseless lack of an alternative in vocational education.⁴⁹ The opening by women for women of the first schools for clock-making, shoemaking and haberdashery in August 1915 sought to fill this void.⁵⁰ The following year practical "two-year women's courses in gardening, home economics, and commerce"⁵¹ were organized, which were advertised as useful "for the future physician, and the future professor, for the director of a school or a hospital, for the craftswoman and factory worker alike."⁵²

⁴² Reuttówna, "Szkoła przyszłości," *Bluszcz* 21 (22 May 1915): 164.

⁴³ Apolinary Krupiński, "Studentka," *Godzina Polski* 85a (27 March 1918): 1.

⁴⁴ "Reforma szkół żeńskich," *Godzina Polski* 249 (7 September 1917): 6.

⁴⁵ Krupiński, "Studentka," *Godzina Polski* 84a (26 March 1918): 1.

⁴⁶ "Szczęście w małżeństwie," *Godzina Polski* 166 (20 June 1917): 6-7.

⁴⁷ "O zadaniach szkoły dla dziewcząt," *Kurjer Warszawski* 76 (17 March 1917, aft. ed.): 4.

⁴⁸ "Reforma szkół żeńskich," 6.

⁴⁹ J. Oksza, "Reformy w wychowaniu dziewcząt," *Bluszcz* 7 (17 February 1917): 50-51.

⁵⁰ "Szkoly zawodowe żeńskie," *Kurjer Warszawski* 228 (19 August 1915, morning supplement): 1-2.

⁵¹ "Kursa gospodarstwa domowego," *Kurjer Warszawski* 98 (7 April 1916, morn. ed.): 1-2.

⁵² J. Oksza, "Reformy w wychowaniu dziewcząt," *Bluszcz* 8 (24 February 1917): 57.

Kurjer Warszawski called the creation of vocational education opportunities for women one of the most urgent tasks in the reconstruction a future Polish state.⁵³

Gaps in the professional training of women were held responsible for the masculinity of many occupations. In the courts, "many married and single women hold the position of office workers, because to higher administrative positions like undersecretary and secretary the department of justice hires people with a university education; there are still very few university graduates among women."⁵⁴ The press wrote of the success of female architects, inventors, artists, but mainly those living abroad. The model to follow was that of Nobel prize-winner Maria Skłodowska-Curie whose example indicated the way forward.⁵⁵

In addition, the Warsaw press called upon women to serve as factory inspectors and to protect the rights of female industrial workers.⁵⁶ The Union of Equal Rights of Polish Women, a feminist organization, organized a special course for future female inspectors,⁵⁷ as well as a conference "Women's Work in Technical Vocations."⁵⁸ In contrast, the Congress of Technicians in Warsaw promoted such occupations as home economics innovator, and instructors for factory affairs, apartments and use of toilets.⁵⁹

One public assessment of occupational risks to women's health revealed some interesting results. Most hazardous were those of bookkeeper, teacher and actor. *Godzina Polski*, which published this information in 1917, concluded: "The statistics show in the end that the 'natural' occupations for women are the healthiest ones, in other words of mother and housewife."⁶⁰ Regardless, the teaching profession was proclaimed as the vocation to which women by nature were predisposed: "We need fewer doctors, lawyers, and directors of financial institutions than we do women prepared to fulfill the dignity of tutors of children."⁶¹

⁵³ "Szkoly zawodowe dla dziewcząt," *Kurjer Warszawski* 321 (20 November 1915): 4-5.

⁵⁴ "Kobiety w sądownictwie," *Kurjer Warszawski* 252 (12 September 1917, aft. ed.): 2.

⁵⁵ "Dział kobiecy. Kobieta współczesna. Część II," *Godzina Polski* 59 (2 March 1917): 6.

⁵⁶ "O inspektorki fabryczne," *Kurjer Warszawski* 233 (25 August 1915, morning supplement): 1.

⁵⁷ "Inspektorki fabryczne," *Kurjer Warszawski* 313 (12 November 1917, aft. ed.): 3.

⁵⁸ "Do studentek politechniki," *Kurjer Warszawski* 101 (13 April 1917): 2.

⁵⁹ "Praca kobiet w zawodach technicznych," *Kurjer Warszawski* 105 (17 April 1917, aft. ed.): 3.

⁶⁰ "Szkodliwe zawody kobiece," *Godzina Polski* 217b (10 August 1917): 4.

⁶¹ "Dział kobiecy. Kobiety a wychowanie przedszkolne," *Godzina Polski* 86 (29 March 1917): 6.

The position of various groups on the “woman question,” not only during the German occupation but also in the period generally preceding it, contained a great deal of prejudice. The biases expressed were mainly social and cultural in character, even though the question of assigning full voting rights to women was also a political issue. The division between proponents and opponents of women’s emancipation did not run exclusively along gender lines, but also along those of class and social origin. The “apolitical” nature of the “woman question” favored its discussion in Warsaw public discourse, and the occupation regime refrained from sending special directives to the press that would otherwise limit debate. Instead, the absence of formal censorship promoted a presentation of views in a discourse limited primarily by prevailing cultural values.

The Warsaw press observed life through the eyes of its publicists, and stereotypes revealed the fears and biased judgments of those opposed to change. Such was the case of the press image of the female student, a caricature thusly described by one publicist: “An unkempt, unwashed frump, a product of the fin-de-siècle’s decadence and buffoonery, a man in a skirt, separated from the properties of her sex while not possessing those of the other sex... God, take pity! The female student... one leg on top of the other, the essential cigarette in her mouth, hair short and closely cut... In behavior—triviality, in her soul the absence of ‘healthy’ values; from her lips—perverse statements; in general—an arsenal of all kinds of anachronisms.”⁶²

Contemporary esthetic notions governing female appearance instructed women to shed even the semblance of intelligence: “Women with broad and tall bodies try artificially, with the aid of bangs and curls, to reduce them, as if they were ashamed that the proliferation of the front lobes of the brain could indicate the development of intellect.”⁶³ The external appearance of working women was said to “indict them for vanity, frivolity, coquettishness; it says ugly, shallow things about them, flays them in the eyes of important and intelligent people.”⁶⁴ In Warsaw, “Fifty-year-old women have begun to dress like teenagers, wearing skirts to the knees... And as a result, Warsaw has taken on the appearance of a ballet, which is incompatible with the weight of the crucial times in which we are living.” This choice of style was said to be typical of female office workers, who also displayed a lack of professionalism in their work and “behave as if they

⁶² Krupiński, “Studentka,” *Godzina Polski* 85a (27 March 1918): 1.

⁶³ “Dział kobiecy. Kobieta współczesna. Część II,” 6.

⁶⁴ “Głosy czytelniczek. Strój kobiet pracujących,” 174–175.

were at name-day parties of their friends.”⁶⁵ Where were the feelings of embarrassment among Warsaw’s women, when “the eyes of Europe have turned on us, eyes that are both friendly and unfriendly?... At this moment our obligation is to uphold national dignity and solemnity everywhere and in everything.”⁶⁶ The more liberal *Nowa Gazeta* riposted that “the independent existence of the nation” had nothing to do with the length of women’s skirts.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, the popularity of foreign fashion was treated in conservative circles at something anti-Polish, particularly at a time of high inflation. Pure Polish fashion, modeled on village styles though still “European,” could also support Polish industry and native producers.⁶⁸

Models drawn from the historical past were intended to serve as an antidote to the dilemmas of the present. “A Polish woman is brave, proud, full of dignity, feverishly devoted to the public good, active and prudent—with a helpful hand and good advice. We honor this ideal, for which we should strive,” *Bluszcz* reminded its readers at the beginning of the war.⁶⁹ Tradition also provided models for women in their social work. Already on the eve of the war, examples were taken from the Middle Ages to urge women to be “propagators of life,” “Piaśt worker bees,” and “Piaśt women,” inheritors of the tradition of the first Polish dynasty.⁷⁰ According to *Godzina Polski*, young women should “model themselves on the virtues of their great grandmothers and at the same time reach for ever higher rungs of knowledge, using all that progress and civilization has attained and won for her.” She should be like “our ancient mothers of knights, who for the good of the fatherland could rely completely on themselves as they sent their sons off to battle.”⁷¹

The roles of wife and mother remained fundamental. A “good mother” was one who enriched and developed her child’s soul, taught devotion to the fatherland, and above all raised the child in the likeness of God.⁷² “A woman must understand that the fate of the nation rests in her hands,”

⁶⁵ “Praca urzędniczek,” *Godzina Polski* 195b (19 July 1918, aft. ed.): 2.

⁶⁶ “Gorsząca moda,” *Kurjer Warszawski* 244 (3 September 1916, aft. ed.): 4.

⁶⁷ “Uwagi,” *Nowa Gazeta* 405 (5 September 1916, aft. ed.): 2.

⁶⁸ Wanda Odrowąż-Maluina, “Głosy czytelniczek. Trochę dobrej woli,” *Bluszcz* 19 (8 May 1915): 151.

⁶⁹ Do kobiet polskich,” *Bluszcz* 34 (26 September 1914): 355–357.

⁷⁰ “Udział kobiet w społecznych zadaniach naszego wieku,” *Bluszcz* 12 (21 March 1914): 117.

⁷¹ I. Piątkowska, “Dział kobiecy. Kobieta nowoczesna,” *Godzina Polski* 233 (22 August 1916): 2; “Dział kobiecy. Kobieta w społeczeństwie,” *Godzina Polski* 131 (15 May 1917): 6.

⁷² “Dział kobiecy. Obowiązki kobiety-matki,” *Godzina Polski* 261 (19 September 1917): 6.

pronounced *Bluszcz* at the time of the Russian evacuation.⁷³ In *Godzina Polski* the “Matka Polka” (Polish Mother) rose to the rank of an allegorical figure who, in appealing for the preservation of values and tradition in the education of young women, said: “Teaching girls how to cook and order a household is often considered demeaning”; however, the formation of habits of a “good housewife” remained essential.⁷⁴

The publication of articles in the press recalling famous Polish women was meant to popularize the social aspect of women’s lives. *Bluszcz* played a particular role in this regard, writing about the well known nineteenth-century figures in the women’s movement, like Narcyza Żmichowska. Other Warsaw dailies wrote about women outside the country: about English and American suffragettes and women-soldiers commanded by Colonel Lady Castlereagh, or about the successes of women in the organization of provisions in urban areas of Germany.

The woman of landed wealth was expected to fulfill an important social role. Given their rural connections (though many resided in the city), landed women should be responsible for “the intellectual development of the people through the systematic accustoming of their younger sisters from the village to the virtues of learning.” They were to teach small crafts, which would enable village women to earn a living. Thanks to such social work, the landed woman “will shed the reputation of a salon doll, thoughtlessly vegetating from day to day.”⁷⁵ “The theory that an intelligent woman with higher education is unable to occupy herself with different parts of a farmstead is simply mistaken and appears completely without basis,” opined *Godzina Polski*, “because education makes practical work easier and ennobles it, simply stripping it of all vulgarity. Work disgraces no one, to the contrary it brings honor to all.”⁷⁶ *Godzina Polski* alone popularized the German notion of collaboration between rural women as producers of food and urban women as its consumers, bypassing speculators. The role of landed women was to organize and coordinate this work⁷⁷ and, indeed, in cooperation with the Commission for Women’s Work, the Association

⁷³ “Kobieta—domowe ognisko,” *Bluszcz* 29–30 (24 July 1915): 228–229.

⁷⁴ “Reforma wykształcenia kobiecego. Szkoły gospodarstwa domowego,” *Godzina Polski* 162 (12 June 1916): 12–13.

⁷⁵ I. Piątkowska, “Słów kilka o kobietach na wsi,” *Godzina Polski* 242 (31 August 1916): 3.

⁷⁶ “Kilka słów o kobietach na wsi,” *Godzina Polski* 242 (31 August 1916): 6.

⁷⁷ “Ze spraw kobiecych. Kobiety a aprowizacja miast,” *Godzina Polski* 162 (12 June 1916): 13.

of United Female Landowners created a store in Warsaw for products from the village.⁷⁸

In reference to the social role of women, it is important to remember their philanthropic activity, which was invaluable in cities like Warsaw. Catholic and Jewish women organized separately to create dozens of different organizations specializing in variously defined areas of social work. For some, philanthropy was a social calling, for others it was fashionable. *Bluszcz* described the situation in the following terms in July 1915: "Here at present there is perhaps not a single young woman who has not devoted her time to social work. The fashion today is that each and everyone do something—we could do with more such fashion. A beautiful fashion, let it last as long as possible."⁷⁹

Extremely active in support of the Polish legionnaires (units fighting in uneasy collaboration with the Central Powers) was the Polish Women's Military Ambulance League. Toward the end of the war and on the eve German withdrawal from the city, the press published a "Call to all Polish Women," regardless of age or social position, to provide material and moral support for a new Polish army. "Let every Polish woman, taking as her example the women of France, state her preparedness to bring one or two Polish soldiers under her care; let her strengthen them with her moral influence, and provide them material help according to her abilities, possibilities and good will."⁸⁰ Women organized in a variety of organizations also participated in patriotic celebrations during the German occupation, such as the anniversary of the Constitution of 3 May, or immediately after the German defeat in the National Demonstration of 17 November 1918. They paraded under their own banners, thus distinguishing the autonomy of their associations.

Could the traditional and new roles promoted by the war be reconciled? "A woman might be able to combine the roles of wife, housewife, and organizer of the household with work in a salaried occupation, though truth be told it would frequently cost her hours of sleep and rest. On the other hand, the calling of motherhood... cannot easily coexist with role of working professionally in the labor force."⁸¹ During the war, the work of women in the school system, the care of children, philanthropy, nursing

⁷⁸ "Nowa placówka kobiet polskich," *Kurjer Warszawski* 274 (4 October 1917, morn. ed.): 1-2.

⁷⁹ Zofia Morawska, "Moda chwili," *Bluszcz* 29-30 (24 July 1915): 226-227.

⁸⁰ "Wezwanie do wszystkich polek," *Kurjer Warszawski* 282 (12 October 1918, aft. ed.): 3; "Wezwanie do wszystkich polek," *Bluszcz* 42 (19 October 1918): 316.

⁸¹ R. Centerszwerowa, "Z zadań doby obecnej," *Bluszcz* 13 (31 March 1917): 91-92.

and sanitation, the struggle against depravity, and the provisioning of cities was considered of inestimable value.⁸² This same woman, who through centuries had been prepared to be “a pleasant salon doll but not a woman ready to participate creatively in life,”⁸³ had completely passed her examination. Women had powerfully distinguished themselves by their presence in social and economic life. The abilities and the organizational skills which they had demonstrated forged for women a new social role: “And such active women, in common work shoulder to shoulder with men, have gained by their own labors, by their own service—like medieval squires—the spurs of modern knighthood, namely equal civil rights.”⁸⁴

The Social and Political Expressions of Women's Demands

Such were the opinions expressed by Polish elites about their own female kind in the Warsaw press. At the same time, the positive representations of women of lesser means in that same press, prevalent during the war's first year, would erode as these women became increasingly forceful in making themselves heard. Dependent on transfer payments, large crowds of *rezerwistki* in September 1915 demonstrated in the fall of 1915 to demand that Warsaw municipal institutions assume the obligations of the recently departed Russian state.⁸⁵ *Rezerwistki* succeeded in defending their interests though direct action, and by such means they would continue to receive assistance payments from the Warsaw city administration through the summer of 1918. Moreover, they continued to reside throughout the war in flats for which they had not paid rents, protecting themselves from eviction on the basis of the 1914 decree of the Russian government.⁸⁶ Following the lead of *rezerwistki*, other women of lesser means were also able to use Russian laws and regulations to defend their interests.

The main reason that such strategies proved relatively successful was due to the social threat that such women had come to pose. If Warsaw's women of lesser means remained relatively calm in face of periodic shortages of basic commodities during the first year of the war, under German

⁸² “Uwagi,” *Nowa Gazeta* 326 (20 July 1916, morn. ed.): 1.

⁸³ “Dział kobiecy. Błędy przeszłości,” *Godzina Polski* 168 (18 June 1916): 7.

⁸⁴ “Czuwajcie,” *Bluszcz* 2 (13 January 1917): 11.

⁸⁵ Aleksander de Rosset, “Warszawa w dniach przełomu” in *Warszawa w pamiątkach pierwszej wojny światowej*, 104; “Zajście z rezerwistkami,” *Gazeta Poranna z grosze* 270 (30 September 1915): 4.

⁸⁶ “Sprawa rezerwistek,” *Godzina Polski* 96b (9 April 1918): 2; “Znowu sprawa rezerwistek,” *Godzina Polski* 202a (26 July 1918): 5.

occupation rising anger caused by food deprivation became ever more visible and was directed first and foremost at those institutions providing public assistance. Women of lesser means played a prominent role in Warsaw's food riots of June 1916, which resulted in the ransacking and looting of 23 grocery stores operating under the supervision of the city of administration—the very same stores where order had been maintained without police presence fifteen months earlier.⁸⁷ When these riots were reprised in May 1917 following similar disturbances in Petrograd that culminated in the overthrow of the tsarist regime, the threat to the existing social order posed by lower class women became palpable to Warsaw's local elites.⁸⁸ Consequently, women of lesser means became less objects of sympathy and more of criticism and even condemnation, beginning with women most vulnerable on the social margin, women of "easy morals." Also singled out were women "undeserving" of public welfare, especially those whose arrears in unpaid rents were attributed to manipulations of the law. *Godzina Polski* clearly sympathized with Warsaw landlords in their conflict with *rezerwistki* and called upon the city to end any and all transfer payments to them.⁸⁹

In Warsaw's increasingly radicalized social environment the political demands of affluent women, expressed not by wild-eyed feminists but women involved in conservative Catholic organizations, gradually appeared in a more positive light. In early 1916, nine of these women's organizations merged to form and legally register the Union of Polish Women's Associations.⁹⁰ Almost immediately the Union began to lobby the Warsaw Citizens Committee, which had appointed a commission to draft an ordinance for new city council elections. "The fulfillment of obligations bestows rights," the Union maintained in an appeal published in the larger Warsaw newspapers,⁹¹ basing its demands for complete political rights on women's fulfillment of the duties of citizenship both inside and outside the social organizations operating under the Committee's auspices. In June 1916 the Union issued a second appeal which claimed that since the burden of social

⁸⁷ APW, Redakcja "Nowej Gazety" (RNG) 3, list of stores looted in the food riots of 19–20 June 1916.

⁸⁸ APW RNG, Informational Communiqué "Rozruchy w Warszawie"; Jerzy Holzer and Jan Molenda, *Polska w pierwszej wojny światowej* (Warsaw, 1963), 213–214.

⁸⁹ "Znowu sprawa rezerwistek," 5.

⁹⁰ "Ze Związku stowarzyszeń kobiecych," *Godzina Polski* 64 (3 March 1916): 5.

⁹¹ "Prawa wyborcze kobiet," *Nowa Gazeta* 151 (1 April 1916, aft. ed.): 2, "Prawa wyborcze kobiet," *Godzina Polski* 94 (2 April 1916): 5, and "Kobiety i rada miejska," *Kurjer Warszawski* 94 (3 April 1916, aft. ed.): 1–2.

work had fallen on women's shoulders, simple justice and rational understanding of the public interest should give women a greater voice in the organization and leadership of those very social, philanthropic and public institutions which they served. In short, the Union demanded "equal rights with men in every sphere where her work is needed."⁹²

The electoral ordinance that governed Warsaw's first city council elections, however, effectively denied women political rights, save for a few single women who met its stringent property qualifications. Undeterred by this defeat, the Union published an appeal to those very few women who could exercise their limited rights: "We can and must nurture the hope that future citizenship will bring us changes." Voting was the responsibility of citizenship: "Let no woman have on her conscience the sin of neglect."⁹³ At the same, a women's meeting was organized in the middle of July to promote their claims to citizenship. The frustration of these women with their male counterparts was expressed by the librarian Jadwiga Borsteinowa who declared that in the area of developing Warsaw's urban economy, "women are capable of doing more in two months than are men in ten years."⁹⁴ Similarly the women's magazine *Bluszcz* no longer remained timid in its call for equal political rights and criticized all Polish state-building projects "that leave no place for half of the Polish nation." It was a "laughable absurdity," its editors continued, "that an alcoholic day laborer might have the right to vote, but not a woman who owns her own business, or is a teacher, a guide to young souls, or a worker who maintains her family on her own."⁹⁵

By the time of the Polish Women's Congress of 8-9 September 1917, the Union of Polish Women's Associations counted fifteen different organizations, including the Association of United Female Landowners, The Catholic Polish Women's Union, the Christian Society for the Protection of Women, and the Society of Young Christian Women, groups that hardly would be considered radical or feminist in any other circumstances.⁹⁶ Presiding over the Congress was the movement's most charismatic leader, Dr. Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka.⁹⁷ The executive committee of that congress, acting in the spirit of its resolutions calling for the immediate realiza-

⁹² "Dział kobiecy. Odezwa Związku Stowarzyszeń Kobiectych," *Godzina Polski* 175 (25 June 1916): 7.

⁹³ "Do wyborczyń-polek," *Kurjer Warszawski* 167 (18 July 1916): 7.

⁹⁴ "Dział kobiecy. Wiec kobiet," *Godzina Polski* 198 (18 July 1916): 6.

⁹⁵ "W przededniu Sejmu Polskiego," *Bluszcz* 2 (13 January 1917): 9-10.

⁹⁶ "Zjazd kobiet polskich," *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 37 (15 September 1917): 454.

⁹⁷ "Zjazd kobiet," *Kurjer Warszawski* 247 (7 September 1917, aft. ed.): 1.

tion of equal political rights, twice petitioned the Warsaw City Council and Magistrate in November 1917 to reform the electoral ordinance of the previous year.⁹⁸ In December it organized another women's meeting, which overflowed the theater on Śniadecki Street where it was held. At this assembly, speaker after speaker noted the persecution of women and the systematic rejection by men of their efforts to assume leadership positions, regardless of the extent of their participation and involvement in public life.⁹⁹

Shortly after the Women's Congress, *Nowa Gazeta* stated the obvious: "This small women's parliament, which took place in the last couple of days, has proven that Polish women have managed to strengthen their forces in recent years."¹⁰⁰ Consequently, men indeed began to listen and to accept what had previously been unacceptable, part of a redefinition in the political discourse of what constituted radical women's politics. In this regard, the threat to the social order posed in the streets of Warsaw by *rezerwistki* and other women of lesser means helped to legitimize the demands of affluent women in conservative Catholic organizations for political rights. Consequently, many of Warsaw's important male public figures, conservative and Catholic themselves, began to voice their support for the equal rights of women in self-governing institutions.

In making the final push to achieve their goals, female activists decided to actively campaign for the inclusion of women's rights in the planned constitution of the quasi-independent Polish state which the German occupation regime sought to establish during the second half of the war. The Women's Congress of September 1917 directly confronted politicians with the question: "Will you support in the future constitution the cause of equal political rights for women?"¹⁰¹ "If a woman has the right to go to the scaffold," *Bluszcz* wrote in reference to the French Jacobin Convention of 1793, "she also has the right to mount the podium."¹⁰² In anticipation of an unfavorable decision of the German-sponsored State Council in this regard in the summer of 1918, activists intensified their press campaign: "They will refuse women voting rights. Therefore they will refuse women the rights of citizenship. The largest Polish democratic circles should be reminded

⁹⁸ "O prawa wyborcze dla kobiet w samorządzie," *Godzina Polski* 316a (17 November 1917): 4 and "O udział kobiet w samorządzie," *Godzina Polski* 322a (23 November 1917): 4.

⁹⁹ "Wiec kobiet," *Godzina Polski* 322a (3 December 1917): 3.

¹⁰⁰ "Po zjeździe kobiet," *Nowa Gazeta* 446 (10 September 1917): 1.

¹⁰¹ "Zjazd kobiet," *Nowa Gazeta* 445 (10 September 1917): 2.

¹⁰² "W przededniu Sejmu Polskiego," *Bluszcz* 2 (13 January 1917): 9.

of this injustice and insult."¹⁰³ It was precisely the moderate political milieu which feared that women would vote for extremist groups—clericalist, socialist, radical populist—and therefore looked unfavorably on women's suffrage. Indeed, conservative Catholic politicians no longer opposed women's political participation and actually came out in favor of equal rights. Such support was even more forthcoming from socialist and democratic left-wing organizations.¹⁰⁴

Finally, after all political parties had accepted women's suffrage following the armistice and the emergence of an independent Polish state, the National Election Organization of Polish Women was founded to acquaint women with the electoral process.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, the Central Committee of Equal Political Rights of Polish Women called upon all women to prepare for the obligations of citizenship resulting from the achievement of suffrage.¹⁰⁶ On the eve of independent Poland's first elections, Kazimiera Neronowiczowa admitted, "We have to say clearly to ourselves that the majority of us are poorly prepared to assume these responsibilities."¹⁰⁷ Zofia Staniszevska, also writing in the pages of *Bluszcz*, made the following proposition: "Men can get along without us. There are enough women that we should be able to put together our own list of male and female candidates. Let there be people of 'good will' on this list. Let the most noble of individuals meet there, the most idealistic in spirit, the most pure of sentiment and striving. Let apostles of honest selflessness come together there."¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

Our examination of propaganda does not focus on the state, but rather on local actors. The "woman question" in the pages of the Warsaw press above all assumed the character of "social propaganda,"¹⁰⁹ whose purveyors were socio-political organizations as well as quasi-political groups and elites

¹⁰³ "Kronika działalności kobiecej," *Bluszcz* 29 (20 July 1918): 219–220.

¹⁰⁴ M. Niedziałkowski, "Prawo wyborcze kobiet," *Bluszcz* 35 (31 August 1918): 255.

¹⁰⁵ "Prawa wyborcze kobiet," *Kurjer Warszawski* 328 (27 November 1918, morn. ed.): 3.

¹⁰⁶ "Z centr. kom. równoupr. polit. kobiet," *Kurjer Warszawski* 330 (29 November 1918, aft. ed.): 4.

¹⁰⁷ "Nowe prawa—nowe obowiązki," *Bluszcz* 52 (28 December 1918): 391.

¹⁰⁸ "Głosy czytelniczek. Do kobiet w przeddzień wyborów," *Bluszcz* 52 (28 December 1918): 392.

¹⁰⁹ For more on the notion of social propaganda, see Jacques Ellul, *Propagandes* (Paris, 1990), 76 and Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, "Klasyfikacja propagandy" in *Teoria i praktyka propagandy* (Wrocław, 1999), 31.

associated with such dailies as *Kurjer Warszawski*, *Nowa Gazeta*, and *Gazeta Poranna 2 grosze*, and periodicals like *Bluszcz* and *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*. In the case of *Godzina Polski*,¹¹⁰ which arose from the initiative of the German occupation authorities with the intention of shaping Polish views regarding the war, it is impossible to determine whether the source of the propaganda message was the Polish editors of the newspaper, or its German supervisors. In any case, the “woman question” was not generally something that appeared on the front pages of *Godzina Polski*, and articles about and directed at women were frequently recycled from other press organs. Thus, the main core of Warsaw press propaganda can be classified as “social,” which isn’t meant to deny its politicized ingredients or its connection to different ideologies. However, its main traits were spontaneity, lack of structure and organization. One cannot speak of “professional” campaigns conducted in the Warsaw press during the years of the First World War, and any member of an interest group could become its propagandist.¹¹¹

The press propaganda discussed in this essay was primarily of an indirect type, although women’s organizations resorted to direct propaganda through contact with the recipient at meetings and assemblies. The very process of transmitting propaganda content determined its functions. In addition to the obvious informative-interpretive function, there was that of agitation, aimed at persuading people to take action and to gain their support, and of integration, designed to stabilize the existing social system.¹¹²

Within the annals of the Warsaw press from 1914–1918, several articles appeared about propaganda as a method of influencing society. Usually, this occurred in the context of social actions such as the promotion of hygiene or the protection of women from prostitution. The most thorough analysis of propaganda was presented in *Kurjer Warszawski*, where the author referred to the scholarship of the French sociologist Le Bon in discussing the significance of authoritative convictions, the indisputability of statements, as well as the importance of repetition in penetrating the psyche of the recipient: “The truths which we proclaim must be unquestionable and their practical significance sufficiently obvious, if they are to be successfully disseminated.”¹¹³ The author’s diagnosis of the limited effect of social actions was that their activists did not know how to “prop-

¹¹⁰ It is interesting that the pejorative adjective “reptile,” which Poles applied to *Godzina Polski*, became the source of the term “reptile press” for publications serving the German occupier in the Second World War, and totalitarian regimes more generally.

¹¹¹ Dobek-Ostrowska, 31.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ “Propaganda,” *Kurjer Warszawski* 133 (15 May 1917, aft. ed.): 1-2.

agate." "There are social organizations, where dozens of people work in a closed circle, or dream about thousands of participants and want to spread their influence among thousands more... What is worse are activists who think that if they do their own thing in a circle of close comrades—that is, they identify some kind of evil and indicate the means for its correction, they emphasize an idea and point to its usefulness—they then have the right to wash their hands of it."¹¹⁴ The term "moral propaganda" also appeared in *Kurjer Warszawski*, as a means of raising social consciousness about the problem of prostitution and defining how to struggle against it.¹¹⁵ The word "propaganda" was used in another context in *Nowa Gazeta* in relation to the Polish woman, who "has made unprecedented contributions to our recent strivings for independence. Her propaganda in this area, her philanthropic activity, her first-aid work, and finally her active involvement in pro-independence organizations has made her equal in rights with men."¹¹⁶

The stereotyped world promoted in the Warsaw press became part of the "anti-propaganda" of the "woman question." Demeaning the opponent was one of the elements of the propaganda struggle of tradition with modernity, of the old with the "too" progressive. Negative objects of assessment were the external appearance of women and their intellectual attributes. It was generalized that women were less professional in their work than men, and that their innate traits predestined them to be teachers, not directors. This stereotype about women was in complete opposition to what we might call the propaganda of success and whose essence was to convince readers that women indeed could be the authors of inventions, inspectors of factories, soldiers, that they could attain professional success and take pride in their achievements. One of the most noteworthy characteristics of the propaganda described in these pages was its effort to play on emotions through appeals to patriotism and the proud historical past, on the basis of which conservatives elevated the image of the "Matka Polka." Did the press propaganda of the "woman question" reach its individual recipients? The model of citizenship, promoted by the mass-circulation press, made every woman and every man a recipient of the transmitted propaganda.

The effectiveness of press propaganda on the "woman question" cannot be measured. What is certain is that by the end of the war and the emer-

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ "Ważna placówka," *Kurjer Warszawski* 87 (27 March 1916, morn. ed.): 2.

¹¹⁶ Stanisław Kemper, "Prawa polityczne kobiet," *Nowa Gazeta* 206 (29 April 1917): 1-2.

gence of a Polish state, the case for women's suffrage and equal political rights had essentially been won. In this regard, the wartime experience of Warsaw women forms part of a larger European story, even if similar ends were reached by different means. Similar as well was the subsequent defusing of the women's movement in Poland, whose success in achieving both active and passive political rights was in part due to the threat to the social order posed by women of lesser means who were utilized, but not mobilized in campaigns for rights and representation. Moreover, Warsaw's wartime suffragettes were not primarily feminists of conviction, but feminists of circumstance and thus were not prepared or willing to sustain the momentum of the war years in knocking down gendered boundaries. Instead these boundaries, though changed, were also reset, most significantly in areas of education, employment and ethical norms, a process that was already visible during the war years. These developments, too, are part of a larger European and Western story, despite the different kind of home front which served as the generator of both change and retrenchment in Warsaw.

SECTION FOUR

PROPAGANDA AND NEGOTIATING WITH NEUTRAL NATIONS

CHAPTER TWELVE

PROPAGANDA AND MOBILIZATIONS IN GREECE DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Elli Lemonidou

The outbreak of the First World War found Greece's leaders divided: King Constantine, the brother-in-law of Kaiser William II,¹ preferred Greece to remain neutral, whereas Eleutherios Venizelos, prime minister and leader of the Greek Liberal Party,² sought opportunities to bring Greece into the war on the side of the Entente, thinking that this would enable him later to fulfill national aspirations and age-long dreams. As the conflict between the two men became more and more intense, two opposing camps formed within the people: the royalists and the Venizelists; in other words, that of the neutralists and pro-Germans, and that of the interventionists and Francophiles. The gap between them deepened until the final break when Venizelos, in October 1916, decided to go to Salonica and establish there a provisional government, in other words a state within the state. From that point the country was plunged more and more deeply into a political, social and constitutional crisis, the consequences of which were to be felt for several years to come.

This situation was irretrievably worsened by the behavior of the Entente powers. Once the Allies became involved militarily in the region by the

¹ King Constantine I was the son of George I who had reigned for forty years. He had ascended the throne on 5 March 1913 after his father's assassination. He was highly respected as the first Greek sovereign to have been born on Greek soil. In addition, the admiration and devotion that the Greek people felt for him personally were increased by the fact that Constantine had commanded the Greek army during the two Balkan wars, which Greece had won. From the start of the First World War, Constantine, the husband of Princess Sophia of Hohenzollern who was the sister of William II, favored the Central Powers and tried to keep Greece out of the conflict.

² Eleutherios Venizelos was born in Crete and was a lawyer by profession. He had been one of the main organizers of the 1905 revolutionary movement in Crete, aimed at integrating the island with Greece. In May 1909 he had become prime minister of the independent government of Crete, and remained in that office until moving to Athens. As prime minister, he followed from October 1910 a program of political and economic reforms intended to give his country a modern appearance. Wishing to put an end to the family clan system that still held sway in Greece, he gave his party, called the *Phileleutheroi*, a liberal tendency.

October 1915 Salonica expedition, they did not hesitate to interfere directly in the country's affairs, wishing to settle the internal crisis to their own advantage. Using the standing excuse of needing to ensure the security of their troops, they followed an authoritarian policy, pretending to dialogue with Greece only by notes, ultimatums, naval demonstrations and blockades. That was indeed a rather strange policy towards a neutral country, but one dictated by the necessities of the war. The Entente powers, aware that their interests would be better served by having Greece involved in the war, wanted to force that country to depart from its uncertain neutrality and intervene in the war on their side. The episode of the forced deposition of Constantine in June 1917, followed by Venizelos coming to power and Greece joining the war, was without doubt the high point of the Allies' policy of interference.

During this conflict in Greece, there were continual mobilizations, each dictated by the necessities of war. On 23 September 1915, after Bulgaria entered the war, the Hellenic army was mobilized. This mobilization was decreed as a precautionary measure, and ended on 22 June 1916, under pressure from the countries of the Entente. Then, when Venizelos formed his provisional government at Salonica, a mobilization decree was also published on 18 April 1917 on behalf of that movement, while during the same period Constantine and the royalist governments of Athens benefited from the enthusiastic support of the reservists, who, since the demobilization of June 1916, had been organized in leagues. We shall attempt to examine all these actions, including the last general mobilization that began on 22 January 1918, which led to the training of Greek troops able to take part in the great victorious operations of the Eastern Army, in the spring and autumn of 1918. In this paper we intend to examine these continuous mobilization campaigns in Greece, emphasizing particularly on the propaganda efforts of both royalists and Venizelists in order to convince each time the Greeks to respond or not to the call to arms, influencing in this way the fate of their homeland.

1. September 1915 to June 1916: Mobilization without War

On 21 September, Bulgarian mobilization took place. In Athens, it was decided that immediate mobilization against Bulgaria was needed as a precautionary measure. The decree mobilizing the Greek army was published on 23 September. Faced with the possibility of a Bulgarian attack on the Serbians, Venizelos wondered how Greece would be able to meet its

obligations under its treaty with Serbia.³ That treaty specified that the *casus foederis* could only take effect if Greece sent 90,000 men to the Greek-Bulgarian frontier, and Serbia sent 150,000 men. However, Serbia was unable to meet its obligations since its troops were still on the Danube, where the Germans were arriving in strength. So on the very day of Bulgarian mobilization, Venizelos asked the Entente countries whether they agreed to supply the Serbian deficiency by sending to Salonica the 150,000 men mentioned in the treaty.⁴ The Allies agreed,⁵ and Franco-British troops began to land on 5 October 1915. Meanwhile King Constantine, realizing that calling in the Allies would amount to an end to neutrality, refused to allow any landing. This forced Venizelos to resign, just a few hours after the first allied soldiers landed on Greek soil.⁶

The governments that succeeded Venizelos adopted a policy of “benevolent neutrality” in relation to the Allies, appearing completely disinclined to go to war. The main arguments for their neutralist propaganda were as follows:⁷

- a. Greece was a free and sovereign state with the right to remain neutral. However, the Salonica landing was considered as a supreme violation of international law and Greek neutrality, aimed at forcing Greece to enter the war.

³ Greece was bound to Serbia by a treaty signed in June 1913. When war broke out, that treaty left no doubt in Venizelos's mind that Greece was bound to help Serbia; this was therefore one more reason justifying the country's entry into the war. Constantine on the contrary deemed that the treaty really did not apply in these circumstances, because Greece had no reason to take part in a “local conflict” such as that between Austria and Serbia. On this question, see: Léon Maccas, “L'Alliance gréco-serbe. Les faits. Les prétextes juridiques et politiques de l'abstention”, *Le Correspondant*, 23 February 1916; Crawford Price, *Venizelos and the War*, London, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton Kent & Co., 1917, 111–128; Theodore P. Ion, “The Hellenic crisis from the point of view of constitutional and international law”, *The American Journal of International Law*, vol. 11, April 1917, 327–357; Raymond Roche, *Légitimité de l'occupation militaire française en territoire hellénique au cours de la guerre 1914–1918*, Toulouse, Imprimerie Toulousaine, 1923, 43; Maurice Larcher, *La Grande Guerre dans les Balkans*, Paris, Payot, 1929, 74.

⁴ MAE, 283, Guillemin to Delcassé, telegram no. 442 of 21 September 1915.

⁵ MAE, 245, Bertie to Delcassé, note of 24 September 1915.

⁶ S. Cosmin, *Dossiers secrets de la Triple Entente. Grèce, 1914–1922*, Paris, Nouvelles éditions latines, 1969, 69–74; George B. Leon (Leontaritis), *Greece and the Great Powers, 1914–1917*, Thessalonica, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1974, 218–244.

⁷ S. Cosmin, *L'Entente et la Grèce pendant la Grande Guerre*, vol. 1, Paris, Société mutuelle d'édition, 1926, 128–138, 194–195; S. Cosmin, *Diplomatie et presse dans l'affaire grecque, 1914–1916*, Société mutuelle d'édition, 1921, 11–12, 49–54; Despina Papadimitriou, *The Press and the Discord, 1914–1917* (in Greek), unpublished thesis, University of Athens, 1990, 75–80.

- b. The king and the army's general staff, having examined the military aspect of the question, maintained that Greece could scarcely count on its army. Its equipment did not meet the demands of modern war, while most of its artillery was worn out by its use in the Balkan wars. To go to war in these conditions would be suicide.
- c. The Greek people, though mostly friendly to the Entente, had just emerged from the Balkan wars. They were weary, wanting a rest, and totally lacking in enthusiasm for war; the only concern was for the country to keep as far away as possible from the European conflagration. Moreover, the pro-Bulgarian attitude of the Allies, who from the start of the war until September 1915 were more concerned to meeting Bulgarian demands to the detriment of those advanced by Greece and Serbia, had somewhat offended the Greeks and shaken its confidence in the Allies.
- d. The tergiversations, disagreements and hesitation of the Entente on the question of the Salonica expedition made Greece skeptical and rather inclined to remain neutral.

The royalist press attempted to arouse the people's national feeling, deeming the policy of the Venizelists particularly dangerous for the country. That policy gave the Allies the right to intervene in Greece's internal affairs, thereby imperiling national independence and the state's autonomy. As for Venizelos, the "obedient servant" of the French and British, he aimed to turn the country into a protectorate of foreign powers. So the choice was between peace and war, between the King of Greece and foreigners.⁸

Royalist propaganda was complemented by German propaganda, very quickly and effectively organized in Greece from the first days of the war, under the direction of the German minister, Count Wilhelm von Mirbach, whose work was supported by a special agent for press affairs, the famous Baron Karl Freiherr von Schenck, former director of the Wolff agency. He had come to Greece before the war as a representative of the Krupp company, and had succeeded in establishing permanent relations with the court and with Greek politicians, very rapidly becoming a prominent figure in the Greek capital.⁹

German propaganda, playing heavily on reflexes of fear, had as its main theme the destruction threatening "little Greece" if it joined the war alongside the Entente without gaining anything in return. That was why it was

⁸ Despina Papadimitriou, *op. cit.*, 180–182, 230–233, 235–241, 280–286.

⁹ SHM, SS X f8, Roquefeuil Lacaze, report no. 211 of 26 April 1916.

in its interests to remain neutral. This propaganda also stressed the power and invincibility of the Central Powers and the perfect organization and discipline of the German army, which could never be beaten.¹⁰ Enormous sums were spent on this propaganda; Schenck used it mainly to buy Greek newspapers and make grants to the press, even outside Athens.¹¹

At the other extreme from this propaganda, the *Phileleutheroi* maintained that the policy of neutrality was henceforward impossible for Greece, for the following reasons:¹²

- a. The alliance with Serbia, and the policy decided at the beginning of the war in agreement with the Crown, obliged Greece to come to the aid of Serbia when it was attacked by Bulgaria.
- b. After Turkey and Bulgaria entered the war, Greece's non-participation in the war was really a historic crime for the country, which in that situation could enjoy the most favorable conditions for realizing the Great Idea of national expansion.
- c. The presence of the French and the British, "powerful friends" of Greece, on Macedonian soil, meant according to the Venizelists both security and strengthening in relation to Bulgaria. The pro-German policy, on the contrary, was against Greece's interests, since Germany "reinforced the enemies of the nation". Its eastern policy was based on the destruction and dismemberment of Serbia, the reinforcement of Bulgaria, and the Turkification of Asia Minor. A German victory would mean the end of the Great Idea, and also the disappearance of the Greek race.

From the end of 1915 a Franco-Venizelist group was established in Athens on the initiative of the French government, in collaboration with Venizelos and with the financial support of the enormously rich Greek Basil Zaharoff.¹³

¹⁰ Jean-Claude Montant, "Aspects de la propagande française en Grèce", in *La France et la Grèce dans la Grande Guerre*, Proceedings of the colloquium held in Thessalonica in November 1989, Thessalonica, University of Thessalonica, 1992, 63.

¹¹ Gabriel Deville, *L'Entente, la Grèce et la Bulgarie. Notes d'histoire et souvenirs*, Paris, Eugène Figuière, 1919, 182; MAE, 245, Dussap, French vice-consul at Janina, to Delcassé, telegram no. 25 of 18 July 1915.

¹² Eleutherios Venizelos and Ioannis Metaxas, *The History of the national discord, according to the articles of Eleutherios Venizelos and Ioannis Metaxas* (in Greek), Thessalonica, Kiromanos, 2003², 20–22; Despina Papadimitriou, op. cit., 83–85, 180–182, 258–259.

¹³ R. Mennevée, *Sir Basil Zaharoff. L'homme mystérieux de l'Europe*, Paris, Les documents politiques, 1928; Richard Lewinsohn, *Zaharoff. L'Européen mystérieux*, Paris, Payot, 1929; Robert Neumann, *Sir Basil Zaharoff. Le roi des armes*, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1935; Anthony

Its aim was to hold in check German propaganda in Greece, and to increase French and Venizelist influence. The prime concern of the Athens propaganda team was to create a new Mediterranean telegraphic agency, the "Radio" agency, which was to supply the Greek press with news in accordance with French interests, while later it would develop a reciprocal activity, supplying western newspapers with information on the Balkan countries.¹⁴ Attempts were also made to increase the circulation of Venizelist newspapers in Athens, to reorganize the provincial Venizelist press, and to ensure the distribution of booklets and circulars. This activity gave Venizelist propaganda considerable impetus until May 1916, when Franco-Venizelist cooperation began to lose some of its former strength.¹⁵

The Venizelists were however constantly supported in their propaganda efforts by France's representatives in Greece, the French minister at Athens and the military and naval attachés, who had never concealed their distrust of Constantine, the royalist governments, and the Greek army's general staff. In their reports to Paris at that time, they constantly described the situation in Greece in the darkest colors, continually inciting their government to apply drastic measures such as the arrest of enemy consuls in Salonica, and even of Greek subjects, destroying bridges, occupying Greek towns and islands, and imposing blockades.¹⁶ These measures however had the result of offending the Greek people and provoking profound indignation against the Allies. A Greek, writing in January 1916 to a friend in France, explained: "We are not exactly happy in our country. Although we are fully neutral, we are subject to wretched vexations by the Allies, who act more or less as if in a conquered country. Greece has always done what it can to help, and has given evidence of this, but recently we have been treated to arbitrary vexations. Since we are small, we have to put up with it all. They want us at any price to enter the war, but we do not want

Allfrey, *Man of Arms. The Life and Legend of Sir Basil Zaharoff*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988; Elli Lemonidou, *La Grèce vue de France pendant la Première Guerre mondiale; entre censure et propagandes*, unpublished thesis, Paris IV-Sorbonne University, 171–174.

¹⁴ Elli Lemonidou, op. cit., 174–177.

¹⁵ ADN, 315, Salanson to Guillemain, letter of 3 March 1917.

¹⁶ On violations of Greek neutrality by the Allies, see AYE, 1916, A/4/X/o, A/4/X/π, A/4/X/ρ, all entitled: "Violations of Greek neutrality by the Entente allies"; Augustin Pas-sadis, *La Question d'Orient et la Grèce*, Paris, Les Presses Modernes, 1929, 252, 257, 263; Georges Suarez, *Briand. Sa vie-Son œuvre, avec son journal et de nombreux documents inédits*, III: *Le Pilote dans la Tourmente, 1914–1916*, Paris, Plon, 1939, 277; Areti Tounda-Fregadi, "Violations de la neutralité grecque par les puissances de l'Entente durant la Première guerre mondiale", *Balkan Studies*, 1985, vol. 26, no. 1, 113–129.

to. We have had enough war for three years; the country does not want any more of it."¹⁷

So it was that on 21 June 1916, after the occupation of the Greek Rupel Fort by the Bulgarians in May, and making the excuse of protecting the Eastern Army, a joint Note was sent by the Allies to the Athens cabinet, followed by a naval demonstration in the Bay of Phaliron. The Note demanded the demobilization of the Greek army and the replacement of the royalist ministry of Stephanos Scouloudis by a government, which would have the confidence of the Entente countries.¹⁸ This brought to an end a very long mobilization, which had caused fatigue and depression to Greek soldiers. Very many of those demobilized came to hate Venizelos implacably for aiming to throw his country into the struggle by force. They formed themselves into "reservist leagues" in view of the forthcoming elections.¹⁹ Many others, fearing a fresh mobilization if Venizelos returned to power, decided to leave the country for Canada or France.²⁰ The Venizelist party thus found itself in a very precarious situation.²¹ In such a threatening climate, Venizelos decided to sail from Athens to Salonica in order to set up his provisional government.

2. October 1916–June 1917: Greece Divided

Mobilization decreed by the National Movement of Salonica

On 26 September 1916 Venizelos set sail for Crete, where he announced his intention to go to Salonica and to form his provisional government there. In Venizelos's speech at Chania, proclaiming the provisional national government, he explained the reasons which "imposed" that decision on him: the king, under pressure from bad counselors, wanted to set up a personal policy that had distanced Greece from its traditional friends. Greek territories were occupied by Greece's age-long enemies. The Greek army had given up the regions conquered with much sacrifice three years earlier, in the Balkan wars. Greece had been humiliated more deeply than ever

¹⁷ SHD, 7 N 993, Marseille Postal Control Commission, *Impressions morales d'ensemble se dégageant de la correspondance examinée du 16 au 31 janvier 1916*.

¹⁸ Augustin Passadis, op. cit., 264–265.

¹⁹ S. Cosmin, *L'Entente et la Grèce*, vol. II, 211–216, and his *Dossiers secrets*, 237; Despina Papadimitriou, op. cit., 234–235.

²⁰ SHD, 7 N 993, Marseille Postal Control Commission, *Rapports économiques et financiers*, report dated 15 July 1916–15 August 1916.

²¹ Despina Papadimitriou, op. cit., 129, 134–135.

before.²² The Venizelist press responded with enthusiasm, stressing the “imminent renaissance of the race” and the “revival” of the nation.²³

Venizelos's priority was the establishment of an armed force, thinking that it was only by taking part in operations that he could affirm his authority.²⁴ As soon as the national movement was formed, Crete and almost all the Aegean islands joined it, enabling it to reach by the end of October 1916 a force of 20,000 men led by 700 officers.²⁵ Thus certain Venizelists drew up the most optimistic plans. It was thought that in a month 30,000 soldiers would be available, and three months later 100,000, most of them coming from the islands (Crete, Mytilene, Chios and Samos, Cyprus), Macedonia, and Epirus. Despite these early successes, efforts to concentrate considerable forces soon encountered various obstacles, the first of which was the Allies' inability to supply Venizelos with the materiel and financial support necessary to maintain his army, the National Defense Army, promised since the Franco-British conference held on 20 October at Boulogne-sur-Mer. It was not until the beginning of April 1917 that the Allies supplied part of that aid, and on the 18th of that month, three months later, it was possible to publish the decree of mobilization.²⁶

In addition to financial questions, Venizelos also had to be careful of the pro-royalist susceptibilities of a large proportion of the officers of the Greek army, and most Greeks' lack of enthusiasm for the war. In order to recruit from among Greek officers, who were mostly attached to the person of the king, Venizelos adopted, from his departure for Salonica, a very moderate attitude on the question of the dynasty. In the Venizelists' system of propaganda it was emphasized that the national movement had a single aim: to stop Bulgaria, the hereditary enemy, from ravaging Greece, and not to fight against the king. Moreover, an assurance was given that, once the sovereign took the firm decision to make himself King of the Hellenes, and

²² Eleutherios Venizelos and Ioannis Metaxas, op. cit., 321–322; Georges M. Mélas, *L'ex-roi Constantin. Souvenirs d'un ancien secrétaire*, Paris, Payot, 1921, 264–265; Georgios Ventiris, *La Grèce de 1910–1920*, Athens, Ikaros, 1931, vol. II, 213–215.

²³ Despina Papadimitriou, op. cit., 136–137.

²⁴ SHD, 997, Marseille Military Postal Control, *Grèce. État moral et politique*, report dated 15 May 1917.

²⁵ George B. Leon, op. cit., 419.

²⁶ MAE, 1471, Romanos to Briand, Note of February 8, 1917; Politis to Romanos, telegram of June 21, 1917; N. Petsalis-Diomidis, “Difficulties encountered by the provisional government of Salonica in financing its military expenditure”, in *Greece and Great Britain during World War I*, Proceedings of the colloquium organized in Thessalonica on 15–17 December 1983 by the Institute for Balkan Studies at Thessalonica and King's College in London, Thessalonica, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1985, 125.

to ensure, as was his duty, the protection of his subjects, Venizelos and his collaborators would be happy to follow his flag as faithful citizens led by their King against the enemy. This was the message communicated by the text proclaiming the provisional government addressed to the Greek people.²⁷ According to the royalists, Venizelos had received from the Allies the sum of two millions French francs in order to reinforce his propaganda campaign destined to the officers of the Greek army.²⁸

During the days following the erection of the national movement, the list of volunteers did indeed begin to lengthen. Senior officers rallied to Venizelos's banner, while others announced their intention to move to the side of Salonica. But soon, volunteer officers, mostly from Old Greece, who were nevertheless inclined to join the National Defense forces, were discouraged by rumors that the Venizelos movement was just about to turn against the dynasty. That was mainly the work of the royalist press that undertook an intense campaign to prove that Venizelos was an anarchist and an anti-dynastic who detested the king, a "warmonger" who, as a "vassal" of the foreigners, was only concerned to drag the country into the war.²⁹

This campaign was readily accepted by the Greek people because it re-awakened the bad memories of two Balkan wars and the futile mobilization of 1916 which had lasted for nine months. As a result, from October 1916 the king gradually began to enjoy growing popularity, deriving from the fact that he symbolized peace at any price. Conversely, Venizelos, who in the popular consciousness represented war, saw his prestige significantly decrease. The most enthusiastic Venizelists saw their hopes dashed by events. Everything showed the lack of zeal with which people answered the call in Salonica, Chios and Samos, where mobilization had been decreed on 11 November 1916; everything showed the people's military luke-warmness rather than its expected enthusiasm. The great majority of the people continued to fear a fresh mobilization; its main concern was to escape the war.³⁰

In order to solve the problem of recruitment, the option of appealing to Greeks overseas was considered. The leaders of the national movement were optimistic, asserting that the majority of diaspora Greeks was

²⁷ S.P. Cosmin, *Dossiers secrets*, 274–275; Georges M. Mélas, *op. cit.*, 264–265.

²⁸ Eleutherios Venizelos and Ioannis Metaxas, *op. cit.*, 331–336.

²⁹ Despina Papadimitriou, *op. cit.*, 160–161, 202–208, 233.

³⁰ SHD, 7 N 994, Marseille Postal Control Commission, *Grèce. Rapports moraux et politiques*, dated 30 October 1916 and December 1916.

Venizelist, and that mobilization among them would certainly be successful. It was also hoped to collect from abroad as much money as possible to meet the needs of the Salonica government. So two missions were undertaken, in the United States and in Egypt, where the Greek communities were flourishing. However, the envoys of the provisional government met with serious difficulties, having to combat the propaganda action for the neutrality of royalist Greeks in the United States and Egypt, who were numerous and well organized. Recruitment among Greeks settlers in those two countries thus remained weak until the end, and the missions undertaken failed to obtain the expected results, provoking the disappointment of the members of the Venizelist movement who had counted a lot on the patriotism of diaspora Greeks and their willingness to “defend” the boundaries of their country.³¹

Nevertheless, it was only after March 1917, and thanks especially to measures of supervision and repression of insubordination, that the provisional government succeeded in ensuring fairly regular mobilization in the isles along the Asian coast, even though the recruits showed no more enthusiasm for the war than in the previous months. Finally they managed to form an army comprising 1,951 officers and 60,587 mobilized men, divided into three divisions: Serres, Archipelago, and Crete.

Royalist Propaganda after December 1916

The events of 1 and 2 December 1916³² and the following days constituted the most striking proof of the power of the king and the Greek people's attachment to the throne. The day following 1 December, confrontations

³¹ Elli Lemonidou, *op. cit.*, 197–201.

³² Not having received a satisfactory response to his ultimatums about ceding war materiel, Dartige du Fournet ordered the landing at Phaliron and Piraeus, at dawn on December 1, of a force of 3,000 men, with orders to occupy certain strategic positions in Athens. The troops landed without any incident, but later there were clashes around posts occupied by the Allies. During the night an agreement was reached, so the confrontations ended. There were heavy losses on both sides: 57 French and five British were killed, and over 160 wounded; on the Greek side there were 45 to 50 dead and 100 to 150 wounded: SHM, SS X f 9, Roquefeuil to Lacaze, report no. 533 of December 9, 1916, entitled: “Report on the events that took place during the first days of December 1916”; Léon Maccas, “Les événements d'Athènes des 1er et 2 décembre 1916”, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, March–April 1917, vol. XXXVIII, 96–135; Louis Dartige du Fournet, *Souvenirs de guerre d'un amiral (1914–1916)*, Paris, Librairie Plon, 1920, 210–273; Georges Bousset, “Le Drame du 1er décembre 1916 à Athènes”, *Revue d'Histoire de la Guerre Mondiale*, no. 1, January 1938, 1–27; Yannis Mourélos, *L'intervention de la Grèce dans la Grande Guerre (1916–1917)*, Athens, Institut français d'Athènes, 1983, 41–45 and by the same author: “Les événements de décembre 1916 à Athènes: les travaux et les jours de la Commission Mixte des Indemnités”, in *La France et*

resumed in the capital, but this time they were against the Venizelists. Scenes of unparalleled violence took place, the Venizelists suffering all kinds of outrages from their political enemies. In this royalist excitement, a significant role was played by the Greek reservists or *epistratoi*, as they were called in Greek, who since the June 1916 demobilization had been organized in the Panhellenic Reservist League³³ led by John Sayas. The reservists abandoned themselves in Athens and the provinces to massacres and arrests of Venizelists, and searches of their homes. Inciting the people to unconditional resistance, they organized in various places demonstrations at which resolutions of loyalty to the king were voted. Their distracting activity continued throughout the following months.³⁴

The bloody events of December were exploited by the pro-German royalist press, which unanimously declared the Venizelists solely responsible for those events. Venizelos became the traitor, the abhorred enemy of his Fatherland; the whole nation was called to defend the Crown against his threat.³⁵ As for Venizelos, he was the only one truly guilty of this situation, because he had deceived the Powers about the real feelings of the Greek people. Fanaticism against him gradually won over Old Greece; the violence of the insults and curses directed against him revealed extreme hatred. "Venizelos, the cursed Antichrist, gave the signal to begin the fratricide massacre that he organized", wrote a royalist some days after the events.³⁶ This anti-Venizelos fanaticism immediately rebounded on the Entente powers, after notification on 9 December of the blockade and the allied Note sent on 14 December to the Athens government calling for the immediate removal of troops and war materiel in the Peloponnese.³⁷

As for the government, far from seeking to restore calm, it tried to maintain the popular excitement. At the same time the royalist propaganda through newspapers tried to accustom public opinion to the idea of making common cause with Germany. They constantly stressed the power of

la Grèce dans la Grande Guerre, op.cit., 111–120, and *The "November events" of 1916. From the archives of the Joint Commission on Indemnities of Victims* (in Greek), Athens, Patakis, 2007.

³³ On the organization of the reservists or *epistratoi* see Georgios Th. Mavrogordatos, *National Discord and Massive Organization. 1. The Epistratoi of 1916* (in Greek), Athens, Alexandria, 1996.

³⁴ SHM, SS X f 9, Roquefeuil to Lacaze, report no. 598 of 26 March 1917 on the Greek reservists.

³⁵ Despina Papadimitriou, op. cit., 248–250.

³⁶ SHD 7 N 995, Marseille Postal Control Commission, *Rapport de Grèce*, dated 15 January 1917; this letter is written on 9 December 1916.

³⁷ SHD, 5 N 145, Bousquier to Lyautey, unnumbered telegram of 20 December 1916; SHD, 5 N 153, same to same, unnumbered telegram of 26 December 1916.

the Germans, who were presented as invincible.³⁸ In fact, despite the king's conciliatory attitude during his negotiations with the Entente, he had not broken off his contacts with Berlin.³⁹ At the same time the royal authorities made preparations for a war in Thessaly and Epirus, where they tried to create a situation threatening for the Allies. To this end bands of irregulars were organized under the inspection of Captain Falkenhauzen, former military attaché of the German legation in Athens. These were active along the whole length of the neutral zone, ready to oppose any invasion in Thessaly. These bands were financially and morally supported by Germany, which, having meanwhile abandoned plans for a general offensive in Macedonia, proved very favorable to the action of these irregulars, who constantly threatened to attack the Eastern Army. For its part, the Greek government several times denied any involvement in that action.⁴⁰

From the end of January 1917 people began to feel the consequences of the blockade. Food, especially bread, which was the main food of the Greeks, came to be in short supply, a situation that was inevitably to worsen in the following days. If at first the government was attacked, particularly because of the bad distribution of stocks, or because German submarines torpedoed ships bringing supplies, this measure, which caused so much suffering, was finally used against the Entente.⁴¹ The population considered that the blockade was unfairly maintained, since Greece had met the conditions of the allied Notes of 14 and 31 December 1916 and 21 January 1917 calling for its cessation. The removal of troops and materiel had been carried out in good faith and as quickly as possible; as for the leagues of reservists, they had been dissolved.⁴²

³⁸ MAE, 266, Guillemin to Briand, telegram no. 54 of 25 December 1916.

³⁹ AYE, 1916, A/AAK, 5, Zalocostas to Carajas in Bern, for forwarding to Theotokis, Greek minister in Berlin, telegram no. 740 of 26 December 1916 and unnumbered telegram of 31 December 1916. For telegrams between Athens and Berlin, see also: MAE, papers from agents, Robert de Billy, vol. 4 of *Souvenirs-Grèce*.

⁴⁰ AYE, 1917, A/AAK, 29, Lambros to General Cauboue, telegram no. 1791 of 6 April 1917; SHD, 20 N 193, Sarraill to Painlevé, report no. 4921/2 of 31 May 1917.

⁴¹ Édouard Driault, *Histoire diplomatique de la Grèce*, Paris, PUF, 1926, vol. V, 284; S. Cosmin, *Dossiers secrets*, 344–348, 360.

⁴² MAE, 270, Guillemin to Briand, letter no. 13 of 18 February 1917, enclosing extracts of three interesting letters published in the Greek newspaper *Truth* between 16 and 19 February 1917. This was a discussion between the newspaper's anonymous correspondents, the purpose of which was, on the one hand, to reveal the reasons why the allied governments believed they should continue to apply a rigorous blockade on the Greek people, and on the other hand to explain how a Greek who called himself a friend of the Entente viewed the current situation.

The pro-Germans, too, took every opportunity to give the Allies a reputation as “starvers”. The press, which was devoted to the pro-Germans, bitterly blamed the Entente for maintaining a blockade that caused the innocent population to suffer extreme cruelty. They said that people had already died of hunger. The numerous allied Notes sent to the Athens government also showed, according to the royalist propaganda, that they had no intention of relaxing the blockade; on the contrary, they proved beyond question the Entente’s hatred and mistrust of Greece. The Entente powers persisted in applying the Venizelist program, which tended to destroy the Greek nation.⁴³

In February 1917 the situation became even more confused: food shortages increased, while in all Greek towns and the Peloponnese countryside, the poor classes suffered seriously from the privations imposed by the shortage and poor quality of bread, and by the increased cost of food in general. At the same time, the Venizelists still lived under a reign of terror: arrests continued, and the government’s tactic consisted in depicting them to the public as trouble-makers responsible for the disorder occurring in various places in Greece because of the general discontent. The leagues of reservists, officially dissolved since the middle of January, continued none the less to exist, under other names than “reservist”, that was sedulously avoided. They planned to organize a large demonstration in Athens to prove to the Entente that “true Greeks” were frightened neither by the blockade nor by the allied sailors, but that they knew how to defend their country, as during the first days of December 1916.⁴⁴

It was only towards the end of March 1917 that the royal government began to show a certain weakness. None the less, the main reasons marking the start of the progressive collapse of the State of Athens came from the international political scene: the United States’ entry into the war, the Russian Revolution, that disturbed royalist circles in Greece, and the coming to power of Alexandre Ribot in France on 20 March 1916, which reorientated French and allied policy. On his initiative, and during two Franco-British conferences in May 1917, in Paris and London, the Allies decided to settle the Greek affair. They therefore sent Charles Jonnart to Greece as the Allies’ High Commissioner, to ask for the dethroning of Constantine. This

⁴³ SHD, 5 N 145, Bousquier to Lyautey, unnumbered telegrams of 3 and 5 January 1917.

⁴⁴ MAE, 269, Guillemin to Briand, telegram no. 369 of 15 February 1917; SHM, SS X f 9, Roquefeuil to the Minister of the Navy, report no. 598 of 26 March 1917, on “the organization of the Reservists”; N. Petsalis-Diomidis, *Greece of two governments. 1916–17* (in Greek), Athens, Philipotis, 1988, 192; George B. Leon, op. cit., 457–458.

finally took place in June 1917, entailing Venizelos's arrival in Athens and Greece's entry into the war.

3. June 1917–November 1918: The Difficult Consolidation of the Venizelist Regime

After the abdication of Constantine on 12 June 1917, and Venizelos's coming to power, it was clear that the re-establishment of the political unity of Greece would take time, because of the difficulties in its way. Now in reality, political questions did not greatly excite the great majority of the people, whose main preoccupation was the country's lack of food supplies and the consequent shortages. During the six months long blockade by the Allies that had begun on 8 December 1916, Greece had lived on its reserves, having received only a few deliveries of cereals that were quickly used up. Even after the blockade was lifted on 14 June, for several reasons the supply of food continued to present enormous difficulties.⁴⁵

All that meant that the population, especially that of large centers such as Athens and Piraeus, had only inadequate quantities of essential supplies, while the few objects to be found on the market, even on the corn market, reached astronomical prices. In the autumn of 1917 the situation worsened to the point where the population was even on the point of being without bread. People realized that Venizelos's return had not been enough to bring back plenty of food to Greece. This situation produced deep discontent in the population, cleverly exploited by royalist propaganda. It was claimed that under King Constantine, people at least still had something to eat, whereas under the pro-Allied Venizelist government they were starving; everything was in short supply, through the fault of the Allies who had imposed their cruel blockade.⁴⁶

Indeed, even after Constantine's deposition, the organization of royalist propaganda in Greece continued to spread. It had ramifications in the smallest mountain villages, and all classes were represented in it. Its main hotbeds were Athens, the towns of Larissa and Elassona in Thessaly, and the towns of Patras, Sparta and Kalamata in the Peloponnese. The action

⁴⁵ MAE, 310, Castillon to Pichon, letter no. 178 of 20 November 1917 and Note of 9 January 1918.

⁴⁶ SHD, 1340, Braquet to Painlevé, telegram no. 145 of 6 November 1917; MAE, 310, Castillon to Pichon, letter no. 178 of 20 November 1917.

of the royalists was morally and materially supported by the ex-king's entourage in Switzerland.⁴⁷

The Constantine party did everything it could to hinder the general mobilization decreed from 22 January 1918. They spread tendentious and discouraging news, for example about the arrival of many German troops on the Balkan front, and the internment in Germany of officers of the 4th corps of the Greek army. They exaggerated the number of desertions by new recruits, and allied reverses on the French front; they spoke of large disturbances in Paris. It should also be mentioned that the Greek army was still full of officers irreducibly on the side of Constantine, who, after their idol's departure, had never ceased intriguing in his favor.⁴⁸ Greek royalist and defeatist propaganda gained much influence by arguing as follows: Greece had no reason to mobilize or go to war. No member of the government had clearly and officially defined the aims of the war for Greece, as foreign heads of state had done. When, in 1915, King Constantine had offered Greece's collaboration with the Allies, it was known that this was in order to capture Constantinople and to extend the country's power; but now people realized that the above mentioned city could never be taken, and would never be given to Greece. One did not even speak of conquering Smyrna and the Asian coast, because Italy wanted that province. As for the invaded territories of Serres, Drama and Cavala, the Bulgarians had assured King Constantine that they would return them to Greece as soon as the war was over. It was therefore wiser to wait for the end of the war; then the Greeks would be in full possession of their resources, while the Bulgarians would have been weakened by four years of war.⁴⁹

In order to counter the reactionaries' and the pro-Germans' propagandistic activity, from June 1917 Jonnart had begun to remove the people most hostile to the Entente. As for the measures taken by the Venizelos government affecting the army, it had undertaken in August 1917 a purge involving the retirement of a certain number of officers proved or suspected guilty

⁴⁷ Switzerland, where King Constantine chose to reside after his exile, became the refuge of royalist Greeks who developed there a well organized propaganda, partly financed by money from the banker Rosenberg: MAE, 282, Clemenceau to Pichon, note no. 13J63-C.R.2/11 of 29 May 1918, forwarding S.R.C. report no. 225 of 19 May 1918 and Dutasta to Pichon, telegram no. 693 of 24 May 1918.

⁴⁸ MB, 313, Politis to Venizelos (on a visit to Paris), highly confidential letter of 26 November 1917; SHD, 7 N 1340, Braquet to Clemenceau, telegram no. 152 of 25 November 1917.

⁴⁹ SHD, 7 N 1342, Eastern Army's information office to Guillaumat, note entitled: "The situation in Greece", dated 9 February 1918.

of Constantinism; several hundred others, compromised in pro-royalist agitations, had also been removed.⁵⁰ It was after the February 1918 mutinies in the Hellenic army at Lamia that Venizelos decided to adopt a more vigorous attitude. Research on this affair, supported by information collected, showed that these movements came from a very serious organization set up with a view to prevent mobilization at any price; but the movements had started too soon, and were bound to fail, so that the plan they contemplated was in the process of completely misfiring.⁵¹

More aware than ever that these incidents were the work of the pro-royalist and the well-organized pro-German propaganda (the Lamia region was known for its anti-Venizelism), Venizelos understood that a lukewarm attitude threatened to have serious repercussions for mobilization. That is why he decided to act resolutely and to punish those responsible for the risings; the Lamia sedition was an event that could serve as the starting-point for a radical purge of rotten elements in the army, the administration and the whole of Greek society.⁵² Thus the government exiled to the Isle of Hydra a certain number of its opponents, former ministers or reservists, took measures such as the arrest of various figures who were conspiring against it, and dismissed many royalist military and officials.⁵³ This policy was approved by a majority of the population. Moreover, an impressive demonstration took place on 10 February, protesting against the incidents at Lamia and Thebes, and, despite the action of the reservists, who tried to terrorize the public, they did not succeed in preventing a considerable crowd from taking part, and demonstrating in favor of mobilization.⁵⁴

In the following months the government succeeded in improving its position. It is true that some mutinies took place, but they were quickly suppressed. The *epistratoi* (reservists) were no longer able to undertake large-scale actions, and the supporters of the ex-king, as well as the pro-royalist press in Greece who both had been so active earlier, continued to

⁵⁰ MAE, 294, Billy to Ribot, telegrams nos. 71–73 of June 20, 1917; MAE, 276, Castillon to Ribot, telegram no. 1246 of 27 August 1917.

⁵¹ SHD, 16 N 2993, Billy to Pichon, telegram no. 41 of 2 February 1918; SHD, 16 N 2993, Bordeaux to Clemenceau, telegram no. 340–342 of 8 February 1918.

⁵² SHD, 20 N 194, a translation of the article published in the Salonica newspaper *Simea* ("The Flag") on 6 February 1918.

⁵³ SHD, 16 N 2993, Bordeaux to Clemenceau, telegraphs nos. 333–334 of 7 February 1918; SHD, 6 N 170, Billy to Pichon, telegrams nos. 56 and 63 of 7 and 8 February 1918; Thanos M. Veremis, "L'impact de la première guerre mondiale sur les relations entre les civils et les militaires en Grèce", *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, October 1993, no. 172, 23–26.

⁵⁴ SHD, 6 N 170, Billy to Pichon, telegram no. 67 of 10 February 1918.

be arrogant, but no longer dared to undertake open action for fear of Venizelos, and did not possess the means or the prestige necessary to make their projects succeed.⁵⁵ Once the reactionaries had been thus contained within strict limits, all the attention of the Greek government, press and public opinion would in future be concentrated on the country's military effort.

In the eyes of Venizelos and for Venizelist propaganda, Greece's participation in the war was the necessary condition to enable the country to make its voice heard and demand that attention be paid to its expectations at the Peace Congress that would follow the end of hostilities. It was necessary to contribute to the general struggle in order, afterwards, to be able to claim advantages. Venizelos did not hesitate to declare this position publicly and to make the Greeks understand it.

On 22 January 1918 the decree of general mobilization was signed by King Alexander, the son of King Constantine. Despite serious, indeed insoluble problems, the soldiers' morale was generally good. That proved that, despite the Greeks' disinclination to go and fight, they responded to the call to arms. In April 1918, Greek troops were used in active operations, the Allies thus benefiting for the first time from Greek mobilization. The divisions of the Archipelago and Crete took the observatory of Skra di Legen, which dominated the starting base for the offensive on the Vardar, an operation in which they distinguished themselves. Greek troops also took part in the victorious attacks of September 1918 which played a decisive role, not only in the capitulation of Bulgaria, but also, more generally, in the ending of the First World War.⁵⁶

After the first victories of the Entente, Venizelos began to speak to the allied ministers about concessions that Serbia could make to Greece, among else the cession of Thrace following the principles laid down by Wilson. Venizelos sought to be reassured that his country would present itself at the Peace Congress with adequate means to defend effectively its national

⁵⁵ MAE, Europe 1918–1929, Greece, vol. 52, *Situation intérieure en Grèce*, note dated 28 May 1918.

⁵⁶ SHD, 4 N 56, Bordeaux to Clemenceau, "Compte-rendu relatif à la situation en Grèce, à l'organisation de l'Armée hellénique et aux opérations de la Mission Militaire française", no. 2433/3 of 1st February 1918; Hellenic Army General Staff, *A Concise History of the Participation of the Hellenic Army in the First World War, 1914–1918*, Athens, Army History Directorate, 1999, 188–189; Mermeix, *Le Commandement unique*, vol. II: *Sarrail et les Armées d'Orient*, Paris, Paul Ollendorff, 1920, 148–158; Jean Delmas, "Les opérations militaires sur le front de Macédoine, octobre 1915-septembre 1918", in *La France et la Grèce dans la Grande Guerre*, *op.cit.*, 6–11; Bruno Hamard, "Quand la victoire s'est gagnée dans les Balkans: l'assaut de l'armée alliée d'Orient de septembre à novembre 1918", *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, October 1996, no. 184, 29–42.

interests, "which were in complete harmony with the high aims of the Allies' struggle".⁵⁷ He tried at every opportunity to remind the British and French governments of Greece's imprescriptible rights to Serres and Cavala, and the fact that the future of Hellenism was linked to continued possession of those towns.⁵⁸

Meanwhile the public was also waiting with impatience and concern the recognition of all its sacrifices, and its tension rose still further after the capitulation of Bulgaria. The press, reflecting this state of mind, began a unanimous campaign aiming to attribute a sometimes excessive importance to the Hellenic army's share in the Bulgarian capitulation. It incessantly repeated the claims of Hellenism to Northern Epirus, Bulgarian Thrace, Smyrna, the Dodecanese, and Cyprus.⁵⁹ So there began a new era in which politics and diplomacy made themselves heard above everything. The Great Idea and the territorial gains that the country could obtain formed the sole preoccupations of all Greeks and the core of the Greek government's new propaganda.⁶⁰

To conclude we could say that organized propaganda, this "arm" that reached new standards of importance and effectiveness during the First World War,⁶¹ has been used in Greece, as in every other belligerent country, by "political" forces in order to mobilize and put in their service all the forces of the nation, not only the bodies, but also the consciences of the fighters. However, considering the propaganda efforts of both sides in Greece, royalists and Venizelists, we could note that, despite some good results, it would be excessive to speak about a large scale propaganda, which acquired an organisation, effective and dynamic enough to exert a significant influence on the Greek population; several projects were not realised and many actions that started did not take the desired development.

In addition, the royalist propaganda could easily gain ground in the Greek army, given that many soldiers and officers were fanatically attached to King Constantine, who represented, in their eyes, neutrality, security and peace. Therefore, propaganda efforts of Venizelos had, as we have seen,

⁵⁷ MAE, Europe 1918–1929, Greece, vol. 70, Billy to Pichon, secret telegram no. 397 of 8 October 1918.

⁵⁸ MAE, A Paix, vol. 149, Briand to Joffre, letter of 24 August 1916; George B. Leontaritis, *Greece during the First World War, 1917–1918* (in Greek), Athens, MIET, 2000, 333–335.

⁵⁹ SHD, 7 N 1342, Billy to Pichon, telegram no. 464 of 16 November 1918.

⁶⁰ Dimitri KITSIKIS, *Propagande et pressions en politique internationale. La Grèce et ses revendications à la Conférence de la Paix (1919–1920)*, Paris, PUF, 1963.

⁶¹ Jean-Baptiste DUROSELLE, *La Grande Guerre des Français. 1914–1918*, Paris, Perrin, 2002, 255–277.

limited success, unable either to ensure, for a long time, the recruitment for his national movement in Salonica or face, after his coming to power in Athens, the reactionary propaganda in the army. If the Greeks mobilized in the last year of the war to fight, this was not the result of the propaganda activity of their governors, but it was mainly the result of the policy of the Entente powers, which, once engaged militarily in Salonica, decided to pursue a policy of interference and force against Greece, which was to conduct the country, sooner or later, in the way of the armed intervention.

Table of Abbreviations

ADN	Archives of the French Foreign Ministry in Nantes
AYE	Archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens
MAE	Archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris
MB	Archives of the Benakis Museum in Athens
SHD	Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes, France
SHM	Service historique de la Marine, Vincennes, France

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PROPAGANDA AND POLITICS: GERMANY AND SPANISH OPINION IN WORLD WAR I

Javier Ponce

Whereas in war different warring parties face off against one another, in the field of propaganda, it is in the neutral countries where the direct confrontation between the two sides takes place, and where each side must advertise itself in order to tip undecided minds in its favor. In this sense, during the First World War the propaganda deployed in Spain by the belligerents was something more than just a paper war, but one where words were supplemented by images supplied by the new technical resources of the day. Employing different approaches, pragmatic propagandists, as well as opportunistic and even (frustrated) idealistic ones, used all the means to hand; moreover, assisted by their respective diplomatic services, journalists, politicians, intellectuals and professional publicists also participated in this story. This was also a struggle marked by a clash of different principles and material interests, also quite diverse, supported in this case by vast amounts of money that crisscrossed the face of Spain to purchase opinion, especially that expressed in the press, for immediate reward. We shall here address the issue of German propaganda from the perspective of Spain's international relations and foreign policy during the First World War and aim to produce some new insights based on the analysis not only of the factors governing propaganda in Spain during the war, but also of the objectives, model and instruments of this propaganda. In this sense, we shall consider propaganda as an integral aspect of the foreign policy of Germany. Finally, we shall present some conclusions yielded by this approach.

Determining Factors

Among the factors that constrained propaganda in Spain during World War I we can mention at least three: the international position of Spain, internal conflict and the barriers to information in the press during the

war. Let us look at the elements that determine these three factors. The first one, the international position of Spain, is determined by its geography, its trade relations as well as by security issues and the progress of the war. Thus, unlike Switzerland, Holland or even the Nordic countries, which were subject to direct pressure by both sides during the conflict, Spain's proximity to the countries that constituted one of the two sides situated it in a field of influence which was less balanced and much better disposed towards the Entente. In connection to its geographical position, the second element determining Spain's international stance is its commercial relations: its economic and financial ties as well as its dependence on trade exchanges of all kinds with the Entente. And the third is the issue of security and the progress of the war: Spanish dependence, for defense questions, on the Entente, which could also bring about the main dangers to Spain's security. Spain's placement in the defensive structure of the Entente had been confirmed in the Cartagena Agreement of 1907, according to which Spain, Great Britain, and France committed themselves to maintain the *status quo* of their territories in the Atlantic and Mediterranean and to consult one another whenever this was under threat.¹ Moreover, Madrid had been party with Paris to the Treaty of 1912 concerning Morocco, which had turned the two countries into partners—albeit unequal ones—in a sensitive territory for colonial policies, particularly for the Spanish.

The second factor governing propaganda in Spain was the conflict within the country, marked by a situation that predated the war but that was further exacerbated by it. The situation prior to the war involved a political confrontation between those groups that supported the Restoration regime and those who hoped to reform it or to drive it into crisis, aggravated by a lack of social and economic development, and complicated by regionalist forces. In this situation the war exacerbated the economic imbalance and the social differences, which were now manifestly intertwined with the

¹ Two of the first studies on this issue were by Enrique Rosas Ledezma, "Las Declaraciones de Cartagena (1907): significación en la política exterior de España y repercusiones internacionales", *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea*, no. 2 (1981): 213–29 ["the statements of Cartagena (1907): their significance in the foreign policy of Spain and their international implications"]; and Rosario de la Torre del Río, "Los acuerdos anglo-hispano-franceses de 1907: una larga negociación en la estela del 98", *Cuadernos de la Escuela Diplomática, Segunda Época*, no. 1 (1988): 81–104 ["the Anglo-Spanish-French agreements of 1907: a long negotiation in the wake of 98"]. On the subsequent development of Spain's international outreach, see Javier Ponce Marrero, "La política exterior española de 1907 a 1920: entre el regeneracionismo de intenciones y la neutralidad condicionada", *Historia Contemporánea*, no. 34 (2007): 93–115 ["Spain's foreign policy from 1907 to 1920: between the regenerationism of intent and conditional neutrality"].

regionalist problem.² There was no reduction in political conflict throughout the war, which drew in ever more Spaniards who did not strictly belong to the social, political and intellectual elites.

The third factor determining propaganda were the barriers to information that the Spanish press had to work around. On one hand, these barriers were related to the material conditions of information set by Spain's economic problems resulting from the war, and secondly, to the ways of handling such information in terms of the origins of sources, the restrictions placed on the freedom of the press, and the pressures from an environment polarized into two camps. As far as the economic issues were concerned, the main problem was the increase in the price of newsprint, which forced the State to intervene and regulate prices. While the press managed at first to address the growth of costs and prevented a rise in retail prices for a few years, difficulties in obtaining supplies from countries at war also affected the printing machinery used by those newspapers employing advanced technologies that were largely dependent on foreign suppliers. Among the material difficulties, we should include a reduction in advertising following the regular publication from 1916 onwards, of blacklists of people and firms in countries other than those of the enemy, with whom all individuals and companies on the Allied side were prohibited from maintaining commercial relations because of their enemy nationality or their association with the enemy. Many advertisers were therefore refused for fear of reprisals that might result in the inclusion of the newspapers on such lists. The newspapers would thus lose all advertisers linked to the Allies, who, by the way, had a strong presence in the largely Entente-dependent Spanish commerce.³

Regarding the handling of information, the first obvious barrier was the flow of information, which although not negligible, it was filtered by the

² Francisco J. Romero Salvadó, *Spain 1914–1918. Between War and Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1999); and by the same author *The Foundations of Civil War. Revolution, Social Conflict and Reaction in Liberal Spain, 1916–1923* (London: Routledge, 2008): 1–147.

³ The first English and French lists of 1916 already included various Madrid publications: the newspapers *El Correo Español*, *El Debate*, *El Siglo Futuro*, *La Tribuna* and the satirical weekly *El Mentidero*; to which *La Defensa de Málaga* and *El Tradicionalista* of Gran Canaria were soon added; cf. "A proclamation prohibiting trading with certain persons, or bodies of persons, of enemy nationality or enemy associations", *The London Gazette*, 29 February 1916, 2211; and *Listas negras referentes a España publicadas por los Gobiernos de Francia e Inglaterra* [Blacklists relating to Spain published by the Governments of France and Britain] (Barcelona: Librería Española, 1916), 1–16.

French agency Havas, via the Spanish agency of Fabra.⁴ The ways around the partisan approach of Fabra involved sending correspondents abroad and—with the opening of the German radiotelegraph agency Transocean, which sent information from its Nauen station from 1915—using radio to source news from Germany. At the same time there were national restrictions on the freedom of the press, which had been put into the legislation for the preservation of neutrality promulgated by the Spanish Government since the beginning of the war. Accompanying this declaration of official neutrality on August 4, 1914 a provision was approved by which the press was to observe neutrality: this promised legal prosecution for insults made in the press or at public meetings against foreign sovereigns or similar dignitaries. Later, on March 29, 1917, faced with the threat of a possible general strike, a royal decree authorized censorship of the press—this time in relation also to the press' assessments of the warring countries and of Spain's stance—which granted a discretionary power to civil Governors, who nevertheless, not always exercise it in this way. Prior censorship was maintained intermittently down till the autumn of 1917, but was re-applied by the law for the repression of espionage of July 7, 1918 to guarantee Spanish neutrality.⁵ The rule was applied to anyone on Spanish territory who collected information for a foreign power or its agents that was harmful to other powers, and—in light of the difficult situation caused by the submarine war—it banned the publication, dispatch, transmission and circulation of news concerning the movements of merchant vessels. It thus increased censorship even from the very centers of telephone and telegraph communications, becoming in this way in a very useful and effective tool for the government that complemented previous censorship of newspapers, and even substituted for it when such censorship was not being enforced, since in practice, the censorship of communications had been in effect since August 1914.⁶

⁴ María Antonia Paz Rebollo, *El colonialismo informativo de la agencia Havas en España (1870–1949)* [The information colonialism of the Havas agency in Spain (1870–1949)], Doctoral thesis (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1988).

⁵ *Gaceta*, 8 July 1918, 81.

⁶ 6 José Antonio del Valle, "La censura gubernativa de prensa en España (1914–1931)", *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, nueva época, no. 21 (1981): 73–126 ["Government press censorship in Spain (1914–1931)"]; and Javier Ponce Marrero, *Canarias en la Gran Guerra, 1914–1918: estrategia y diplomacia. Un estudio sobre la política exterior de España (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Ediciones del Cabildo de Gran Canaria, 2006)*, 251–2. [The Canary Islands in the Great War, 1914–1918: strategy and diplomacy. A study of the foreign policy of Spain].

There was a final barrier to information that was conditional on propaganda, and which in this case both reinforce it and came to be reinforced by it. This was the pressure of a public opinion, which became ever more polarized into two camps the longer the war lasted and the greater its impact on Spain grew, for virtually all newspapers belonged to one camp or the other. The messianic character of the war, the first total war, can help us to understand the stances taken in a neutral country, but it was the very intense activity of the belligerents in Spain what gradually reinforced this trend. This took the form of propaganda for war and acquired great importance by managing to attract the media into one's camp and to use it to defend one's own interests. In this context bribery was commonly practiced to obtain the support of a newspaper, as print was the main tool employed to produce a more favorable image of one group and a negative image of the other. In this sense, the adscription to one group or the other implied the acceptance of the attack of its opponents, and on the other hand, the inevitable coloring of editorial policy, news items and advertisements.⁷

In studying the aims, models and instruments of propaganda, we will be considering propaganda, and in this case especially German propaganda, as part of the foreign policy of the belligerents. Because if in neutral countries they deployed diplomatic activities that aimed to win them over or to keep in place policies as favorable as possible to their interests, the pursuit of this aim was also aided by the use of propaganda. Therefore, it is in the neutral countries where the diplomatic efforts of the warring parties came face to face, and where propaganda became a war of propaganda aiming to sway undecided minds in their own favor. This was especially the case after the short war turned into a long one, since in the first months of the war due to the expectation of a German victory alike that of 1871—which many people took for granted—propaganda had not been fully employed. In the case of Spain, this war of propaganda was purely national in the sense that it responded to its internal conflicts and that it was seen by the two sides into which Spanish opinion was already divided as an extension of their own internal struggles. German sympathizers were recruited from defenders of the traditional order, the aristocracy, Church groups and the military, while advocates of political reform, Liberals,

⁷ José Javier Sánchez Aranda, "Las dificultades de informar en tiempos de guerra. La prensa española durante la I Guerra Mundial", *Comunicación y Sociedad* VI, no. 1-2 (1993): 173–87. ["The difficulties of reporting in wartime. The Spanish press during World War I"]. (version online at <http://dspace.si.unav.es/dspace/handle/10171/8104>).

Leftists and Republicans, anti-clerical groups and most intellectuals felt closer to the Allies.⁸ They all believed that the outcome of the war would have a universalizing character, since the victory of one side would also lead to the strengthening of the position of their supporters in Spain.⁹ And all this despite the obvious differences between the values asserted in Spain and those defended by the warring nations themselves. Let's consider two examples: strictly speaking, those who defended the existing political system and traditional religion in Spain could hardly have seen the German Empire as representing their views, with its resemblance to a federation and with a non-Catholic as its Emperor; the other side, the defenders of republicanism could not have been comfortable supporting the British monarchy or the even more authoritarian regime of the Tsar. There are many more such contradictions that show us clearly that the war between the pro- and anti-factions in Spain, having weak convictions in the international sphere, drew on its internal conflicts.¹⁰ This also explains why Spain remained neutral throughout the conflict, and why the Government of Dato proclaimed this from the start of the war.

We should also take into account the fact that the disastrous war of 1898 against the United States as well as the military attrition in Morocco fuelled in wide sectors of Spanish society the attitude that modern large-scale warfare should be prevented at all costs. On the other hand, involvement in such a war would place an unbearable strain on the army, on a rigged political system, on a backward economy and a fragile social peace, which could threaten the survival of the monarchy itself. With the exception of those who wanted to bring about its downfall and cause regime change or, at later dates, even the sort of revolutionary process which was to take place in Russia, the rest of the political groups assumed that Spain was too weak to participate in the war. Moreover, a majority in Spanish society—

⁸ For the internationalism of Spanish intellectuals and their relation to the press of the period see Paul Aubert, "La propagande étrangère en Espagne pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale", in *Espanoles y franceses en la primera mitad del siglo XX* [Spaniards and Frenchmen in the first half of the 20th century] (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1986), 363–80.

⁹ See also the classic work of Gerald H. Meaker, "A Civil War of Words: The Ideological Impact of the First World War on Spain, 1914–1918", in *Neutral Europe between War and Revolution 1917–23*, ed. Hans A. Schmitt (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), 1–65.

¹⁰ The war between opponents and defenders of the belligerent parties was extensively documented by Fernando Díaz-Plaja, *Francófilos y germanófilos. Los españoles en la guerra europea* (Barcelona: Dopesa, 1973). [Francophiles and Germanophiles. The Spanish in the European war].

illiterate for the most part—remained indifferent, without fully understanding what was at stake in the war nor the ideological struggle that some people saw it to be. Thus, despite commitments to and the proximity of the Entente, there was a weak consensus—even if it ultimately was a consensus—for non-intervention. This consensus—one of few—did not prevent such neutrality, which tried to be strict on a diplomatic level, from becoming tinged with shades and standpoints as it moved to a press permeated by internal political conflicts. In fact, for the educated elite, the war was soon perceived as an ideological war, the outcome of which would leave its mark on the future of all of humanity, so that it could not but affect the situation in Spain and its internal struggle. Let us now look at how such Spanish context saw the unfolding of German propaganda, which compared to the more diverse propaganda of the Allies, represented the overwhelming majority of that put out by the Central Powers.

German Propaganda: Objectives, Model and Tools

If we consider propaganda as part of the foreign policy of the belligerents, that of Germany had as its objectives the maintenance of Spain's neutrality. Being aware of Spain's dependence on the Entente in all respects, the most Berlin could hope for was that Spain be kept out of the conflict. Indeed, it was quite impossible that Madrid would accept any offers made by Berlin to enter the war against England and France, as it would suffer immediate military retaliation.¹¹ Spanish neutrality would allow Germany to ensure entry to the Western Mediterranean, as well as to guarantee it neutral shelters in the territories and waters of Spain, which were of great strategic importance because of Spain's position between two continents and two seas. Finally, as the war drew on and Allied pressure on Spain intensified, the more specific and ambitious objective of German propaganda was to prevent any excessive leaning of Spanish neutrality towards the Allies.

In carrying out this objective, however, Berlin never ceased to use the bait of offers and promised Spain economic aid and political support in the post-war period to free Madrid from the guiding hand of the Entente. Germany also cautiously encouraged Alfonso XIII to continue his efforts

¹¹ Telegram from Ratibor to the Auswärtiges Amt, 6 October 1914, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (hereafter PAAA), Spanien 61, Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Deutschland, R 11998.

as a mediator in the conflict, in order to reassure Spanish hopes for a strengthening of its international position and, incidentally, to prevent Spanish sympathies from moving towards the Entente. Moreover, the *Auswärtiges Amt* used vague promises to nourish the idea that Spanish collaboration would be rewarded with the annexation of territories and countries that Spanish irredentism saw as a goal of its foreign policy. To sovereignty over the Straits of Gibraltar was added by the most naive ones, among them Alfonso XIII, the annexation of Tangiers, a free hand in Morocco and a tempting mandate over Portugal, which under the form of an union or close association was to become a permanent goal of foreign policy.¹² Already in October 1914 a communication from Ratibor to the King had led to the fueling of his illusions, as it urged him to intervene in Portugal. Alfonso XIII expressed gratitude, stating that he could not proceed against Portugal as he would have liked, as if he did France and England would immediately occupy the Balearics and the Canary Islands, would bombard all Spanish ports and would block communication between Spain and Morocco.¹³ German propaganda was not averse to making use of such offers.

The model adopted by German propaganda was an opportunistic one, the heir to *Weltpolitik* and to the thrust of German policy in pre-war years. Thus, despite Spain's poor relations with Germany in comparison to those with Great Britain and especially with France, Berlin knew very well how to exploit the conflicts that rose out of the close relationship between Spain and the Entente. At the beginning of the war, German presence in Spanish society comprised a large colony consisting largely of business people, and later during the war, officers and men of the many interned German ships. Added to this was the prestige enjoyed by German culture, science, learning centers and universities among Spain's educated elites, many of who had been trained in these institutions.¹⁴ The tools used for propaganda included the press, the cinema and displays of German military power. As

¹² Hipólito de la Torre Gómez, *Antagonismo y fractura peninsular. España-Portugal, 1910-1919* [Antagonism and peninsular fracture: Spain-Portugal, 1910-1919] (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1983).

¹³ Telegram from Ratibor to the *Auswärtiges Amt*, 6 October 1914, PAAA, Spanien 61, *Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Deutschland*, R 11998.

¹⁴ Many of those who had been schooled in German culture would nevertheless have subscribed to a pro-Allied policy. cf. Paloma Ortiz de Urbina, "La Primera Guerra Mundial y sus consecuencias: la imagen de Alemania en España a partir de 1914", *Revista de Filología Alemana*, no. 15 (2007) ["The First World War and its consequences: the image of Germany in Spain from 1914"]: 193-206; Manuel Espadas Burgos, "De la época bismarckiana a la Gran Guerra", in *España y Alemania en la Edad Contemporánea*, ed. Walther L. Bernecker

far as the press was concerned, we should first say that it had been carefully prepared even before the war, and large sums of money had been invested in it.¹⁵ While it has been shown that German propaganda during the First World War was not especially well organized and coordinated, particularly in the neutral countries, Germany's propaganda activities in Spain were very intense and effective from the start of the conflict.¹⁶ The successful German press campaign was promoted from Madrid by Ambassador Max von Ratibor and from Barcelona, by the businessman/printer, August Heinz Hofer.

From as early as 1912 Ratibor had been trying to expand Germany's news service to counteract the influence of the English and above all the French services, brought to bear through the Havas Agency. At that time, once the *Auswärtiges Amt* in Berlin had filtered it, news from Germany came via the telegraph service of Ernst Hirsch. Then from Madrid it was distributed across the Iberian Peninsula and even to Latin America, relying for this on the services of the press officer Alexander Bruns, whose most outstanding merit, however, was that he was a friend and confidant of King Alfonso XIII. The earliest proposals to create a better-organized German news service were made in the spring of 1912 in a letter that Hofer sent to the German consul in Barcelona. To remedy the shortage of news coming directly from Germany, which was particularly evident in the provinces, Hofer believed it would be necessary to appoint a Spaniard to front the news net in Madrid and to create auxiliary infrastructure in Barcelona, which he offered to direct himself. Furthermore, the financial problems of local newspapers provided an opportunity for German subsidies, which could then require that dispatches from the German service replace those of the Spanish Fabra agency, the news subsidiary of the French agency Havas. Ratibor approved some of Hofer's proposals and proposed to Berlin an expansion of Germany's information service even though the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Gottlieb von Jagow, had pointed out that he had no funding for this and that the existing news service was, in fact sat-

(Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert Verlag, 1992), 63–87 [“From the era of Bismarck to the Great War”]; and Meaker, 24–8 and 59, note 55.

¹⁵ Luis Álvarez Gutiérrez, “Intentos alemanes para contrarrestar la influencia francesa sobre la opinión pública española en los años precedentes a la Primera Guerra Mundial”, in *Espanoles y franceses en la primera mitad del siglo XIX*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1986), 1–21 [“German attempts to counteract French influence on Spanish public opinion in the years preceding the First World War”].

¹⁶ Ron M. Carden, *German policy toward neutral Spain, 1914–1918* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), 55–91.

isfactory, especially as far as Bruns was concerned: he was considered a useful source of information with regard to the King, despite the fact that in the months that followed, Bruns's standing had been damaged by complaints made by German diplomatic representatives in South America who cast doubt on his competence as a press officer.

In Barcelona, Hofer—owner of the printing house “Sucesor de J. de Neufville”—personally undertook measures to make pro-German news stories available to the Spanish public, financing in 1913 a publication for this purpose called *Ibero-Mundial*. His business interests required frequent trips throughout Spain, particularly to remote cities to sell newspapers equipment, so he was in an excellent position to see what propaganda needed to be done throughout the Iberian Peninsula and to influence rural opinion. Moreover, discussions had begun in Barcelona in early 1914 with the newspaper *La Vanguardia*. Its director believed that the Havas agency did not provide balanced news and that if any news did come directly from Germany, they were incomprehensible to editors who did not read German, whereas the majority could understand at least some of French. To counter this linguistic handicap, the owner of *La Vanguardia* urged the German consul in the city to get his Government to set up a telegram service using the German cable directly between Emden and Vigo, which would be funded by Berlin, and which had already been proposed by Hofer in 1912.¹⁷ In the spring of 1914, the situation seemed conducive to the creation of a new structure for the German news service, with an excellent chance of influencing rural opinion and of securing the position of German news in one of the most important newspapers of Barcelona, or so argued Ratibor in a renewed attempt to convince Jagow. However, the latter suggested only consolidating the information service without changing its structure, as well as negotiating with the owner of *La Vanguardia*.¹⁸

The different types of information and news reports that the Germans were able to get into Spain by themselves at the beginning of the war, would have come from the two German telegraph cables which after leaving Emden crossed under the English Channel and came ashore, one at Vigo, in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, and the other on Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, situated in the middle of the most important shipping routes to the South Atlantic. In turn, on leaving Tenerife, the German cables connected through Monrovia (Liberia), and linked from there on to Pernambuco (Brazil) and—via Lome (Togo)—to Douala (Cameroon). The

¹⁷ Álvarez, 16.

¹⁸ Carden, 63-7.

Emden-Tenerife cable was thus essential for this telegraphic communication from Germany to Africa and South America, as it strengthened the role of the German information service in Spain as a redistributor of news to Latin America. The other resource available to the Germans was radiotelegraph communication, which broadcasted from powerful German radio stations such as those at Nauen and Norddeich in Germany, or at Kamina in Togo, and whose messages could be received by Spanish radio stations or the telegraph operators of the many German ships which had been taking refuge in Spanish ports since the beginning of the war. Yet, Germany lost most of these media outlets in the early days of the conflict. The importance of the cable from Emden to Tenerife was such, that from the summer of 1912, Great Britain had worked out plans for the post office—aided by the navy—to cut this line, along with the one at Vigo, as soon as instructions to this effect were given. After the Admiralty and War Office had decided that enemy cables were to be cut, the order to the post office was one of the measures that automatically followed from the declaration of war, and on August 5, 1914 the German cables under the English Channel from Emden to Vigo and Tenerife were severed.¹⁹ The next day, August 6, the Spanish naval authorities of Marina put out of operation the radio rooms of German ships moored in Spanish ports.²⁰ On top of this came in the same month the destruction of the radiotelegraphy station at Kamina, which further increased Germany's difficulties in obtaining information.

Faced with these technical difficulties on the outbreak of war, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Berlin now strongly supported the activities of Ratibor and Hofer, who had not ceased their efforts to establish a news and propaganda service in Spain. The primary recipient of this information should be Alfonso XIII, so that German radiograms containing news of the war that would also be of interest to the King could be received by a Spanish radio station, according to the proposal that the Minister of

¹⁹ Cf. Julian S. Corbett, *Naval Operations (History of the Great War)*, vol. I: *To the battle of the Falklands, december 1914* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920), 43; P. Chack, *La Guerre des Croiseurs (Du 4 août 1914 à la bataille des Falkland)*, vol. I: *Du 4 août au 1 octobre 1914* (Paris: Challamel, Librairie Maritime et Coloniale, 1922–1923), 90; and *Der Kreuzerkrieg in den ausländischen Gewässern (Der Krieg zur See 1914–1918)*, vol. I, edited by E. Raeder, under the supervision of Eberhard von Mantey (Berlin: Verlag von E.S. Mittler & Sohn, 1922), 54.

²⁰ Telegram from the Naval commander at Las Palmas to the Director General of Shipping, 8 August 1914, Archivo del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Madrid (hereafter AMAE), Guerra Europea, H 2990.

State made to Ratibor at the end of August 1914.²¹ In September 1914, Ratibor requested financial support for an afternoon daily paper to be published in Barcelona. In fact, the funds for the press at the disposal of the Ambassador had been increased to 25,000 Marks, but this sum had run out at the beginning of October and he found himself obliged to request more funding for the propaganda activity in Spain in order to counteract the information unfavorable to Germany coming from France, compared to the few newspapers that the ambassador felt were totally pro-German, such as the Carlist *El Correo Español* and *El Universo*.²² Although newspapers such as *La Tribuna*, *La Correspondencia Militar* and *ABC* were considered sympathetic to Germany, the Ambassador believed it necessary to control dailies with wider circulations, even if as soon as 1915, *ABC* already stood at the head of Spanish newspapers in terms of daily sales.²³ Hofer had already personally financed the illustrated weekly *La Neutralidad*, but he needed 5,000 pesetas to continue this work, which seemed important since it had shown the possibilities for successfully supporting and strengthening Spanish neutrality.²⁴ Moreover, after October 1914, the pro-German stance of *La Tribuna* had a price: 8,000 pesetas a month for the first four months and 4,000 pesetas for the following six months, although soon—in March 1915—it was requested to revise this last sum and to increase it to 6,000 pesetas. This newspaper was to undertake an anti-Portuguese campaign that seemed worthwhile given Portugal's anticipated entry into the war against Germany. Feelers were even put out for a Republican newspaper, *El País*, which had proved to be willing to accept funding from the German Embassy in exchange for a pro-German orientation. At the end of October, Berlin approved the subsidy for both newspapers.²⁵

As an example of the great readiness for sacrifice by the German colony in Spain as well as its great interest in the transmission of German news and its influence in the Spanish press, Ratibor cited in October 1914 the

²¹ Radio telegram from Ratibor to the Auswärtiges Amt, 27 August 1914, PAAA, Spanien 46, Die Spanische Presse, R 11862.

²² Ratibor to Bethmann Hollweg, 12 October 1914, *ibid*.

²³ María Cruz Seoane and María Dolores Sáiz, *Historia del periodismo en España 3. El siglo XX: 1898–1936* (Madrid: Alianza, 1996), 211–321 [History of Journalism in Spain 3. The 20th century: 1898–1936].

²⁴ Ratibor to Bethmann Hollweg, 6 November 1914, PAAA, Spanien 46, secr. Subventionierung Spanischer Zeitungen, R 11868.

²⁵ Auswärtiges Amt to Ratibor, 22 October 1914, *ibid*. In the same way the increase requested in March was accepted; Auswärtiges Amt to Ratibor, 21 March 1915, PAAA, Spanien 46, secr. Subventionierung Zeitungen Spanischer, R 11869, also cited in Carden, 69 and 79.

case of Las Palmas. According to the Imperial Vice Consul, there, the small German colony was spending between 1000 and 1100 pesetas each month: 500 pesetas to pay a Madrid journalist who radio-telegraphed German war news every day and another 600 pesetas provided by voluntary donors so that the local newspaper *Diario de Las Palmas* would publish articles favorable to Germany.²⁶ This was a good demonstration of the power of persuasion of German money, since this liberal newspaper had been founded by Fernando León y Castillo, who had been Ambassador of Spain in Paris for two decades and who used to complain about the pro-German stance of the journal;²⁷ it was, moreover, the newspaper with the largest circulation in the Canary Islands at the beginning of the war.²⁸ In addition, the German colony and the officers and sailors of the German ships stationed in Las Palmas had contributed 16,000 Marks towards the war.²⁹ Not for nothing was Las Palmas the largest shelter of German and Austrian ships of all Spanish ports.³⁰ The subsidies to the press were maintained, as would seem to be proved by a British memorandum of August 1916, which based on a secret French document estimated that 400 pesetas were paid each month by the German colony in Las Palmas to the local newspaper *La Provincia*, which at this time was its organ of communication.³¹ The pro-German stance of this daily, as of so many other pro-German Spanish newspapers, was not foreign to German business interests, which even before the war had been in competition with the dominant British.³²

In Tenerife the Germans also made use of their own cable station, for, even though communications between Emden and Tenerife had been interrupted by the British at the very outbreak of war, the link from Tenerife

²⁶ German vice-consul on Las Palmas to Ratibor, 30 September 1914, PAAA, Botschaftsarchiv Madrid (hereafter BAM), Fach 80/83, Nr. 53–64, Pol. 8 i, Nr. 8, Press und Nachrichtendienst im Allgemeinen, vol. 1.

²⁷ Undated letter from Fernando León y Castillo to Juan Melián Alvarado, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Las Palmas, Fondo Fernando León y Castillo, file 17.

²⁸ Estadística de la prensa periódica de España (Madrid: Dirección General del Instituto Geográfico y Estadístico, 1914), 46–7 [Statistics relating to the periodical press of Spain].

²⁹ Ratibor to Bethmann Hollweg, 12 October 1914, PAAA, Spanien 46, Die Spanische Presse, R 11862.

³⁰ 15 German ships and two Austrian were concerned, according to the list prepared by the naval attaché at the British Embassy in Madrid, May 1918, The National Archives, Kew (hereafter NA), Foreign Office (hereafter FO) 372/1169.

³¹ Memorandum on German paper *La Provincia*, War Trade Intelligence Department, 28 August 1916, NA, FO 395/30.

³² On German propaganda in Las Palmas see Javier Ponce Marrero, "Prensa y germanofilia en Las Palmas durante la Gran Guerra", *Anuario de Estudios Atlánticos*, no. 38 (1992): 581–602 ["The Press and Germanophile sentiments in Las Palmas during the Great War"].

to Africa and South America remained in use. Thus, German news reaching Tenerife—once it had been sent on from Madrid by a trusted agent via the Spanish stations—was published in the islands' newspapers under the heading 'From a German source' or 'From the German colony', and was sent on from there by telegraph to Monrovia and Pernambuco, where it was also published in the press and from where news was likewise sent on to the station on Tenerife. All this was made possible thanks to the involvement of Junyent, an employee of the Spanish telegraph service, who influenced the press on the Canaries, and who worked on behalf of the German service, allowing such communication through the German cable without Spanish supervision.³³ The service provided by the cable between Tenerife and Monrovia led London to consider cutting the line, which the French saw as a vital necessity,³⁴ as it also was for the British consul in Tenerife, who felt it was essential.³⁵ The connection from Tenerife to Monrovia would finally be cut by the British Admiralty near Monrovia at midnight on November 19, 1914.³⁶ As for the radiotelegraphic communications that lay outside the reach of the Allies, the latter worked very hard to reduce any possibility of Germany using them, by putting pressure on Spain to bring into force measures restricting radiotelegraphic traffic. In that same month of November, the Spanish and the British governments agreed on a total prohibition on transmitting and receiving coded messages to or from Spanish radiotelegraphy stations, while subjecting to censorship those messages written in clear language.³⁷ Therefore, embassies and consulates were permitted to send messages in cipher by cable alone, further harming the Germans who had seen their cables cut by the Allies while they kept their own intact.

In November 1914 Ratibor sought the approval for all propaganda activities that German residents had been carrying out as private individuals in Spain. Berlin proved to be favorable to all of these activities, even though it allocated only 3,500 Marks for propaganda in Madrid and Barcelona. In

³³ Secret communication from the Imperial Ministry for Postal Services to the Navy General Staff, to the *Auswärtiges Amt* and the Imperial Ministries for Naval Affairs and for the Colonies, 4 November 1914, PAAA, Spanien 46, *Die Spanische Presse*, R 11862.

³⁴ French Minister for Postal Services to the Secretary of the General Post Office in London, 29 October 1914; private, French Embassy in London to the Foreign Office, 3 November 1914, NA, FO 372/636.

³⁵ Telegram from Croker to the Foreign Office, 12 November 1914, *ibid.*

³⁶ Confidential and urgent, Secretary of the Admiralty to the Under Secretary of State for the Foreign Office, 22 November 1914, *ibid.*

³⁷ Marquis of Lema to Geoffray, 14 November 1914; Marquis of Lema to Hardinge, 15 November 1914, AMAE, *Guerra Europea*, H 3116.

the latter city, Hofer was to serve in several capacities, since not only was he the agent of the German information service for Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries—sending information for Spain and Latin America—but he also was the coordinator of German propaganda in Barcelona, publishing 6,000-8,000 copies of an illustrated weekly, now called *La Guerra Mundial* (*The World War*). Moreover, he also was responsible for preparing German and Spanish editions of news dispatches arriving from Germany via radio telegram or mail.³⁸ These editions were sent to the Embassy in Madrid and to the 26 German consulates in Spain and Portugal, as well as to 160 German societies formed by residents in Spain. But particularly important for the propaganda effort was the dispatch of the Spanish edition of these German news stories to 400 Spanish and Portuguese dailies and close to 150 influential Spanish citizens with pro-German interests. Hofer's dedication to the German cause also included preparing photographs from the war, as well as the selection of pro-German articles published in Spanish newspapers for dispatch to the Italian and Romanian press as a counter to Allied propaganda. Hofer also put confidence in film propaganda, since he considered that given the fascination that this newly created medium wielded at that time, nothing could have as much impact as moving images.³⁹

Propaganda activities in Madrid relied on the participation of several German residents. Among these, the most notable was Wilhelm Reutzenberg, director of the propaganda division of the subsidiary that AEG/Thomson Houston Ibérica maintained in Spain, and which Armbruster directed. Reutzenberg selected long articles and sent them to nearly 200 Spanish newspapers in Madrid and the provinces, and to a dozen or so in Portugal. Unlike the more topical news of the war which Hofer provided from Barcelona, Reutzenberg tried to round out the work of his fellow countryman by reporting news about life in Germany in a more extensive, educational way, highlighting the activities of the Social Democratic Party as well as accident insurance and health services for workers, and other aspects of daily life that could modify the image some people had of Germany, specifically targeting those groups, such as the workers, who might otherwise have identified more with the Allies. At the same time, Reutzenberg proved to be an effective propagandist, ready to remind

³⁸ Ratibor to Bethmann Hollweg, 6 November 1914, PAAA, Spanien 46, secr. Subventionierung Spanischer Zeitungen, R 11868.

³⁹ Hofer to the Nachrichtendienst für die Länder spanischer und portugiesischer Zunge, 7 November 1914, PAAA, Spanien 46, Die Spanische Presse, R 11862.

Spanish readers of the nature of Spain's historical relations with the Allies, and how it had indeed been France and England which had brought about Spain's loss of Great Power status. As far as the British were concerned, it was easy to appeal to Spain's always sensitive claims to recover Gibraltar; as regards France there were some more or less recent accounts still to be settled, from the war of independence against French occupation to the slights done to Spain in Morocco, with the question of Tangier as the most recent unhealed affront to Spain's African ambitions.

Also important in Madrid were the propaganda activities of Carl Coppel, a well-known and respected businessman who ran a watch factory, and who wrote a short pamphlet entitled *Por la Patria y por la Verdad* (*For the Fatherland and for the Truth*) exonerating Germany for its responsibility for the war. Following the success that this pamphlet enjoyed with a circulation of around of 35,000 printed copies, Coppel committed himself to continue this series of short analyses of the war every ten days.⁴⁰ Coppel also encouraged the German Embassy to buy war films because of the great impact he felt that these films would have on the Spaniards, and in this he convinced Ratibor, who in the same month of November requested a number of production companies to contact Spanish film companies to start showing films.⁴¹ On the other hand, the German colonies in other Spanish cities also made every effort to serve the interests of German propaganda, according to what the ambassador pointed out to Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, whom particularly appreciated the sacrifices made by the German colony in Las Palmas.⁴²

Likewise, at the beginning of December 1914, as Ratibor had requested, the Ministry of Home Affairs authorized all Spanish radiotelegraphy stations to receive and pass on to the press and others who requested them, the news reports transmitted by the station at Nauen or any other German transmitter.⁴³ Thus, by the end of 1914 the German information service in Spain—which included this complex structure of propaganda activities, as well, of course, as the activities promoted directly by the German Embassy—was making clear progress. The Embassy had created this pro-

⁴⁰ Ratibor to Bethmann Hollweg, 6 November 1914, PAAA, Spanien 46, secr. Subventionierung Spanischer Zeitungen, R 11868.

⁴¹ Jens Albes, "La propaganda cinematográfica de los alemanes en España durante la Primera Guerra Mundial", *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* XXXI, no. 3 (1995): 77-8 ["German propaganda films in Spain during the First World War"].

⁴² Ratibor to Bethmann Hollweg, 6 November 1914, PAAA, Spanien 46, secr. Subventionierung Spanischer Zeitungen, R 11868.

⁴³ Marquis of Lema to Ratibor, 11 December 1914, AMAE, Guerra Europea, H 3116.

paganda network in a very short time—although, as we have seen, it had already made preparations before the war,—making perfectly clear the widespread presence of German propaganda in the face of certain inactivity on the part of the Allies until 1916.⁴⁴ Ratibor controlled all these activities through Embassy officials, who could block the publication of whatever they considered to be detrimental to Spanish opinion, and the Embassy distributed 10,000 Marks—authorized by the *Auswärtiges Amt*—as Christmas gifts to editors and journalists who served the German cause. *El Correo Español* received 4300 pesetas, *La Tribuna* 1500 pesetas, and *El Debate* 1000 pesetas. Even the *Heraldo de Madrid*, a periodical with divided sympathies, albeit seen mostly as pro-Allied, received a further 250 pesetas, no doubt to reward and encourage its pro-German leanings.⁴⁵

At the beginning of 1915, the German Embassy sent on to the Chancellor the list of the pro-German newspapers in various Spanish cities, in relation to the possibility of advertising in them, which could be a promising approach, seeing that reduced advertising caused by the war had led to a significant lowering of revenues for the Spanish press. The list for Madrid included the pro-German *La Tribuna*, the Carlist *El Correo Español*, the independent *ABC*, the Catholic *El Debate*, as well as less important ones like *La Mañana*, and the Catholic papers *El Siglo Futuro* and *El Universo*.⁴⁶ Prominent in Barcelona were *El Correo Catalán* and the Catalan nationalist *La Veu de Catalunya*, while the following neutral papers received mention: *La Vanguardia*, *Diario de Barcelona*, *El Noticiero Universal*, *Las Noticias*, *La Tribuna* and *El Día Gráfico*. In other provinces the list included the newspapers *La Gaceta del Norte*, *Semanario Aurera* and *El Nervión* from Bilbao, *El Correo del Norte* from San Sebastián, *El Correo de Andalucía*, *El Noticiero*, *Sevilla* and *Sevilla Nueva* from the Andalusian capital, the *Gaceta del Sur* from Granada, *El Correo de Cádiz* from this port city, the *Diario de Valencia* from this east coast city, *El Pueblo Asturiano* from Gijón, *El Eco de Galicia* from La Coruña, *El Diario Montañés* from Santander, *El Porvenir* from Valladolid, *La Defensa* from Málaga, *La Crónica* from Zaragoza, and *El Bloque* from Cáceres.⁴⁷ The embassy also opened negotiations with other newspapers to try to increase the number of daily newspapers favoring Germany. In some cases it was not an easy task to deal with Republican

⁴⁴ Aubert, 381–94.

⁴⁵ Regarding the *Heraldo*, see “A short report on propaganda in Spain, March 1916–March 1917”, John Walter to Hubert Montgomery, 13 March 1917, NA, FO 395/117.

⁴⁶ Ratibor to Bethmann Hollweg, 11 January 1915, PAAA, Spanien 46, Die Spanische Presse, R 11865.

⁴⁷ Ratibor to Bethmann Hollweg, 19 January 1915, *ibid*.

newspapers whose readers inclined more towards the Allies, but Ratibor believed it was necessary to get closer to all segments of opinion and thus to try to gain influence over them as well. In this aspect the results were uneven, as even though *El País* had accepted a German subsidy in the fall of 1914, it quickly saw that it could no longer maintain a pro-German editorial policy after this had caused an embarrassing situation with its readers. Its loss was compensated by the radical Republican newspaper *El Diluvio*, of Barcelona, with which Hofer had agreed a monthly payment of 2,500 pesetas in exchange for publishing official German war news and articles about the working classes and health insurance in Germany, which were to be selected by Hofer himself and the German consul in Barcelona, Georg Plehn;⁴⁸ however, later on this newspaper returned to its more natural pro-Allied stance, subsidized each month by the British until the end of the war.⁴⁹ Moreover, in order to sway the remaining important newspapers, German firms bought advertisements in *El Imparcial* and the *Heraldo*; thus putting pressure on them to use more pro-German news items and reports that, in the case of the *Heraldo*, Bruns was able to channel via a Swiss journalist.⁵⁰

Moreover in early 1915 the German information service for Spain turned to two German film producers, because until then only a few series of slides had reached Spanish cinemas. They succeeded in interesting one of the first movie houses in Madrid to take German films and shortly afterwards began showing in Barcelona and its surroundings "Messter's weekly news" from the Messter-Film-Gesellschaft, which was brought in through a Berlin export company to the Barcelona publisher Seix Barral which, in turn, sold it to the owners of Spanish cinemas. However, only one or two copies of each short could be sold, because in fact, despite the intensification of German propaganda, the number of new releases was very low in the first two years of the war. These first German films were also seen in Cádiz and Jerez de la Frontera, but not in Madrid, Valladolid or Salamanca, because there the civil Governors, who exercised censorship, banned their showing.⁵¹

With the entry of Italy into the war on the Allied side, Ratibor and the German military High Command believed that France and England would

⁴⁸ 48 Carden, 70–80.

⁴⁹ Enrique Montero, "Luis Araquistain y la propaganda aliada durante la Primera Guerra Mundial", *Estudios de Historia Social*, no. 24-5 (1983): 253 and 266. ["Luis Araquistain and Allied propaganda during the First World War"].

⁵⁰ Ratibor to Bethmann Hollweg, 19 January 1915, PAAA, Spanien 46, Die Spanische Presse, R 11865.

⁵¹ Albes, 79–81.

increase their propaganda efforts to cause Spain to join the conflict too on the side of the Entente.⁵² Therefore, it was necessary for Germany to make a greater effort, so at the beginning of June 1915, Jagow authorized new funding to the Ambassador to buy other major newspapers and influence important politicians, and suggested using more energetic methods. Ratibor explored several possibilities, such as the purchase of advertisements supporting Germany in pro-Allied newspapers, but the price demanded by these newspapers was excessive for the influence that such ads could be expected to have. More expensive still would have been the outright purchase of the pro-Allied newspapers in Madrid, which was reckoned to cost between five and ten million pesetas, plus another two to three million pesetas to produce a first-class information service for the newspapers in both Madrid and Barcelona, which would thus have saturated Spain with pro-German opinion. Concrete negotiations were, however, more modest, and were limited to buying a two-thirds interest in the Barcelona newspapers *El Día Gráfico* and *La Tribuna* for 200,000 pesetas, paid in July by Georg Plehn to the owners of the two newspapers. The Commander in Chief of the Austro-Hungarian army, General Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, declared to his German counterpart, General Erich von Falkenhayn, that major investments should be made in Barcelona and Bilbao, where Socialist and Republican opinion was strong and where Francophile sentiments were more openly expressed, as it was concluded by the Austrian high commander from conversations with Spanish politicians who had visited him. The need to influence this section of opinion would also be behind the distribution of anti-British literature among workers in different towns such as Barcelona and Málaga.⁵³

The German ambassador had further gained support from provincial newspapers in Zaragoza, Seville, San Sebastián and Las Palmas,⁵⁴ but other plans, such as creating newspapers with socialist ideological leanings to counter from within the pro-Allied propaganda of some of the leaders of the Spanish left, were discarded, because the cost of German propaganda activity in Spain was already turning out to be very high. The remaining months of 1915 were wholly devoted to combating pro-Allied propaganda using the press media that had already been won over to the German cause,

⁵² Telegram from Ratibor to the Auswärtiges Amt, 2 June 1915, PAAA, Spanien 46, secr. Subventionierung Spanischer Zeitungen, R 11869.

⁵³ Telegram from Gaselee to Croker, 15 May 1917, NA, FO 395/121.

⁵⁴ After some initial months of relative unclarity, it was from May 1915 that the pro-German stance of the above-mentioned Las Palmas daily *La Provincia* became perfectly clear; Ponce, "Prensa y germanofilia", 598 ["Press and Germanophile sentiments"].

and which had managed to shape Spanish public opinion, which according to Ratibor, was already sufficiently sympathetic to Germany. Ultimately, by late 1915 the subsidized press was already an extensive and well enough developed tool to launch an anti-Allied campaign, such as was indeed launched with regard to the military activities of the Entente on different occasions during the war. However, in December 1915 the relations between Berlin and Madrid underwent a severe reverse when Dato was forced to resign on account of domestic problems caused by the war. The British and French took full advantage of this incident to put heavy pressure on the King, attempting to secure Dato's replacement by the count of Romanones, whose leanings towards the Entente were well known. Romanones introduced a form of neutrality more benevolent to the Entente, in such a way that during his term of office the Germans were forced to make policy concessions to counter the influence of the Spanish Prime Minister, while as mediator, Alfonso XIII attempted—despite the inevitable concessions made to the Entente—to avoid any open adherence to the Allied cause and to leave open the few opportunities for maneuver provided by Germany's offers.

In 1916 German propaganda underwent some new developments with regard to cinematography, which was used to publicize the major advances in German industrial and military technology. In connection to this, the military spectacle generated by the visit of the German submarine *U-35* to the port of Cartagena in June of that year brought a personal message from Wilhelm II to Alfonso XIII as a demonstration of friendship between the two countries. This visit was made possible at the express desire of the Spanish monarch, but it was certainly, and above all, a spectacular act of German propaganda, a masterstroke to impress on Spanish public opinion the power of the German military. However, it brought in its wake clear threats by the Entente to occupy Spanish ports, which led to the publication of a Spanish declaration that made it virtually impossible to repeat such visits.⁵⁵ During that summer anti-German reports were widespread in Spanish newspapers, in a press campaign which Ratibor believed had been undertaken with the approval of the Spanish government, and which he felt deserved a sharp protest note from Berlin.⁵⁶

From that same summer of 1916 the German Embassy in Madrid made strenuous attempts to improve propaganda films to compensate for the success and the impact of war films shown by French propaganda. Gustav

⁵⁵ Ponce, *Canarias en la Gran Guerra*, 98-9 [The Canary Islands in the Great War].

⁵⁶ Carden, 125-7 and 153-5.

Flamme, a German businessman residing in San Sebastián, where he had founded a pro-German newspaper in 1915, was instructed to show a series of German and Austrian films in several Spanish cities. After beginning his propaganda tour in San Sebastian in September 1916, he dealt with censorship by giving the events a private character and sending out free tickets for the showings. Yet a collection box for the German Red Cross was set up at the entrance, thus allowing the defrayal of the costs of organizing the showings. The next stops on this film tour were Bilbao, Santander, Gijón and Oviedo, in each of which at least two showings were made with the help of members of the local German communities and those sectors of society—like the Jesuits at Gijón—who were more sympathetic to Germany. In some of these cities four or five showings had to be organized in order to meet the heavy demand for tickets, even from the leading authorities, especially military and ecclesiastical, as well as Allied diplomats.

The Submarine War and Propaganda

In the course of October and November of 1916, the anti-German campaign intensified, and in order combat it, an increase was made to the funding for the press available to Ratibor, who in turn requested more propaganda material. The basic weapon to mitigate Romanones' change of course was the publication of the concessions that Germany was willing to make regarding Spanish shipping and its promises of future economic aid. In the same way, in view of the successful box office income from the film tour—which amounted to more than 9000 pesetas—, Flamme proposed to continue it in Pamplona, Zaragoza, Alicante, Valencia, Granada and Seville, where the German films reached in the last two months of 1916. Now where possible, the films should be purchased and not rented, given the lower cost this would imply. In these cities there were further obstacles to the showing of German documentaries raised by the censorship of the civil Governors in some places, like Pamplona, where an extra showing was allowed grudgingly, or Zaragoza, where the film was absolutely prohibited, although this decision did not prevent them from showing other German documentaries twice. In Alicante, the single showing that did take place attracted few viewers partly because of veiled British threats to put some city traders on blacklists if they went to German films. In Valencia and Seville, they nevertheless managed two showings that resulted in healthy takings for the Red Cross. In Granada it also proved possible—though not

without difficulties—to rent a theatre, but none was found to be available in Cartagena or Almería. Still at the beginning of 1917 six German feature films on the war and the navy were exhibited in Barcelona, in showings organized by a German association, but, in the early part of the year the Romanones government banned public showings of war movies.⁵⁷ This coincided with the expansion and intensification of the submarine war and with an increase in sinkings in December 1916, which had now reached the coastal waters of the Canaries and were causing great agitation and alarm among public opinion.⁵⁸ This led to a worsening of relations between the governments of Berlin and Madrid, where Romanones was determined to cut back German influence on Spanish public opinion by means of an active press campaign.

From the very first days of January 1917 censorship had proven to be more and more uncompromising with pro-German newspapers and with German news that reached Spain by radio, despite demands from Ratibor that these restrictions be lifted. From the office of the Prime Minister notice was given that Spain would be forced to request Ratibor's recall if the German ambassador did not stop his propaganda activities and his meddling in internal Spanish affairs, which had even led the Spanish ambassador in Berlin to take actions, especially in regard to the press campaign against Romanones, which was attributed to Ratibor.⁵⁹ Even as the *Auswärtiges Amt* had instructed him to refrain from interfering in Spanish affairs and the General Staff in Berlin had asked him to conduct propaganda with greater caution, it was General Ludendorff himself who from September 1916 had insisted on more funding to bring down Romanones. It is not surprising, therefore, that at the beginning of February new sums were made available to Ratibor to redouble his activities in the press.⁶⁰ This was especially necessary because in the following months of 1917 the progress of the war was to have a clear and increasingly negative impact on Spanish-German relations. In January of that year the decision was taken at the Imperial Headquarters to initiate total submarine warfare starting February 1, in order to cut off Britain from supplies and produce an unsustainable situation.

⁵⁷ Albes, 83–92.

⁵⁸ Ponce, *Canarias en la Gran Guerra*, 224–34.

⁵⁹ Polo de Bernabé to Count of Romanones, 13 January 1917, AMAE, Guerra Europea, H 3055.

⁶⁰ Carden, 147 and 162–3.

The new submarine war was to have great impact on Spain, so much so that German propaganda was forced to adjust to a new policy framework. In addition, that same month of February 1917 was marked by the reappearance of the German submarine *U-35*, which unloaded in waters off Cartagena a varied cargo made up of weapons, explosives and instructions for spies, as well as literature and feature films for propaganda purposes.⁶¹ Polo de Bernabé, the Spanish Ambassador to Germany, received verbal assurances from the *Auswärtiges Amt* that any explosives found in February 1917 in Cartagena were destined to the eventual destruction of the engine rooms of German ships moored in Spain and that this would have been done in a manner that would in no way have caused difficulties or damage to Spanish ports. The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly deplored the incident at Cartagena, of which—according to him—he had not been informed, but justified the German Admiralty preemptive action because it had reports that left no doubt concerning British plans to seize these ships, resorting, if necessary, to a coup de main.⁶²

The German account of the incident at Cartagena was the first sign of heightened tension in Spanish-German relations. The inconceivable stupidity of the German explanation—in Polo de Bernabé's opinion—was soon compounded by the conflicts caused by the submarine campaign.⁶³ When on April 9 1917 a German submarine torpedoed the Spanish steamer *San Fulgencio* without prior warning, Romanones pro-Ally Prime Ministerial Office attempted to get the government to sever relations with Germany, following in the footsteps of the United States, but failed due to resistance of the King and his Cabinet, and was forced to submit his resignation. The overthrow of Romanones, who the Germans considered to be the greatest threat to Spanish neutrality, had been the subject of an active press campaign mounted by Ratibor, the German Ambassador in Madrid, who had some bearing on the fall of the liberal leader. Thus, the forces opposed to the President had received support from the Germans in various forms, notably by subsidies to their journals or by the foundation of new anti-Romanones newspapers. In Madrid, the German Embassy collaborated in both the creation and the funding of *La Nación* and *El Día*, and the payroll of pro-German newspapers in the capital now included the also funded *El*

⁶¹ Polo de Bernabé to Zimmermann, 3 March 1917; Holtzendorff to Zimmermann, 3 March 1917, PAAA, Der Weltkrieg Nr. 11 q Geheim, Unternehmungen und Aufwiegungen in Spanien, R 21241.

⁶² P-Louis Rivière, *Un centre de guerre secrète, Madrid 1914–1918* (Paris: Payot, 1936), 107–8.

⁶³ Polo de Bernabé to Gimeno, 24 March 1917, AMAE, Guerra Europea, H 3055.

Correo Español, *La Correspondencia Militar*, *La Tribuna*, *La Acción* and *España Nueva*, as well as *ABC*,⁶⁴ *El Debate*, *El Universo* and *El Siglo Futuro*;⁶⁵ while in Barcelona, San Sebastian, Bilbao and Valencia small propaganda bureaus were opened, which relied on assistance provided by the Marquis of Polavieja and led to the creation of so-called “committees for the defense of neutrality” throughout the length and breadth of the country.⁶⁶ To the same end, and as a very effective means of propaganda suggested by the German consul in Valencia in the face of the difficulties caused by the submarine war, the *Auswärtiges Amt* approved making available to Ratibor the sum of 850,000 pesetas to alleviate the poverty of day-laborers on the east coast, who had been hard hit by the fall in exports of fruit, and, if he thought it appropriate, a further 50,000 pesetas for the consul in Santa Cruz de Tenerife to distribute to the needy of the Canary Islands.⁶⁷

García Prieto—Marquis of Alhucemas—and Dato, the successors of Romanones, attempted to restore a more or less strict neutrality. In fact, García Prieto represented the conservative wing of the Liberals, so the German Embassy considered him a suitable candidate. As far as film propaganda went, the new Government of García Prieto was more conciliatory, allowing the screening of movies provided that they were not offensive to other friendly countries and didn't include expressions against neutrality, hence, the authorization of the civil governors was still required. Thus, now in collaboration with the Austro-Hungarian Embassy, the Germans showed again documentaries, which came in equal parts from Germany and Austria.⁶⁸ Screenings took place in rooms fitted out for the purpose by the German Embassy in Madrid and by the different representatives of German interests in Spain, which allowed the films to be seen in several Spanish cities as well as in the Canary Islands. On Tenerife films were shown with great success in a film theater for two days in the middle of September 1917;⁶⁹ screenings were also held in Las Palmas, where the German shipping company Woermann used its facilities to show German war films for four days

⁶⁴ For the British *ABC* was one of the few pro-German newspapers in Madrid which remained respectable, for which reason it was never included on their blacklists, though other Allied countries thought differently; “A short report on propaganda in Spain, March 1916–March 1917”, John Walter to Hubert Montgomery, 13 March 1917, NA, FO 395/117.

⁶⁵ Cf. *ibid.*; Seoane and Sáiz, 216–22; and Aubert, 395–99 and 404–8.

⁶⁶ Jens Albes, *Worte wie Waffen. Die deutsche Propaganda in Spanien während des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 1996), 258–322.

⁶⁷ Rivière, 49–50 and 120.

⁶⁸ Albes, *Worte wie Waffen*, 324–52.

⁶⁹ German consul at Santa Cruz de Tenerife to Ratibor, 17 September 1917, PAAA, BAM, Fach 80/83, Nr. 53–64, Pol. 8 i, Nr. 8, *Press und Nachrichtendienst im Allgemeinen*, vol. 32.

in the fall of 1917, raising 1600 pesetas which were distributed between the Austrian and German Red Crosses.⁷⁰

In any event, because of the submarine war, Spanish diplomacy relations with Germany would remain tense throughout 1917. Already in May, the new Government of García Prieto had demanded reparations and respect for the interests and sovereignty of Spain;⁷¹ and in June—after the fall of García Prieto due to domestic problems—the new Government of the conservative Dato took steps to prevent the entry of German submarines into Spanish ports. At the beginning of June 1917 the German submarine *UC 52* entered the port of Cadiz, where it remained until the 29th. The Allies reacted to its stay as they had done a year earlier when the German submarine *U-35* had visited the port of Cartagena with a personal message from Wilhelm II. The same day as the *UC 52* left Cádiz the Spanish authorities responded to Allied pressure by adopting a Royal Decree prohibiting the entry of submarines of all warring nations into Spanish ports and waters. Thus, when the German submarine *UB 49* entered Cádiz on September 9, 1917, it was duly interned. However, this submarine escaped from the Spanish port on October 6, producing a crisis in Spanish-German relations. This was the reason why at the beginning of the new year of 1918 Wilhelm II sent a personal letter to Alfonso XIII, linking the settlement of this issue to the withdrawal of Von Krohn—the naval attaché at the German Embassy in Madrid—which Spain had requested since October 1917. In response to this letter from the German Emperor, the King of Spain wrote on January 19, 1918 to Wilhelm II about this delicate and vexing issue, trusting in a dignified and satisfactory solution.⁷² But before sending him home in February 1918, Von Krohn was given a new task, dealing in fact with propaganda, for he received a number of documentaries which were first to be screened for the King before being distributed in Madrid and Barcelona, via Reutzenberg and Hofer respectively.⁷³

Furthermore, the tightening of the Allied blockade added to the problem of receiving propaganda material from Germany, while, on the other hand, the long blacklists included new pro-German newspapers.⁷⁴ From 1917 on,

⁷⁰ German vice-consul in Las Palmas to Ratibor, 31 October 1917, *ibid.*, vol. 33.

⁷¹ Radio telegram, very confidential and urgent, from Alvarado to Polo de Bernabé, 18 May 1917, PAAA, Der Weltkrieg Nr. 5 e geh Spanien adh., Funksprueche: Spanien, R 20655.

⁷² Alfonso XIII to Wilhelm II, Palace of Madrid, 19 January 1918, PAAA, Spanien 61, Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Deutschland, R 12005.

⁷³ Rivière, 49.

⁷⁴ Even if there were some differences between them, the lists produced by the Allies at the end of the war included from Madrid ABC, El Correo Español, El Debate, El Siglo

by using their strict control of shipping and imports, the English also attempted to use the blockade to cut supplies of paper to the pro-German newspapers in various Spanish cities, succeeding in various places, particularly against the pro-German press of the islands, where the blockade was more difficult to evade. In this way, the pro-German newspapers *Gaceta de Tenerife*—which according to the British was subsidized by the German consul—and *La Provincia* of Las Palmas had to deal with a shortage of supplies of paper, which obliged them to reduce their numbers of pages in the spring of 1917 and even more so in the beginning of 1918.⁷⁵ However, in the spring of 1918, at the time of the last German offensive, Germany also stepped up its propaganda campaign in Spain from the publicity bureau of Flamme in San Sebastián. From there, the German consulate coordinated the dispatch of film material to the Imperial German consulates, so that from March of that year new German films were once again screened in Tarragona, Zaragoza, Pamplona, La Coruña, Santander, Vigo and Oviedo, moving in the summer of 1918 to Andalusia and Barcelona, where they were seen by 7000 people.⁷⁶ Their success in the cities of Catalonia was accompanied by the foundation of Spanish-German societies in Tarragona and Barcelona, which included several prominent members of society, as well as people with economic ties to Germany; such societies thus became new agents of German propaganda, organizing lectures and establishing ties with sympathetic newspapers. Nevertheless, the progress of the war was already working against German propaganda, as the German submarine campaign provoked in 1918 such sensitive situations that Madrid was on the verge of a diplomatic break with Berlin.

Futuro, El Mentidero, and La Tribuna; from Bilbao La Gaceta del Norte, the Diario de Vizcaya and El Pueblo; from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria El Tradicionalista, La Provincia, and El Día; from Barcelona El Día Gráfico and El Tiempo; from Málaga the Diario Malagueño and La Defensa; from La Coruña El Eco de Galicia and El Ideal Gallego; from Santander El Diario Montañés and El Noticiero Montañés; from Seville El Correo de Andalucía; from Granada the Gaceta del Sur; from Santa Cruz de Tenerife the Gaceta de Tenerife; and from Valencia Las Provincias; cf. Enemy trading list no. 2, revised to March 15, 1918 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), 122–41; “Liste officielle no. 12 des maisons considérées comme ennemies ou comme jouant vis-à-vis de l’ennemi le rôle de personnes interposées”, Journal Officiel de la République Française, 21 December 1918, 10968–73; and Consolidated statutory list of persons and firms in countries, other than enemy countries, with whom persons and firms in the United Kingdom are prohibited from trading, complete to Feb. 21st, 1919 (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1919), 122–47.

⁷⁵ Croker to Gaselee, 21 June 1917; telegram from Gaselee to Croker, 17 July 1917, NA, FO 395/121; and Ponce “Prensa y germanofilia”, 600.

⁷⁶ Albes, Worte wie Waffen, 361–2.

The economic situation, worsened by the submarine war, induced Spain to rely more strongly on the Entente; consequently, Germany threatened to cancel the concessions granted so far to Spanish shipping,⁷⁷ such as those relating to the traffic of certain Spanish products,⁷⁸ as well as to permits given in the submarine War Zone, in which shipping was prohibited.⁷⁹ After the last governments of Dato and García Prieto, the new government of national unity of Antonio Maura attempted to prudently redirect Spanish neutrality, however, now beyond the reach of German propaganda, he was not able to avoid a worsening of Spanish-German relations on the question of submarines, even if at the beginning of the war Maura had shown pro-German proclivities. In August 1918 his government wrote a note to the Berlin government that from that moment on it would replace Spanish ships sunk by submarines with German ships moored in Spanish ports. However, the Spanish government did not carry out this measure, since, according to diplomatic sources, this would have prompted a break with Germany. Besides, Berlin decided to hand over six steamers to Spain as repayment for sunken ships, attempting in this way to appease the Madrid cabinet, as the war situation had worsened considerably for the Central Powers and Germany watched with concern the forced rapprochement of Spain to the Entente.⁸⁰ The military outcome was already decided and with the end of the war, in November 1918, came also the end of the propaganda war, in which Germany had been so active during the whole conflict.

Some Conclusions

The present analysis of German propaganda as an integral part of Berlin's foreign policy in Spain permits a few conclusions, especially regarding the aims of Germany diplomacy and propaganda. In this sense, it was noted that Madrid's neutrality was the best outcome that the *Auswärtiges Amt* and pro-German sentiment in Spain could hope for, for if Spain did take part in the war in any way, it could only be on the side of the Entente. As

⁷⁷ Instruction sent by Bussche to Prinz Ratibor, 29 April 1918, PAAA, Der Weltkrieg Nr. 28, Druck der Entente auf Spanien (Tonnagefrage), R 21919.

⁷⁸ Chief of Navy General Staff to the Secretary of State of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, 13 February 1918; Secretary of State of the *Auswärtiges Amt* to Polo de Bernabé, February 1918, PAAA, Spanien 61, Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Deutschland, R 12005.

⁷⁹ Telegram from Polo de Bernabé to Alhucemas, 23 February 1918, PAAA, Der Weltkrieg Nr. 5 e geh Spanien adh., Funksprüche: Spanien, R 20657.

⁸⁰ Ponce, Canarias en la Gran Guerra, 323–43.

the German ambassador in Madrid had told Berlin at the outset of the war, taking Germany's side was totally out of the question for Spain, given its proximity to and dependence on France and Great Britain (and the inevitability of their reprisals). The impetus deployed by German propaganda from the start of the war stems then from Spain's international position, tied to the Entente in the Mediterranean agreements of 1907. The purpose of this propaganda was to neutralize any possible Spanish participation in the war on the side of its partners from Cartagena by means of an early massive campaign aiming at strengthening its neutrality. It should be recognized, nevertheless, that neither the French nor the British wanted Spain's direct participation in the war, primarily because in a short war its scant military resources could provide little support, and secondly because in a widespread conflict they mainly sought—and obtained—Spain's participation in the economic warfare. This bore on a more concrete and ambitious aim, which can be singled out in German propaganda: to block any excessive leaning of Spanish neutrality in the direction of the Entente. It is evident that by the end of the war Berlin had to face the reality of the pressure the Entente put on a dependent Spain, which in the summer of 1918 was close to breaking with Germany, as its propaganda was no longer able to make up for the devastating effects on all levels of its submarine war.

Thus, even if the Germans were not able to hold Spain to strict neutrality, at least until 1918 they were able to avoid its complete absorption by the Entente and a decisive swing towards the Allies. To achieve this, they made good use of an excellent propaganda web, linked to its information and espionage service, and massively leveraged opportunities presented to German cash for influencing the opinion of a press beset by chronic economic problems, which were aggravated by the war and compensated to a great extent by the German Embassy in Madrid. The principal argument of such German propaganda responded to the opportunistic model that surrounded Spain's international recovery, to be achieved by a successful Spanish recapture of Gibraltar and Morocco, which was to be made feasible by German proximity and a German victory. This irredentism and this recovery were also a constant factor in the more or less explicit bargaining ploys, which directed in particular to Alfonso XIII, dealt with the intended role of the King and Spain as mediator in the conflict. After all, pro-German sentiment had the advantage of being the more natural and instinctive response to the historical disagreements and difficulties that the relations with France and Great Britain still raised in Spain. Therefore,

this pro-German stance was based much more on the historical dislike of France and Great Britain present in the collective mind of the nation, than on any defense or admiration of Germany, a far away country, of which most Spaniards knew nothing. This argument afforded moreover various opportunities: first, to reach out quickly and easily to the collective feelings of a large part of the Spanish people, who in turn had little idea of what was being discussed in Europe; and, second, the opportunity to win over Alfonso XIII, who often overreached his governments, with a personal agenda that sought to maintain the limited room for maneuver that Germany's offers allowed him in confronting the Allies. It was a question of exploiting to the full an element which was betting on Germany, since the offers made to Spain and Alfonso XIII, and their more or less veiled propaganda were a delaying tactic, which proved effective in galvanizing Spain and its monarch into remaining neutral.

However, in order to assess the achievements of German propaganda with respect to Spain's neutrality, it will be still necessary to analyze the actual room for maneuver open to Madrid's foreign policy, which such propaganda wished to influence. As far as this question is concerned, it is evident that the wriggle room left to Spanish neutrality was tiny, this due to internal weaknesses, imbalances and divisions, and to the threats to the survival of the regime which involvement in the war would pose. And this is the key to the evolution of Spain's neutrality, despite the propaganda and the pressure exerted. In this way, even though the fall in April 1917 of Romanones—when he attempted to bring Spain closer to the Entente—depended on the involvement of the German Embassy and German propaganda, it had much more to do with the refusal of the King and the rest of his government to break the neutrality. Not even in August 1918, with Germany already defeated and Spanish-German relations extremely strained over the submarine question, would Spain take the decision to break off relations with Berlin, given the absence of national and international ties to face the abyss of war. If we bear in mind the tiny margin for movement open to Spain, or to be more precise its impotence, we can judge Germany's use of war propaganda in Spain as both a relative success and failure, stoking and rekindling a fire, which was already well alight—by Spain's desire to recover territory from France and Great Britain—but which was unlikely to burn much more fiercely. The enthusiastic involvement of so many Spaniards in this propaganda war, on one side or the other, had more to do with internal conflicts that saw the war as an extension of these internal struggles. For more than four years, the defenders

and opponents of the political status quo had numerous new propaganda resources at their disposal in the midst of an escalation of words, which magnified the social and political unrest.

To conclude, we can add that the extraordinary build up of propaganda services, especially that of Germany in Spain during the Great War, also had much to do with the messianic character of a total war, which meant no stinting of resources, least of all for propaganda purposes, which, far beyond the aims of German war diplomacy, were greatly overtaken by Spain's own internal dynamics. In this sense, Germany's frenetic activity drove a propaganda war which had a major impact on Spain's internal struggle, and which amounted to a civil confrontation of words, ideas and principles, concealed beneath political inclinations; a confrontation present in the war and precursor of the final crisis of Spain's political system.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

LURING NEUTRALS. ALLIED AND GERMAN PROPAGANDA IN ARGENTINA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

María Inés Tato

"The outbreak of hostilities between the warring nations was the favorite topic of the day, since one can almost say that nothing else was spoken of in the theatres, in the streets, in public places, and wherever people gathered. (...) from the first hours of the morning onward, a crowd eager for details began to plant itself in front of the (news) boards of LA PRENSA. (...) The public came and went until the late hours of the night."

"Repercusión de la guerra en la Argentina," *La Prensa*, August 3, 1914, 8.

Introduction

This is how *La Prensa*, the morning paper with the largest circulation in Argentina,¹ described the atmosphere in the city of Buenos Aires on the occasion of the outbreak of the Great War. The passionate interest in the events developing in a theatre of operations lying thousands of miles away may be explained by the confluence of a variety of factors. Firstly, the national population census conducted in the very same year 1914 had indicated that about 30% of the country's nearly eight million inhabitants consisted of European immigrants; in the case of the republic's capital, the corresponding figure reached 49%.² Since the last quarter of the 19th century, furthermore, Argentina had been integrated into the world market as one of the major exporters of grain and meat,³ as an importer of indus-

¹ At the time, the newspaper's circulation fluctuated between 160,000 and 200,000 copies (F. Antonio Le Rose and Montmasson, eds., *Guía periodística argentina* [Buenos Aires: no publisher, 1913], 12, 73–74; *Anuario Industrial de la Nación Argentina, 1919–20* [Buenos Aires: Benet Editor, 1920], 9).

² Vicente Vázquez Presedo, *El caso argentino: migración de factores, comercio exterior y desarrollo 1875–1914* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1979).

³ In the early 20th century, Argentina had overtaken the United States in the export of meat and now covered 90% of the British imports in this category. Parallel to this, it now ranked as the third largest grain exporter behind the United States and Russia (Pablo

trial goods, and as a beneficiary of capital investments coming from Europe. Although the United Kingdom was Argentina's major trading partner, Germany had recently begun to play an increasingly important role in the Argentine foreign trade.⁴ Finally, the liberal elites who had participated in the building of the Argentine national state around 1880 maintained fluid cultural and political contacts with the Old Continent, which they regarded as a model that was worthy of emulation. In short, the interest which the war elicited in Argentina was the consequence of its close demographic, economic, and cultural ties with Europe.

The two presidents in power during the conflict—the conservative Victorino de la Plaza and the radical Hipólito Yrigoyen—were, in spite of their different party affiliation, in agreement on the adoption of a policy of neutrality towards the war, which was not only in keeping with the local diplomatic tradition but also took into account the cosmopolitan character of Argentine society and the necessity to maintain trade relations with all warring nations. Within this pattern, neutrality served to prevent both internal and external tensions and enjoyed a widespread consensus in society, above and beyond the sympathies shown for one or the other of the belligerent nations. Only from 1917 onward, following a series of incidents with Germany resulting from its unrestricted submarine warfare, did the sympathies of public opinion turn into a militant polarization advocating either the abandonment or the maintaining of neutrality,⁵ thereby giving rise to heated debates in the press and in various forums, to an active associative movement, to the enlistment of hundreds of volunteer soldiers, and to massive street demonstrations that were not free of violence.⁶

Gerchunoff and Lucas Llach, *El ciclo de la ilusión y el desencanto. Un siglo de políticas económicas argentinas* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 2005), 36 and 43).

⁴ In 1913, 24.9% of Argentina's exports were destined for the British market and 12% for the German market, followed at some distance by France, Belgium, the United States, and Italy. In terms of imports, Argentina purchased 31.1% of its imported goods from the United Kingdom, 16.9% from Germany, and 14.7% from the United States (Roger Gravil, "The Anglo-Argentine Connection and the War of 1914–1918", *Journal of Latin American Studies* 9/1 [May 1977], 59–89; here 61 and 84).

⁵ For the conflicts caused by the sinking of ships sailing under Argentine flag, see Juan Archibaldo Lanús, *Aquel apogeo. Política internacional argentina, 1910–1939* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2001), 72–83. On the evolution of the neutral consensus in Latin America that coincides with the Argentine case, see Olivier Compagnon, "Entrer en guerre? Neutralité et engagement de l'Amérique latine entre 1914 et 1918", *Relations Internationales* 137 (2009), 31–43.

⁶ María Inés Tato, "La movilización de la sociedad argentina frente a la Primera Guerra Mundial", in: Silvia C. Mallo and Beatriz Moreyra, eds., *Miradas sobre la historia social en la Argentina en los comienzos del siglo XXI* (Córdoba: Centro de Estudios Históricos

Neutralists and “rupturists”—or Germanophiles and Aliadophiles, disqualifying nicknames used in their daily disputes—conceived of the Great War as an event that not only jeopardized the country’s position in the international arena but also the very definition of national identity.

This essay aims to provide an exploratory overview of the written propaganda that was diffused in Argentina by the Allied nations and the German *Reich* in the course of the armed conflict. This will be done by examining a selection of brochures, books, and other publications that were produced in Europe for distribution in Latin America or, in other cases, written and published in Argentina under European sponsorship. Accordingly, no consideration will be given to the other forms of propagandistic expression that were used (though less profusely) at the time, as for instance cinematographic films, posters, patriotic postcards, or conferences.

The propaganda developed by the warring countries in Argentina was an integral part of their strategy of economic warfare. It was designed to secure an adequate supply of food during the conflict (to the detriment of one’s enemies) and to pave the way for the elimination of economic competitors in the future postwar world.⁷ In this sense, the propaganda was essentially aimed at conquering public opinion and did not seek to change the Argentine government’s policy of neutrality, at least until 1917. By that time, the United States had already entered the war and sought to rally the countries of the American continent behind its own foreign policy under the banner of Pan-Americanism, notably by way of diplomatic pressure and economic sanctions.⁸

“Prof. Carlos S. A. Segreti”—Centro de Estudios de Historia Americana Colonial, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2008), 725–741; María Inés Tato, “La contienda europea en las calles porteñas. Manifestaciones cívicas y pasiones nacionales en torno de la Primera Guerra Mundial”, in: María Inés Tato and Martín Castro, eds., *Del Centenario al peronismo. Dimensiones de la vida política argentina* (Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi, 2010), 33–63.

⁷ Ricardo Weinmann, *Argentina en la Primera Guerra Mundial: neutralidad, transición política y continuismo económico* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 1994), 43. For the measures implemented, especially by the Allies, with regard to the Argentine foreign trade, see Gravil, “The Anglo-Argentine Connection,” and Phillip A. Dehne, *On the far western front. Britain’s First World War in South America* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

⁸ Lester D. Langley, *America and the Americas: the United States in the Western hemisphere* (Athens GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), 111–119; Weinmann, *Argentina en la Primera Guerra Mundial*, 118–120.

Allied Propaganda

Among the powers that had begun to compete for the favor of Latin American opinion, the Allies undoubtedly disposed of several comparative advantages. One of these advantages resulted from the monopoly on communications exercised by the United Kingdom, which, after declaring war on Germany, cut the submarine telegraph cables that linked its enemy to America, thereby preventing the arrival of alternative information regarding the conflict.⁹ It is thus not surprising that the Argentine press, which received its news from the Allied agencies Havas and Reuters, largely mirrored the perspective of the Triple Entente.¹⁰ This was the case, with some variations, for the major newspapers and magazines with a nationwide circulation, as for instance *La Prensa*, *La Nación*, *La Razón*, *El Diario*, *Crítica*, *Caras y Caretas*, *La Mañana*, *La Vanguardia*, *Plus Ultra*, *Nosotros*, *La Argentina*, and *Última Hora*, and even the official newspaper *La Época*, which, although an ardent defender of government neutrality, saw no reason to refrain from expressing its sympathy for the Allied cause.¹¹ However, the receptivity of the Argentine press to the Allied perspectives on the conflict responded to deeper and more permanent factors than mere economic ones. This was ultimately due to the firmly deeply-rooted predominance of the French cultural model among Argentina's social elites, which formed the basis of the preponderant sympathy for the Allied cause in Argentine public opinion during the Great War. From the mid-19th century onward, the ruling class' main cultural reference was indeed France; Paris in particular became the customary destination of its travels and extended stays abroad, which were seen as a way of acquiring the basic elements of a refined sociability which the Argentine elite identified with its social status.¹²

⁹ H. C. Peterson, *Propaganda for war. The campaign against American neutrality, 1914–1917* (New York: Kennikat Press, 1968), 12–14.

¹⁰ The propaganda which the United States directed at Latin America relied primarily on the handling of the news services (Alan Axelrod, *Selling the Great War. The making of American propaganda* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 190).

¹¹ On the reading of the war by the Argentine press, see Weinmann, *Argentina en la Primera Guerra Mundial*, 65; Raimundo Siepe, *Yrigoyen, la Primera Guerra Mundial y las relaciones económicas* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1992), 63–64; Olivier Compagnon, “Si loin, si proche...” *La Première Guerre mondiale dans la presse argentine et brésilienne*, in: Jean Lamarre and Magali Deleuze, eds., *L'envers de la médaille. Guerres, témoignages et représentations* (Québec: Presses Universitaires de Laval, 2007), 77–91.

¹² On the influence of French culture in Latin America, see Denis Rolland, *La crise du modèle français. Marianne et l'Amérique latine. Culture, politique et identité* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2000).

In addition to the information furnished by the news agencies, the Allied powers also circulated numerous publications in Argentina, in the form of leaflets and books that mostly came from the War Propaganda Bureau, which had been called to life one month after the outbreak of the war. Better known as Wellington House—a name borrowed from the seat of its center of operations—it disposed of a section that was responsible for the development of propaganda destined specifically for Spain, Portugal, and Latin America.¹³ British voluntary associations also contributed to the propagandistic activities, as for instance the *Comisión de Propaganda Pro-Aliados* (Committee for pro-Allied propaganda). Founded in Buenos Aires in 1915 and funded by the British Patriotic Committee, the British Society, and other community agencies, it was responsible for financing the publication of more than three million copies of at least 84 brochures, published mainly in London and Edinburgh.¹⁴

The principal authors of Wellington House were represented in the list of Spanish titles that were widely circulated in the country during the war: James M. Beck, James Bryce, G.K. Chesterton, Sir Edward Cook, John Masefield, and John Buchan,¹⁵ among others. The selection of publicists was based on various criteria: for one thing, on their direct political and/or military responsibility in relation to the conflict, as in the cases of

¹³ M. L. Sanders, "Wellington House and British Propaganda during the First World War", in: *The Historical Journal* 18/1 (March 1975), 119–146. The author cites the cooperation of the Reuters news agency in the official British propaganda program in Argentina, namely through the transmission of 10,000 words per month.

¹⁴ Arthur L. Holder (ed.), *Activities of the British community in Argentina during the Great War 1914–1919* (Buenos Aires: The Buenos Aires Herald, 1920), 376–378.

¹⁵ See, James M. Beck, *La doble alianza contra la triple entente*, first published as *The double Alliance against the Triple Entente* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914); *La opinión de América acerca del pleito alemán*, first published as *America's View of Germany's Case* (London: Central Committee for National Patriotic Organizations, 1914); James Bryce, *La actitud de la Gran Bretaña en la guerra actual*, first published as *The Attitude of Great Britain in the Present War* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1916); G.K. Chesterton, *La barbarie de Berlín*, first published as *The Barbarism of Berlin* (London/New York: Cassell, 1914); Sir Edward Cook, *Cómo Inglaterra se esforzó para mantener la paz: memoria de las negociaciones anglo-alemanas 1898–1914*, first published as *How Britain strove for Peace: A Record of Anglo-German Negotiations 1898–1914* (London: Macmillan, 1914); *Inglaterra y Turquía: las causas de la ruptura*, first published as *Britain and Turkey: the causes of the rupture* (London: Macmillan, 1914); *Por qué está en guerra la Gran Bretaña: causas y cuestiones en disputa*, first published as *Why Britain Is at War: The Causes and the Issues*, set out, in brief form, from the diplomatic correspondence and speeches of ministers (London: Macmillan, 1914), and John Masefield and John Buchan, *Gallipoli*, first published in London: William Heinemann, 1916; and *La batalla del Somme: primera fase*, first published as *The Battle of the Somme: First Phase* (London/New York: T. Nelson & Sons, 1916), respectively. In these works, both writers described their personal experiences on the battlefield.

Chancellor H.H. Asquith, Prime Minister David Lloyd George, the Secretaries of State Edward Grey and Arthur Balfour, the British Government Committee on the Treatment of Prisoners of War by the Enemy, and of the commander of the British Expeditionary Force Douglas Haig. On the other hand, the selection was also based on the intellectual prestige of the authors, either as historians who could shed light on the roots of the war, as in the case of Arnold Toynbee or Ernest Lavisse,¹⁶ or else as prominent personalities from other field of cultural activity, such as Gilbert Murray and J.W. Headlam, both scholars of Classical antiquity, the theater critic William Archer, the poet Alfred Noyes, the sociologist Emile Durkheim, the germanist Charles Andler, or the philologist Joseph Bédier.¹⁷ Moreover, it was seen as particularly opportune if the authors' political affiliation did not coincide with that of the government which published their writings—as in the case of the British socialist Ben Tillett, who supported the war¹⁸—, because this conferred a greater legitimacy to the war cause, and especially if they were of German nationality—as in the case of Prince Lichnowsky, the German ambassador to the United Kingdom in 1914,¹⁹ whose perspective on the war supported the Allied stance. Furthermore, it was not

¹⁶ See, Arnold Toynbee, *La destrucción de Polonia: un estudio de la eficiencia alemana*, first published as *The Destruction of Poland: A Study in German Efficiency* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1916), and *Las atrocidades en Armenia: el exterminio de una nación*, first published as *Armenian Atrocities, the murder of a nation* (London/New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), and Ernest Lavisse, *La práctica y la doctrina alemanas de la guerra*, first published as *German Theory and Practice of War* (Paris: A. Colin, 1915).

¹⁷ See, Gilbert Murray, *¿Cómo puede ser justa la guerra alguna vez?*, first published as *How Can War Ever Be Right?* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914); J.W. Headlam, *Las condiciones de paz de los Aliados*, first published as *The Peace Terms of the Allies* (London: R. Clay and Sons, 1917); William Archer, *Daltonismo neutral: carta abierta al Dr. Georg Brandes*, first published as *Shirking the Issue: A Letter to Dr. George Brandes* (London/New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917); Alfred Noyes, *La suerte del submarino alemán: el record de la eficiencia británica*, first published as *Mystery ships (trapping the "U" boat)* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916); Emile Durkheim, *¿Quién ha querido la guerra?*, first published as *Who Wanted War? The origin of the war according to diplomatic documents* (Paris: A. Colin, 1915), and *Alemania por encima de todo: la mentalidad alemana y la guerra*, first published as *Germany Above All: German Mentality and War* (Paris: A. Colin, 1915). Charles Andler, *El pangermanismo: sus planes de expansión alemana en el mundo*, first published as *Pan-Germanism: Its Plans for Expansion in the World* (Paris: A. Colin, 1915), and Joseph Bédier, *Los crímenes alemanes demostrados por testimonios alemanes*, first published as *The Hun's diary: German Proofs of German Crimes* (New York: S. J. Clarke, 1915).

¹⁸ Ben Tillett, *La responsabilidad de la guerra y a quienes corresponde esa responsabilidad*, first published as *Who Was Responsible for the War and Why?* (London: Whitwell Press, 1917).

¹⁹ Prince Lichnowsky, *Mi misión en Londres: 1912–1914*, first published as *My Mission to London: 1912–1914* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918).

uncommon to enlist the services of authors whose works were oriented to specific sectors of public opinion, as in the case of the popular authors George Herbert Ely and Charles James L'Estrange, who wrote for a young public under the pseudonym Herbert Strang, or of Ramiro de Maeztu, Francisco Melgar, and Juan de Silva,²⁰ who addressed the Catholic public (the major confessional current in Argentina). Similarly, texts produced by and for the labor movement could also be drawn upon.²¹ Finally, there was also a tendency to disseminate the works of US-American authors—such as Samuel Harden Church and Frederic W. Whitridge—, but also works written by Latin Americans—such as the Brazilian politician and diplomat Ruy Barbosa and the former Paraguayan president Cecilio Báez—and by Argentinians—such as the politician Francisco A. Barroetaveña.²²

The French government, for its part, organized its propaganda activities through the *Maison de la Presse* and, from March 1918 onward, the *Union des Grandes Associations Françaises contre la Propagande Ennemie*.²³ Although the belated character of these agencies (in comparison to their British counterpart) meant that the bulk of the Allied propaganda diffused in Argentina essentially came from the United Kingdom, pamphlets and books written in Spanish and printed in Paris were nevertheless in circulation, in addition to other writings in French that were read by the Argentine

²⁰ See, Herbert Strang, *Inglaterra y la guerra*, first published as *England and the War: A book for boys and girls* (London: H. Frowde, 1916), reissued in 1918 in Buenos Aires under the title *La Gran Bretaña y la guerra: librito para muchachas y muchachos*; Ramiro de Maeztu, *Inglaterra en armas: una visita al frente*, published in Spanish in London: Darling and Son, 1916. Francisco Melgar, *En desagravio* (Paris: Bloud and Gay, 1915), and *Visita de un católico español a Inglaterra* (London: The Menpes Printing and Engraving, 1917), and Juan de Silva, *El problema católico en la guerra* (Madrid: no publisher, 1917).

²¹ *Manifiesto de los obreros belgas á los obreros de todas las naciones*, first published as *Appeal of the Belgian Workmen to the Workmen of All Nations* (London: W. Speaight and Sons, 1916), and *El movimiento laborista británico y la guerra*, first published as *The British Labour Movement and the War* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1915).

²² See Samuel Harden Church, *La opinión americana sobre la guerra europea: réplica al manifiesto de los profesores alemanes*, first published as *The American Verdict on the War: A Reply to the Manifesto of the German Professors* (London: The Times, 1914); Frederic W. Whitridge, *Opiniones de un norteamericano sobre la guerra europea*, first published as *One American's Opinion of the European War, an answer to Germany's appeals* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1914); Ruy Barbosa, *Los conceptos modernos del derecho internacional* (London: Jas. Truscott and Son, 1916), and Cecilio Báez *En favor de los aliados* (London: Hayman, Christy & Lilly, 1917). Francisco A. Barroetaveñas, *Alemania contra el mundo* was published at least four times between 1915 and 1916 (Holder, *Activities*, 242).

²³ Gary S. Messinger, *British propaganda and the State in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 19–21.

intellectual circles.²⁴ Furthermore, the French community residing in Spain promoted the publication of the *Boletín de Información para España y América del Sur* (Information Bulletin for Spain and South America) and of the collection *Documentos e Informes del Comité Internacional de Propaganda* (Documents and Reports of the international committee of propaganda),²⁵ which were also distributed in Argentina. Both publications reproduced official documents from the Allied countries and numerous photographs of war scenes. The French living in Argentina also embarked on similar journalistic undertakings, as in the case of Louis Cogniat, the founder of the tri-weekly newspaper *La Razón Francesa* (later to become *La Acción Francesa*), which profited from the collaboration of personalities such as Maurice Barrès, Georges Clemenceau, Emile Durkheim, Gabriel Hanotaux, Charles Seignobos, Arnold Toynbee, and Louis Veuillot.²⁶

Another prominent example of propagandistic Allied press was the illustrated magazine *América-Latina*, which was published alternately in London and in Paris by Wellington House. Run by the Mexican author Benjamín Barrios, it appeared in variable intervals (sometimes bi-monthly, sometimes monthly) and was characterized by its careful editing and its profuse illustrations, which represented an invaluable element of propaganda.²⁷ Circulated in over 30 countries through the initiative of diplomatic and consular authorities, it defined itself as a “work of propaganda” distributed at “absolutely no cost” and urged the readers to disseminate it.²⁸ The magazine included speeches and official statements of the Allied governments, battle accounts, impressions from the front, assessments of military strategy, reproductions of caricatures pertaining to the war, portrayals of soldiers who had been wounded or killed in the conflict, excerpts from newspaper articles, book recommendations, contributions of European or American intellectuals. Some of these articles were later published separately in the form of pamphlets.

²⁴ Including texts by Emile Boutroux, Henri Bergson, Gustave Hervé, and Gabriel Hanotaux, among others.

²⁵ Georges Ciro, “Cronique”, *Bulletin Hispanique* 17/1 (1915), 67–68.

²⁶ Hebe C. Pelosi, “Publicaciones de la francofilia argentina”, *Temas de historia argentina y americana* 1 (Jul.-Dec. 2002), 65–96.

²⁷ On the propaganda value of this and other illustrated newspapers, see Sanders, “Wellington House”, 134–135.

²⁸ The back cover bore the caption “If you know of any person who has not received this publication, and you both sympathize with our program, please let us know so that we may in any case correct this unintended mistake. You can write to either one of the two offices” [the one located at 62, Rue Saint-Lazare, Paris, or the other at 54, Gresham Street, London].

As a general rule, the propagandistic literature of the Allies in Argentina cited the same arguments as those employed in other latitudes. Firstly, Germany was given the entire blame for the outbreak of the war, as the conflict was said to have resulted from its expansionist ambitions, which were in turn rooted in Pan-Germanism. Furthermore, the Allied involvement in the war was justified by the necessity to defend the neutrality of Belgium. In combination with this issue, German militarism was denounced as a threat to Western civilization, thereby leading to the identification of the German *Reich* with barbarism, based on the accounts of the atrocities that were attributed to it.²⁹ As in other regions, the impact of this topic on Argentine society was enormous and stimulated the founding of charitable organizations for the relief of the Belgian victims—as for instance the *Comité Argentino Pro Huérfanos Belgas* (Argentine Committee for Belgian orphans)—as well as the collaboration with the fundraising activities of the Red Cross of Allied countries. Another incident featuring Germany had similar repercussions: the execution of the British nurse Edith Cavell.³⁰ The celebrated Argentine poet Pedro B. Palacios (known under the pseudonym *Almafuerte*), for instance, dedicated his *Evangélica* to the memory of Miss Cavell, whose death he blamed on the Kaiser in his *Apóstrofe*³¹—a topic that was regularly taken up by other pro-Allied intellectuals in the public forums.

Another central theme of Allied propaganda was the condemnation of the German military tactics, from the use of poison gas to the submarine

²⁹ As disseminated, for example, in *Las atrocidades alemanas*, first published as *German atrocities in France; a translation of the official report of the French comision* (London: United Newspapers, 1915); in the pastoral letter of Cardinal Mercier (published under several titles, such as *Alocución del Cardenal Mercier en Santa Gúdula de Bruselas*; *Carta pastoral de su eminencia el cardenal Mercier, arzobispo de Malinas: acerca del patriotismo y la fortaleza*; *De vuelta de Roma: carta pastoral de Su Eminencia el Cardenal Mercier*), and in various pamphlets by Lord Bryce. About atrocities attributed to Germany, see John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

³⁰ The relevant pamphlets that were brought in circulation included, among others, the *Correspondencia del Secretario de Estado de Negocios Extranjeros de S. M. con el Embajador de los Estados Unidos en Londres respecto a la ejecución de Miss Cavell en Bruselas*, first published as *Correspondence with the United States ambassador respecting the execution of Miss Cavell at Brussels* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1915), and *Muerte de Edith Cavell*, first published as *The death of Edith Cavell* (London: Manchester, Daily News & Leader, 1915).

³¹ *Almafuerte y la guerra* (Buenos Aires: Otero and Co., 1916). He was also the author of *Hommage a miss Edith Cavell* (Buenos Aires: no publisher, 1915).

war and the Zeppelins,³² while, on the other hand, the Allied conduct of the war was presented as legitimate. So, for instance, the violation of the rules of international law implied in the British blockade was justified stating that the United Kingdom was “compelled in self-defence to violate its letter, while carefully regarding its spirit.”³³ In that sense, it was unfair that “International rules should be obeyed by both sides, but their repudiation by one side leaves the obligation of the other unimpaired.”³⁴ It was necessary to distinguish between international law and international morality, because “though doubtless the two are closely related they are not identical. The obligation of the first is absolute, that of the second is conditional; and one of its conditions is reciprocity.”³⁵

In sum, the conflagration was presented as an inevitable cultural collision between democracy and authoritarianism, between civilization and barbarism, between spirituality and materialism, as represented respectively by the powers of the Triple Entente and the Central Powers. The pro-Allied intellectuals of Argentina interpreted these general topics on the basis of local historical paradigms. Thus, the identification with the Allied cause was linked to the liberal Argentine tradition, which traced itself back to the struggle for independence from Spain that had involved the entire South American continent in the early 19th century, but also to the very recent experience of democracy that had been inaugurated by the electoral reform of 1912, which had introduced universal suffrage.

Moreover, the supporters of the Triple Entente regularly emphasized the contributions of the Allied nations to the building of Argentina’s open society as an additional argument that promoted the adherence to this cause.³⁶ In the recognition of the Allied legacy, there was a notorious absence: that of Russia. The czarist autocracy represented an important

³² German conduct of war was condemned in works such as *Métodos de guerra antiguos y modernos*, by W.H. Koebel, *El asesinato en el mar*, by Archibald Hurd, first published as *Murder at Sea* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1916), or *La matanza de los inocentes*, by Enrique Pérez (Londres: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1916).

³³ Arthur Balfour, *El bloqueo británico* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1915), 18; first published as *The British Blockade* (London: Darling, 1915)

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁶ As summarized by one of its principal spokesmen: “the past, present, and future of our homeland come together in our attitude towards the war: the past with the origins of our race and of our Latin cultural roots; the present with its political and economic interests that are linked the peoples of the Alliance; the future with its ideals of justice, namely the cause of the nationalities, of democracies, of civil liberties”. Ricardo Rojas, “La hora del destino”, in: *La guerra de las naciones* (Buenos Aires: La Facultad, 1924), 12–34, here 25–26. Excerpt from a speech held in 1917.

contradiction in the Aliadophile rhetoric, which identified the Allies with the cause of Liberty and Democracy. Therefore, the Russian empire was excluded from that discourse.³⁷ The situation changed after the revolution of February 1917, which made that inconsistency disappear, and was considered the defender of the liberties of oppressed peoples. This event allowed the full incorporation of Russia into the Allied cause, shared by “the France of the rights of man, the England of the Magna Carta, the Russia of the anti-czarist revolution, the Italy of the defeated papacy, the Portugal of the overthrown Braganzas, the American Union of the federal constitution.”³⁸ The last swerve of Russia’s appraisal occurred after the revolution of October. The Bolshevik government was accused of being a German agent and condemned for deserting from the Allied field.³⁹

On the other hand, the United States’ participation in the war from 1917 onward did not substantially alter the content of the locally diffused Allied propaganda, aside from the fact that it now included various speeches by President Woodrow Wilson. However, one should not overlook the fact—which was capitalized upon by US diplomacy⁴⁰—that the incidents resulting from submarine warfare gave rise to strong reactions in Argentine society and led to widespread demands to break off diplomatic relations with the German *Reich*, all of which effectively seemed to justify the shift in foreign relations proposed by Washington. In this situation, a number of rupturist leaders—in addition to focusing their speeches on Argentina’s cultural identity with the Allies and on the national pride that had been wounded by German aggressions—also began to lay claim to the foreign policy of the United States, which they presented as a model to be emulated by the rest of the continent.⁴¹ From this perspective, however, the Argentine government’s persistent adherence to neutrality merely concealed its loy-

³⁷ As in the enumeration of the Allied contributions made by the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Mañana*: “Our gratitude is for France, who gives us bread for the spirit; for Italy, whose sons produce our present and future grandeur; for England, who recognized Argentine independence and then offered us unlimited confidence in capitals which multiply the public wealth, and the example of her liberty” (“Alemania y «La Mañana»”, *La Mañana*, March 31, 1917, 3).

³⁸ Rojas, “La hora del destino”, 26.

³⁹ Olindo Malagodi, “Impresiones del día. Rusia y la Conferencia de París”, *La Nación*, November 30, 1917, 7; “La situación en Rusia”, *La Nación*, August 15, 1918, 6.

⁴⁰ Weinmann, *Argentina en la Primera Guerra Mundial*, 129–130.

⁴¹ Francisco A. Barroetaveña, “Discurso del Dr. F.A. Barroetaveña”, in: Francisco A. Barroetaveña et al., *La Argentina ante la guerra* (Buenos Aires: Otero and Co., 1917), 9–21, here 16–19.

alty to the German cause and meant the abandonment of Argentina's true national interests.⁴²

In summary, from 1917 onward, the pro-Allied propaganda produced in Argentina attained greater prominence than that produced by the powers of the Triple Entente themselves, a development that coincided with the spread of the doctrine of Pan-Americanism.

German Propaganda

The same factors that contributed to the propagation of the Allied cause in Argentine public opinion worked against the German Reich. In addition to the obstacles encountered in cable communications, the greater part of the Argentine intellectual elite had no knowledge of the German language or culture, so that its influence was limited to lawyers, doctors, and to the military—due to the latter's professional formation and to the networks of sociability that linked them to the Reich.⁴³

Working through its embassy in Buenos Aires and enlisting the support of the colony in Argentina, the German government undertook an ambitious propaganda effort by creating a daily Spanish-language newspaper that sought to overcome the language barriers between the Reich and local public opinion. On October 31, 1914, the evening newspaper *La Unión* was thus launched.⁴⁴ It was founded and run by the experienced German journalist Hermann Tjarks, the owner and director of one of the leading newspapers of the German community in Argentina: the *Deutsche La Plata Zeitung*.⁴⁵ The two newspapers owned by Tjarks as well as the *Argentinisches Tagesblatt*, the daily newspapers of the Turkish community (*Bandera Otomana*, *Azzaman* and *Assalam*), and one of the Spanish community's newspapers (*La Gaceta de España*, financed by the local German community)⁴⁶ became the sole defenders of the Central Powers in the field

⁴² Alberto Gerchunoff, "La diplomacia del Sr. Irigoyen", in: *El nuevo régimen* (Buenos Aires: Otero y García, 1918), 75–115.

⁴³ Weinmann, *Argentina en la Primera Guerra Mundial*, 63–64.

⁴⁴ On this newspaper, see María Inés Tato, "The Battle for Public Opinion: the Argentine newspaper *La Unión* during the Great War", in: Olivier Compagnon and María Inés Tato (eds.), *Toward a history of the First World War in Latin America* (Madrid/Frankfurt: Iberoamericana/Vervuert Verlag, 2013).

⁴⁵ Upon his death in April 1916, the management of *La Unión* was taken over by his sons Germán and Emilio.

⁴⁶ Ronald C. Newton, *German Buenos Aires, 1900–1933: Social change and cultural crisis* (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 1977), 35.

of Argentine journalism.⁴⁷ *La Unión* initially obtained its information from radiograms received via Nauen-Tuckerton and, from 1916 onward, from radiograms and telegrams relayed by Transocean, which linked the German radio stations of Nauen and Hannover with those of Sayville and Tuckerton in the United States. These services were presented by the newspaper as “free of British censorship.” Information was also compiled from the press of neutral countries, notably from Spain, and from Argentine media that were hostile to Great Britain, such as *The Southern Cross*, the newspaper of the Irish-Argentine community. *La Unión* had a circulation of roughly 25,000 copies per day.⁴⁸

From September 1915 onward, its pro-German campaign was supplemented by a bimonthly illustrated magazine entitled *Germania*, which was founded by the Argentine businessman Eduardo Retienne and managed by Pablo Fabatz. Unlike *La Unión*, which even continued to be published for a year after the end of the conflict, this magazine was short-lived: only 24 issues were published before it ceased appearing in June 1916, citing difficulties in the supply of high quality paper as a result of the war,⁴⁹ although it would seem that its disappearance was due to the lack of financial support on the part of the German-Argentine elite.⁵⁰ In addition to reproducing articles written by German authors, *La Unión* and *Germania* brought together the leading local intellectuals of Germanophile orientation: Ernesto Quesada, Juan P. Ramos, Augusto Bunge, Carlos Octavio Bunge, Alfredo Colmo, Gustavo Martínez Zuviría, Ernesto Vergara Biedma, and Calixto Oyuela, among others.⁵¹ Both newspapers also relied on the collaboration of the Swiss citizen G.W. Zimmerli, the representative of the German Red Cross, who was usually accused of being an agent of German propaganda in South America.⁵² By way of subscriptions, *La Unión* and

⁴⁷ On the activities of the local German community's daily newspapers, see Katrin Hoffmann, “¿Construyendo una ‘comunidad’? Theodor Alemann y Hermann Tjarks como voceros de la prensa germanoparlante en Buenos Aires, 1914–1918”, in: *Iberoamericana. América Latina, España, Portugal* 9/33 (2008), 121–138.

⁴⁸ *Anuario Industrial de la Nación Argentina*, 11.

⁴⁹ “Suspensión de Germania,” *La Unión*, June 9, 1916, 9.

⁵⁰ Newton, *German Buenos Aires*, 36.

⁵¹ On some of these authors's position during the war, see María Inés Tato, “Contra la corriente. Los intelectuales germanófilos argentinos frente a la Primera Guerra Mundial”, in: *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas / Anuario de Historia de América Latina* 49 (2012), pp. 205–223.

⁵² Frederick C. Luebke, *Germans in Brazil: A comparative history of cultural conflict during World War I* (Baton Rouge LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 106–110.

Germania were able to circulate in other South American countries and even in a number of European countries.

With regard to propaganda works published in the form of pamphlets or books, numerous writings of German authors were brought into circulation during the Great War, having been printed both in Buenos Aires and at various locations in Spain, a country that stood out among the neutral nations on account of the overwhelming predominance of its Germanophile tendencies.⁵³ As in the case of Allied propaganda, the German propaganda also resorted to the criterion of authority when it came to selecting their most representative authors. *Alemania y la guerra europea* (Germany and the European war), a work that presented the German perspective regarding the causes of the war and the responsibility for the conflict while also providing an overview of Germany's cultural, political, and economic development, relied on the collaboration of an entire group of prominent German intellectuals from various disciplines. These included, among others, the historians Otto Hintze, Friedrich Meinecke, Hermann Oncken, Paul Darmstädter, and Erich Marcks; the philosopher of religion Ernst Troeltsch; the diplomat Wilhelm Solf; the economist Hermann Schumacher; and the jurists Walter Schoenborn and Ernst Zitelmann.⁵⁴

However, defenders and propagators of German culture were also recruited among the prominent local figures, as for instance the German professor Richard Gans—whose academic career was largely pursued in Argentina, where he founded the chair of Physics at the National University of La Plata—and the jurists Ernesto Quesada and Juan P. Ramos.⁵⁵

⁵³ Gerald H. Meaker, "A civil war of words: the ideological impact of the First World War on Spain, 1914–18", in: Hans A. Schmitt, ed., *Neutral Europe between war and revolution, 1917–23* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), 1–65, here 8–11.

⁵⁴ Otto Hintze, E. Troeltsch, Hermann A. Schumacher, Guillermo Solf, and Hans Delbrück, *Alemania y la guerra europea: su política y sus instituciones*, Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1916; Friedrich Tezner, Ottocar Weber, Heinrich Becker, Erich Marchs, and Paul Darmstädter, *Alemania y la guerra europea: aliados y enemigos de Alemania*, Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1916; Hermann Oncken, Walter Schoenborn, Friedrich Meinecke, Ernst Zitelmann, and Otto Hintze, *Alemania y la guerra europea: génesis y espíritu de la guerra*, Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1916. Both this three-volume Spanish edition as well as some chapters of the same work published in the form of pamphlets by the *Unión de Libreros Alemanes* (Union of German Booksellers) circulated in Argentina. Created by the historian Wilhelm Keiper and financed by the local German community, the latter organization printed around one million copies of various propaganda titles between 1917 and 1921 (Newton, *German Buenos Aires*, 36).

⁵⁵ See Richard Gans, *Las universidades alemanas* (Buenos Aires: Unión de Libreros Alemanes, 1918); Ernesto Quesada, *La actual civilización germánica y la presente guerra* (Buenos Aires: no publisher, 1914), and of *El "peligro alemán" en Sud América* (Buenos Aires: Selín Suárez, 1915, and Juan P. Ramos, *La significación de Alemania en la guerra europea*

Authors of British nationality who had been critical of their own government's policies were likewise drawn upon—paradigmatic examples being Roger Casement⁵⁶ and Houston Stewart Chamberlain⁵⁷—as were other critical authors from neutral countries—such as the Danish Jules H. West.⁵⁸ As in the case of Allied propaganda, texts aimed at specific social groups such as Catholics⁵⁹ and workers⁶⁰ were also published.

The accounts of war events formed a prominent category in the catalogue of German propaganda publications in Argentina, being given far more emphasis than in Allied propaganda;⁶¹ it included the book *La Batalla*

(Buenos Aires: no publisher, 1915), and *Alemania ante la guerra* (Buenos Aires: Selín Suárez, 1915).

⁵⁶ *Ultimo discurso* (no place: no publisher, no date), first published as *Roger Casement's speech from the dock* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: '76 Pub. Co., 1916?).

⁵⁷ *La libertad inglesa* (Buenos Aires: Unión de Libreros Alemanes, 1918); *Alemania* (Buenos Aires: Germania, no date); *La verdad de la guerra* (Spanish translations of selected passages from Chamberlain's war essays, originally published in German. Barcelona: Germania, 1916).

⁵⁸ *Alemania la pendenciera: observaciones de un neutral* (Buenos Aires: Guillermo van Woerden, no date).

⁵⁹ A. J. Rosenberg, *La Guerra Alemana y el Catolicismo: defensa alemana contra ataques franceses*, first published as *Der deutsche Krieg und der Katholizismus. Deutsche Abwehr französischer Angriffe* (St. Paul: Wanderer Printing Co., 1916); Heinrich Schrörs, *La guerra y el catolicismo*, first published as *Der Krieg und der Katholizismus* (Kempten: Kösel'sche Buchhandlung, 1915), and *Cultura alemana, Catolicismo, Guerra Mundial*, first published as George Pfeilschifter, ed., *German Culture, Catholicism and the World War* (St. Paul: Wanderer Printing Co., 1916), a two-volume compilation of articles by the Church historian Heinrich Finke, the theologians Joseph Sauer, Heinrich Schrörs, Joseph Mausbach, Godehard Joseph Ebers, Peter Lippert, Georg Pfeilschifter, the bishop Michael von Faulhaber, and the Catholic leader Hermann Platz.

⁶⁰ *Resultado de los servicios prestados por los seguros del Estado para el proletariado* by the Centre Party leader Johannes Giesberts (Buenos Aires: Unión de Libreros Alemanes, no date), and *La acción social obrera en Alemania* by Robert Schmidt (Buenos Aires: Unión de Libreros Alemanes, 1918).

⁶¹ Titles include *Skagerrak*, a chronicle of the Battle of Jutland by Commander Georg von Hase (Buenos Aires: Martín Schneider, 1916), *Ayesha. Aventuras de los tripulantes del Emden*, by Lieutenant Commander Hellmuth von Mücke (Buenos Aires: Fénix, 1915), first published as *Ayesha* (Berlin: Verlag August Scherl, 1915); *De Alemania al Mediterráneo en submarino*, by Lieutenant Commander Walther Forstmann (Buenos Aires: Fénix, 1916), first published as *U39 auf Jagd im Mittelmeer* (Berlin: Ullstein and Co., 1918); *El Moewe: relato de la primera campaña de este crucero alemán en el Atlántico*, by Nikolaus zu Dohna-Schlodien (Buenos Aires: Martín Schneider, 1917), first published as *SMS. Möwe* (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1916); *El primer viaje del submarino mercante Deutschland*, by Captain Paul König (Buenos Aires: Martín Schneider, 1917), first published as *Die Fahrt der Deutschland* (Berlin: Hollerbaum and Schmidt, 1916); *El submarino de guerra -U 202-: sus hazañas y peripecias*, by Edgar von Spiegel von und zu Peckelsheim (Buenos Aires: Martín Schneider, 1917), first published as *Kriegstagebuch U 202* (Berlin: A. Scherl GMBH, 1916); and *Una página de gloria de la flota alemana* (Buenos Aires: Martín Schneider, 1916).

del Marne (The Battle of the Marne), an analysis of the military engagements of 1914 written by the Argentine general José Félix Uriburu, who had been military attaché in Berlin until the outbreak of the war.

The Spanish were also very strongly represented in the list of pro-German authors, the most prominent being the economist Vicente Gay, the Carlist politician Juan Vázquez de Mella, as well as the writers and journalists Gabriel María Vergara, Ángel Ruiz y Pablo, Francisco Martín Llorente, and Narciso Ruiz Escobar.⁶² Moreover, there were numerous Spaniards among the permanent or occasional collaborators of *La Unión*, as for instance Javier Bueno, Enrique Domínguez Rodiño (correspondent in Germany), José Ladrón de Guevara, Ricardo Monner Sans, and José María Salaverría, while the newspaper often reproduced the views of the politicians Joaquín Costa and Antonio Maura, and of the writers Jacinto Benavente and Pío Baroja.⁶³

One of the central themes of German propaganda was precisely the refutation of the accusations against the *Reich*. Several works produced by the contributors of *La Unión* were devoted to this objective, as for instance *Gitanos y caballeros: dos clases de gentes y dos clases de armas*, by Pedro de Córdoba (pseudonym of the Portuguese geographer Gonzalo de Reparaz); *Delenda est Germania!*, by the Spanish republican Manuel A. Bares (in three volumes); and *El enigma de la Guerra*, by Néstor Carrico (in eight volumes).

For its part, the daily newspaper published by Tjarks printed various translated excerpts from *Truth about Germany: Facts about the war*, published in 1914 in New York by the self-styled Committee of Representative German Citizens.⁶⁴ It also assumed the daily task of comparing the Allied cable information with the news from neutral or German sources, but also

⁶² See, Vicente Gay, *El pensamiento y la actividad alemana en la guerra europea* (Madrid: Francisco Beltrán, no date), and *El imperialismo y la guerra europea: los principios nacionalistas y el iberismo* (Madrid: Francisco Beltrán, 1915); Juan Vázquez de Mella, *Discurso completo pronunciado en el Teatro de la Zarzuela de Madrid el 31 de mayo de 1915* (Buenos Aires: Fénix, 1915); Gabriel María Vergara, *En favor de la ciencia alemana* (Buenos Aires: Unión de Libreros Alemanes, no date); Ángel Ruiz y Pablo, *La codicia de los aliados en la guerra actual* (Barcelona: Tipografía Xalapeira, no date); Francisco Martín Llorente, Lieutenant-colonel of the Spanish General Staff, author of *De re bellica* under the pseudonym Armando Guerra (Madrid: Blass y cia., 1916), and Narciso Ruiz Escobar, *Para los amantes de la verdad* (Barcelona: no publisher, 1918).

⁶³ The latter two were the exception among the Spanish intellectuals of higher renown, who were predominantly in favor of the Allied cause (Francisco Romero Salvadó, *Spain 1914–1918: Between War and Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1999), 14).

⁶⁴ The British refutation of this work was taken in charge by Douglas Salden and Maurice Low in *The Real "Truth About Germany"* (New York/London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1914).

of denouncing the manipulation of war photographs by the news agencies,⁶⁵ and, in a general way, of refuting the charges directed against the German *Reich*. The newspaper claimed that the greater part of the press was biased when it came to evaluating the same war episodes, depending on whether the Allies or the Central Powers played the main role in them. Thus, for example, the press deemed it a feat of "high diplomacy" that "three nations of white race (...) secretly join, calling the black and yellow races to their aid, in order to annihilate another white nation (...) for the sole reason of envying it its progress and its industry," whereas when Germany "took all necessary measures to prepare its defense against a sudden attack and to secure its own existence," there was talk of Caesarism, imperialism, or militarism. While the cooperation between Belgium, France, and England was described as "high politics and as loyalty to the international treaties," the marching of German troops through that country "in order to forestall the planned (military) strike, in self-defense," was termed a "violation of neutrality." Just as the Belgian attacks against the German troops were qualified as acts of "heroism," the latter were accused of committing "atrocities" when they "punish(ed) such acts in accordance with the customs of war and international conventions." The use of religious buildings for military purposes on the part of the French and Belgians was characterized by the press as "good tactics or strategy," but the German bombardment of these points was branded as "sacrilege, desecration, or barbarism." The British onslaughts on neutral shipping were viewed as "supremacy on the seas, the protection of naval traffic, or the defense of neutral trade," whereas the German attacks on enemy ships were conceived of as "piracy." The use of "dum-dum" bullets by the Allies, in violation of the Hague Conventions, was seen as "humanitarianism," while the German bombardments were regarded as "barbarism and a violation of international treaties."⁶⁶

Following a similar strategy, the German propaganda tended to stigmatize a number of Allied practices as "barbaric," as for instance the afore-

⁶⁵ In the pamphlet *La calumnia gráfica* (Buenos Aires: Unión de Libreros Alemanes, no date), a number of pictures from the battlefields that had been published by the Allied press were also compared with the alleged originals of the same pictures.

⁶⁶ All the previous quotes are taken from "Catecismo de la Triple Entente", in: *La Unión*, October 31, 1914, 4. Some of these aspects were further expounded in various pamphlets that were put in circulation, such as *La culpa de Bélgica: contestación al profesor Waxweiler*, by Richard Grasshof, first published as *The Tragedy of Belgium: an answer to Professor Waxweiler* (New York: G.W. Dillingham Co., 1915), and *Extracto de la colección de documentos probando las violaciones del derecho de gentes por los estados en guerra con Austria-Hungría* (Buenos Aires: no publisher, 1916).

mentioned recourse to colonial troops—which was vilified from a clearly racist perspective—⁶⁷ and the alleged ill-treatment given to enemy soldiers and prisoners of war. The latter aspect formed the nucleus of a book that was up to six editions and was widely promoted by its author in a series of lectures held at various localities in Argentina and Uruguay: *Los bárbaros*, by Alfredo Luis Beltrame. In this book, the journalist and war correspondent of *La Unión* wrote about his experience in French war prisons, in which he had been detained on a charge of spying for Germany. Beltrame described the poor sanitary conditions and the dietary deficiencies in the prisons of Lyon and Dijon, but also the forced labor and physical mistreatment of prisoners of war:

“The German officer who occupied the cell in front of mine was battered in a fierce way. The guards took him out his cell and, in the corridor, beat him with the rifle butts, punched him and kicked him [...] [until] the poor wretch fell down exhausted, unconscious [...] This scene repeated two, four and even eight times a day [...] a man ill-treated and hit in a consummate barbaric way by French soldiers, representative of Culture, Liberty, Civilization, Justice, Equality, Fraternity, Law -all in capital letter, as French newspapers use to write”.⁶⁸

In the same vein, the experiences of two volunteer soldiers in the Foreign Legion—one Argentine, the other Swiss—were also publicized. Both criticized various facets of military life in the Foreign Legion, from issues of health to matters of discipline, but also the lack of recognition of their efforts on the part of the French state.⁶⁹

Just as the German propaganda attempted to turn the criticism that it had incurred for its conduct of the war against the Allies, another of its main arguments consisted in rejecting the characterization of the German *Reich* as an imperialist power that posed a threat to world order. Arguing the contrary, it passed on this description to the United Kingdom, which was said to have become involved in the conflict in order to eliminate German trade competition in the immediate postwar period.⁷⁰ It accord-

⁶⁷ *Empleo, contrario al Derecho Internacional, de Tropas de color en el teatro de la Guerra europeo de parte de Inglaterra y Francia* (no place: no publisher, no date).

⁶⁸ Alfredo Luis Beltrame, *Los bárbaros* (Buenos Aires: Guillermo van Woerden y Cía., 1917), 76–77.

⁶⁹ Juan B. Homet, *Diario de un argentino soldado en la guerra actual* (Buenos Aires: Martín Schneider, 1918); Maximilian Kirsch, *Le légionnaire étranger: de légionnaire français a soldado alemán* (Buenos Aires: Martín Schneider, 1918).

⁷⁰ *La neutralidad de España, un peligro para Inglaterra: Gibraltar y España. Inglaterra usurpadora*, by Sidi-Guatz-Melem (no place: Imprenta moderna, 1917); *El vampiro del*

ingly emphasized its conflicts with other states and its character of aggressor throughout history. Postulated by German propagandistic literature in general, this theme was rapidly adapted to the Argentine context. The Germanophile intellectuals never ceased to underline the incidents that had been harmful to Argentine national interests and in which the United Kingdom had been the main protagonist, such as the English invasion of 1806/1807 on the Río de la Plata and the occupation of the Malvinas/Falkland Islands in 1833, which have been claimed by Argentina ever since. This diplomatic conflict was brought up again in order to emphasize the disparity of interests that separated the two states and in order to condemn the Aliadophiles for their support—which was qualified as unpatriotic—of the country that had appropriated part of the national territorial heritage. *La Unión* went one step further in restating the irredentist claim to the Malvinas/Falklands and stressed the expediency of a rapprochement with Germany for the purpose of recuperating the archipelago in the event that the Germans should win the war.⁷¹ In other words, the German propaganda attempted to arouse the support of public opinion on the basis of possible points of convergence with Germany and with anti-imperialism, a feeling that was very deeply rooted in the ideological framework of Argentina.

This topic was particularly linked to the anti-North American sentiments that had been common to the Latin American cultural sphere since the beginning of the 20th century, following the Spanish-American War that culminated in the independence of Cuba.⁷² Although the general condemnation of US-American imperialism had already made its appearance at the beginning of the Great War,⁷³ it was revived with greater intensity from 1917 onward as a result of the United States' diplomatic campaign to change the direction of foreign policy in the Latin American nations. According to the supporters of the German cause,

The pro-Allied propaganda, until now a Platonic conqueror of sympathies, is practicing and abetting a vast plan that threatens the sovereignty and the natural interests of the nations of America, seeking to conquer the opinions

continente. Exposición de la política inglesa según sus impulsos, recursos y efectos (Buenos Aires: Hans Fändrich, 1917), by Count Ernst zu Reventlow, first published as *Der Vampir des Festlandes. Eine Darstellung der englischen Politik nach ihren Triebkräften, Mitteln und Wirkungen* (Berlin: E.S. Mittler und Sohn, 1915).

⁷¹ For instance in "Las Malvinas," *La Unión*, December 8 and 23, 1914, 3.

⁷² Oscar Terán, *Vida intelectual en el Buenos Aires fin-de-siglo (1880–1910). Derivas de la "cultura científica"* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000), 207.

⁷³ Quesada, *El "peligro alemán"*, 32, 52–53.

of their peoples in order to draw them into the war, with the clear aim of favouring the political and economic interests of the United States.⁷⁴

Faced with this new orientation of Allied propaganda—which was mostly channeled through the periodical press and the speeches of its Argentine supporters—the Germanophile reaction consisted of a renewed denunciation of the United States' expansionist and economic motives. From this point of view, the United States' plan would involve

effectively dominating all American governments and being the administrators of the continent, in order to take control of the trade (...) to establish, under their rule, the federation of republics of which they already speak, and—in the name of liberty and of the Monroe doctrine—to guide, dominate, exploit, and protect them, not from the threat of Europe, our friend, but from trade and European capital, their enemies.⁷⁵

Consequently, it was proclaimed that the Pan-Americanism promoted from Washington was not based on the equality of nations but on their subjection; it merely amounted to a "North Americanism" and represented "another diabolical invention of the crudest selfishness and most extreme imperialism."⁷⁶ Taking advantage of the growing British weakness after long years of war, the United States was headed to impose its leadership on the Latin American nations, which is why it fostered divisions among them. To this end, it sought to undermine the continental influence of the strongest South American nation, namely Argentina,⁷⁷ by encouraging the ambitions and the misgivings of its neighbors (Brazil, Uruguay, and Chile) and by leading them to an armed conflict. Pedro de Córdoba believed that the rivalry between Brazil and Argentina would inevitably lead to an armed conflict, but recommended defusing the conflict potential with the other neighboring countries and reaffirming "the solidarity of our destinies, in order to jointly seek the harmonious, friendly, and fraternal solution to the problems that divide us," thereby giving birth to a block of nations which he called "Southern America," to which an "Equatorial America" and a "Central America" would later need to be added.⁷⁸ The first step toward

⁷⁴ Ernesto Vergara Biedma, *Guerra de mentiras: el discurso de Wilson y el peligro yanqui* (Buenos Aires: L. J. Rosso, 1917), 20.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁷⁶ Alfredo Colmo, *Mi neutralismo* (Buenos Aires: Renovación, 1918), 102 and 60.

⁷⁷ On the widespread belief in the existence of a "manifest destiny" for Argentina during this period, see Roberto Etchepareborda, "La generación argentina del destino manifesto", *Investigaciones y Ensayos* 16 (January-June 1974), 111–137.

⁷⁸ Pedro de Córdoba, *Nuestra guerra: la coalición contra la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: La Gaceta de España, 1917), 63, 78.

the creation of this unity was the Conference of Neutral Powers convened by President Yrigoyen.⁷⁹ In March 1917, the Argentine head of state invited the countries of Latin America to a conference that was to be held in Buenos Aires in early 1918 with the aim of drafting a joint diplomatic strategy regarding the Great War and with a view to neutralizing the Pan-American proposal of the United States. Inspired by a sort of Pan-Hispanism that rested on the affirmation of the summoned nations' common origins and fate, the official project came to nothing due to the fact that most Latin American countries had already broken off diplomatic relations with Germany by the scheduled date of its realization. The title of the conference was changed in an effort to adapt to this changing reality: from a "Conference of Neutral Powers," it thus became a "Peace Conference," then a "Trade Conference," and finally a "Conference of Latin American Nations."⁸⁰ Yrigoyen's rejection of Pan-Americanism and his strict preservation of neutrality in spite of internal and external pressure earned him the support of the pro-German publicists and, simultaneously, the unfounded accusation of Germanophilia on the part of some exponents of the Allied cause.

In the opinion of the German propagandists, the abandoning of neutrality was unjustified. The sinking of Argentine ships in the wake of submarine warfare was only a minor incident that had been adequately compensated for by the Reich. In any case, the submarine war—which was not covered by international law and could therefore not be in violation of nonexistent regulations⁸¹—was merely the collateral effect of a strategy into which Germany had been coerced by the British blockade, the latter being much more detrimental to Argentine national interests than the former.⁸² Unlike the rupturists, they also denied that these war incidents constituted a violation of national sovereignty.

From 1917 onward, the stubborn defense of the official foreign policy was in addition to the topics that had been already introduced into Argentina by German propaganda. The denunciation of the US-American interference in the country's foreign affairs, the violation of its national self-determination, the extolment of Pan-Hispanism as the best alternative strategy (as opposed to Pan-Americanism) for reaffirming Argentine leadership in Latin America, and the defense of neutrality as the most advisable

⁷⁹ Ibid., 75.

⁸⁰ Weinmann, *Argentina en la Primera Guerra Mundial*, 109 and 117.

⁸¹ Alfredo Colmo, *Mi neutralismo*, 46; Vergara Biedma, *Guerra de mentiras*, 8.

⁸² Vergara Biedma, *Guerra de mentiras*, 25.

foreign policy were incorporated into the existing propagandistic repertoire. In this way, the initially small audience of German propaganda grew in size, to the point of coinciding, in some of these aspects, with others supporters of neutrality who were not necessarily committed to the defense of the German cause. It thus converged with the government party, the Catholics, the anarchists, the international socialists, and with the economic groups that aspired to maintain economic relations with all warring countries. Although the German propaganda saw the fulfillment of its expectation that the Argentine government would make no changes to its policy of neutrality, its campaign to reverse the dominant conception of Germany in public opinion did not prove an equal success.

Conclusions

In the context of the Great War, Argentina witnessed intensive propagandistic activities on the part of both warring nations. Hundreds of books and pamphlets as well as various periodical publications—from newspapers to illustrated magazines—were brought into circulation in order to spread the respective propagandistic message that was meant to generate support for the one or other cause. Far from addressing an indifferent society, the wartime propaganda attracted the interest of a public opinion that had been mobilized since the very beginning of the war, and which became increasingly involved and interested in the ups and downs of the conflict from 1917 onward. Under these circumstances, the combined impact of the United States' entry into the war and of the diplomatic quarrels with Germany over the issue of submarine warfare elicited an even greater involvement on the part of Argentine society and thus also a greater receptivity to the propaganda campaigns of the various powers.

Although they usually resorted to Spanish translations of propaganda texts of quasi universal usage, both the Allies and the German Reich disposed of intelligence agencies with specialized branches that were assigned the task of developing propaganda material that took into account the specific tendencies of public opinion in the various nations. In both cases, however, the activism to attract support profited especially from the adaptation of these general themes to the local idiosyncrasies made by the Argentine intellectuals. Accordingly, the Allied propaganda focused primarily on the dissemination of a stereotype of Germany as a nation based on militarism, barbarism, and authoritarianism—in contrast to the Allied powers, which were identified with liberty and democracy. Both these

values, which local publicists associated with specific periods in the history of Argentina, added yet another common denominator to the emotional bond that linked Argentine society to the Allied nations and required practically no argumentation.

Germany, for its part, also proved versatile when it came to choosing the central themes of its propagandistic activities. In addition to taking up the defense of the German cause by emphasizing its contributions to universal culture and science, the works of Germanophile intellectuals addressed sensitive issues that touched upon key problems of the Argentine past and enjoyed a fairly widespread social consensus, as for instance anti-imperialism and irredentism. This choice of topics gave German propaganda a greater social range, thus enabling it to overcome the inherent limitations of the simple exaltation of German *Kultur*, though not enough to establish a portrayal of Germany that competed with the one propagated by the Allies.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the respective propagandistic efforts, it is ultimately not enough to analyze the publicized contents' potential for persuading the society that one or the other cause is legitimate and therefore worthy of sympathy. The cultural horizon in which these efforts took place must also be considered. Thus, although German propaganda could have successfully attuned itself to the interests and expectations that were appreciated by Argentine nationalism, it found itself confronted with the quasi undisputed dominance of a cultural identity that was primarily rooted in the French model, from the perspective of which the other Allied nations were assessed and interpreted—and to whom the support was extended. Accordingly, the absorption of Allied propaganda was facilitated by the prior identification with its main ideological and cultural values, whereas the penetration of German propaganda encountered obstacles that proved difficult to overcome, notably due to the peripheral position of German culture in relation to the Argentine cultural sphere.

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