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OKLAHOMA AND THE WORLD WAR, 1914-1917:
A STUDY IN PUBLIC OPINION

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OKLAHOMA AND THE WORLD WAR, 1914-1918:

A STUDY IN PUBLIC OPINION

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PREFACE

This is the initial attempt to investigate and evaluate the reactions of Oklahomans to the momentous question of American entry into World War I. While several works have appeared dealing with the activities of various Oklahoma organizations and individuals once the United States became a belligerent, the majority were written immediately following the conflict and lack the perspective of time and recent research.¹ In addition, a number of references to Sooner

¹Oklahoma State Council of Defense, William T. Lampe (ed.), Sooners in the War: Official Report . . . Containing the War Activities of the State of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City, 1919); W. W. Welch, J. S. Aldridge, and L. V. Aldridge (compilers), The Oklahoma Spirit of '17 (Oklahoma City, 1920); William T. Lampe, Tulsa County in the World War (Tulsa, 1919); Paul W. Smith, "Evidences of Opposition to War Policies in Oklahoma" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Tulsa, 1950); Charles C. Bush, "The Green Corn Rebellion" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1932); Edwin K. Wood, "The University of Oklahoma in World War" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1923); O. A. Hilton, "The Oklahoma Council of Defense and the First World War," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XX (March, 1942), pp. 18-42; Monroe Lee Billington, "Senator Thomas P. Gore and Oklahoma Public Opinion, 1917-18" (unpublished paper read before the American Historical Association, Washington, D. C., December 30, 1958). Scattered brief and general references to World War I public opinion and reaction in Oklahoma appear in most of the state histories and monographs cited in n. 1., p. 3 of this study.

state public opinion appear in various Oklahoma histories, monographs, and periodical articles, but for the most part these are brief and general and, like the works previously cited, make no attempt to assay the total view.

Public opinion studies such as this have been done for the states of Indiana, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, and North Dakota as well as a Pacific Coast press reaction survey and ancillary purviews including Illinois and Maryland. None of these, however, may be said to represent the Oklahoma point of view toward the war, although the various Midwest studies generally reflect the strong isolationist sentiment. Oklahoma's position was unique among the states in 1914 although Arizona and New Mexico shared some of the distinguishing characteristics. A state for only seven years, the frontier impact, a predominantly native-American and rural population, and an agrarian economy, all reflecting both southern and midwestern viewpoints, represented the basic forces shaping the Sooner climate of opinion.

Solidly Democratic except for the Republican stronghold in the northern section, the state administration and the majority of the daily press and citizenry loyally supported Woodrow Wilson. When unhappy with the President's foreign and defense policies, they often maintained a discreet silence. Populist and progressive ideologies were prevalent. In addition, Oklahoma led the Nation in Socialist party membership and in Indian population. There were quite

a number of Negroes and one-half of the meager foreign-born element of 2.4 per cent represented Central Powers' nationalities including the German-Russians. One-fourth were German. Extreme opposition to the war centered in the Socialists and I. W. W.'s. I. W. W.-inspired syndicalist activity among the Socialist and share-cropping elements led to the ill-starred "Green Corn Rebellion" which acutely embarrassed Oklahomans and more than any other factor led to the demise of the Socialist party. Each of the several distinct segments of the economy--the western "Wheat Belt" in particular--held views often uniquely its own, at least when compared with other areas in the State.

Beyond these factors, Oklahoma supplied one of the leading national opponents of Woodrow Wilson's war policies, Senator Thomas P. Gore. Robert L. Williams, the violently patriotic war-time governor, Senator Robert L. Owen, and Congressman Scott Ferris provided the chief pro-Administration leadership. Forthright and somewhat eccentric William H. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray was an early advocate of preparedness. While the daily press and the urban majority largely recognized the inevitability of war when the German Government initiated unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1, 1917, the rank and file remained extremely reluctant to go to war until midsummer and even later. However, all but the most radical eventually fell in line and vigorously--at times

even overzealously--supported the war effort. Oklahoma's reaction to the war, in the main, was not unlike that of the rest of the basically rural and isolationist Midwest and South. Since the war could not be avoided, it must be fought and won.

The Robert L. Williams Papers at the Oklahoma Historical Society, the Thomas P. Gore, Dick T. Morgan, William H. Murray, W. N. Redwine, Wilburn C. Cartwright, and Thomas W. Woodrow Papers at the University of Oklahoma, official government documents, especially the Congressional Record and the Census Reports, and contemporary newspapers and periodicals have been the major sources for this study. Indispensable among the daily newspapers were the Democratic Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City) and Daily Ardmoreite as well as the Republican Tulsa World and Muskogee Phoenix. The latter maintained a quite objective "independent view," politically. Significant, too, were such weeklies as the Democratic Poteau News, The Indian Journal (Eufaula), The Osage Journal (Pawhuska), and the Wewoka Democrat as well as the Republican Enid Events and Stillwater Gazette. Highly useful journals included Harlow's Weekly, The Oklahoma Farmer, Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman, and Oklahoma Federationist. In all, sixty-four Oklahoma newspapers, ten journals, and eighty-nine periodical articles were examined.

In the area of Oklahoma Socialism the various Sooner Socialist Platforms and Proceedings; Oscar Ameringer's

intimidable autobiography, If You Don't Weaken; Donald K. Picken's thesis study, "The Principles and Program of Oklahoma Socialism, 1900-1918"; Woodrow's Magazine; and three of the party's numerous weekly newspapers, Sword of Truth (Sentinel), World-Wide War (Pawhuska), and Johnston County Socialist (Tishomingo) were invaluable sources of information. Four monographs in addition to the works on Oklahoma appearing on pages one, two, and three of this study proved particularly valuable: Edward Everett Dale and James D. Morrison, Pioneer Judge: The Life of Robert Lee Williams; H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, Opponents of War, 1917-1918; David S. Shannon, The Socialist Party of America; and Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917. Among the unpublished materials, Monroe Lee Billington's three works on Senator Thomas P. Gore, Charles C. Bush's "The Green Corn Rebellion," and Paul W. Smith's "Evidences of Opposition to War Policies in Oklahoma" merit special mention.

No dissertation, of course, is the product of a single individual; it is a co-operative enterprise. Manifestly, to give credit here to the many persons who have contributed significantly in this undertaking is impossible except to say that I am indeed grateful for every assistance. Recognition is due at the outset to two inspiring teachers, both former professors at the University of Oklahoma, who more than anyone else are responsible for this particular research. It was

the late H. C. Peterson who intensified my interest in the World War I period, particularly the area of American involvement and the role of public opinion, the press, and the human factor. To Dr. Edward E. Dale I am indebted for introducing an outstater to the drama and significance of Oklahoma history. As a contemporary of the period under consideration he has been, along with Dr. Edwin C. McReynolds, an invaluable source of information.

The staffs of the libraries of the University of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Historical Society, Concordia College, North Dakota State University, and the University of Minnesota merit particular mention for their cheerful and efficient assistance in providing necessary materials. Mr. James Babcock, the Assistant Archivist at the University of Oklahoma at the time I initiated research, went far and beyond the call of duty in rendering most valuable assistance. Mrs. O. J. Cook, Director of the Newspaper Department, and the late Miss Elsie D. Hand, Librarian, at the Oklahoma Historical Society extended similar exceptional services. To Dr. Monroe Lee Billington, Associate Professor of History at the University of South Dakota and Senator Gore's biographer, I am deeply indebted for materials, suggestions, and sustained interest emanating from his own significant research in this area. I wish to acknowledge also, the ready cooperation of Dr. Thomas A. Bailey, Byrne Professor of American History at

Stanford University, and Dr. Emlyn D. Jones, Seattle, Washington, in supplying materials on Pacific Coast public opinion. Mr. Peter J. Ristuben, Assistant Professor of History at Pacific Lutheran University, provided a variety of significant services for which I am deeply grateful. Mrs. Starlin Powell typed the manuscript in its final form.

To the Administration and my colleagues at Concordia College I extend my sincere appreciation for continuing interest, understanding, and assistance. I acknowledge, in particular, my deep obligation to Dr. Joseph L. Knutson, President, and Dr. Carl L. Bailey, Academic Dean, for their exceptional interest and manifold contributions. Grants from the Southern Fellowships Fund and the Department of Education of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Dr. Sidney A. Rand, Executive Director, facilitated research activities in a very major way.

Above all, I am in particular debt to Dr. Gilbert C. Fite, Research Professor of History, who has directed this dissertation. His infinite patience and understanding and steady encouragement have sustained me through innumerable vicissitudes and his scholarly perception has rescued me from more than a few grievous errors of fact and interpretation. I wish to acknowledge also, the considered judgment and the valued assistance of Dr. W. Eugene Hollon, Dr. Alfred B. Sears, Dr. A. K. Christian, and Dr. Rufus G. Hall, all

members of my dissertation committee. To each of them I extend my sincere appreciation.

Finally, to the members of my immediate family, my wife, my parents, and my sister, I owe a debt I can never describe or repay. I would recognize, above all, the preeminent role of my wife, Elda Steinke Lutter, in bringing this study to its final conclusion. For her wise counsel, steady hand, constant encouragement, and indispensable assistance I am humbly grateful. While her contributions involved neither research nor writing, she is, nonetheless, a silent but significant co-author.

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OKLAHOMA AND THE WORLD WAR, 1914-1918:

A STUDY IN PUBLIC OPINION

CHAPTER I

A NEW STATE IN A NEW CENTURY

Oklahoma, "Land of the Red Men,"¹ achieved statehood in 1907, only seven years before the outbreak of World War I. It had experienced a long and colorful history.² Hardy Spanish

¹Of Indian origin, the name "Oklahoma" signifies "Home or Land of the Red man." U.S., Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population, III, p. 433 ("Historical Note"). In its section on place names another source indicates that the name "Oklahoma" was first suggested by the Choctaw-speaking Indian missionary, Alfred Wright, and that the term combines two Choctaw words "Okla," meaning "people" and "home," "red"; thus "red man" or "red people." The World Almanac, 1959, p. 204. Professor Edwin C. McReynolds, a leading authority on Oklahoma, confirms this information and states further that the first use of the term "Oklahoma" in an official public document occurred in the Choctaw-Chickasaw Treaty of 1866 when the name, "Oklahoma District," was applied to the proposed union of the two tribes under an intertribal council. Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History of the Sooner State (Norman, 1954), p. 234.

²Among the numerous works available on the history of Oklahoma the best single-volume survey, both factually and interpretively, is Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History of the Sooner State (Norman, 1954). An admirable "thumb-nail" account by the same authority appears in the "History" section of Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State, ed. and comp., Kent Ruth (Norman, 1957), pp. 26-45. Hereafter cited as Oklahoma Guide. Other useful single-volume works worthy of

conquistadores led by Francisco Vasquez de Coronado had traversed its western prairies in 1541 seeking the legendary "Seven Cities of Cibola." The French seigneur, Bernard de la Harpe, passed through Eastern Oklahoma in 1718 enroute to a land grant on the upper Red River. In the half century following the first "Indian Removal" treaty in 1816 the Five Civilized Tribes had occupied and developed what was to become the eastern part of the State, the area formerly known as Indian Territory. Although some 140,000 whites had settled in Indian Territory, especially after 1880--64,000 of them

mention include Edward Everett Dale and Morris L. Wardell, History of Oklahoma (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1948), Grant Foreman, A History of Oklahoma (Norman, 1942), and Edward Everett Dale and Jesse Lee Rader, Readings in Oklahoma History (Evanston, Ill., 1930). Multi-volume works useful where greater detail is desired are Joseph B. Thoburn and Muriel H. Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and its People (4 vols.; New York, 1929); Joseph B. Thoburn (ed.), History of Oklahoma (5 vols.; New York and Chicago, 1916); and Charles F. Barrett, Oklahoma After Fifty Years, A History of the Sooner State and its People, 1889-1939 (4 vols.; Hopkinsville, Kentucky and Oklahoma City, 1941). It will be noted that none of these are too recent in publication. Outstanding on the territorial period is Roy Gittinger, The Formation of the State of Oklahoma, 1803-1906 (Norman, 1939). Morris L. Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, 1838-1907 (Norman, 1938), also is useful. On the period since statehood, James Ralph Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma, 1907-1949" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1949) merits citation. While limited in scope, Roy Gittinger, The University of Oklahoma: A History of Fifty Years, 1892-1942 (Norman, 1942) is excellent and supplies a wealth of information pertinent to this study. For a reliable view of Oklahoma in the broader setting of the Southwest and the Trans-Mississippi West consult Le Roy R. Hafen and Carl Coke Rister, Western America (2d ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1950); Ray Allen Billington, Westward Expansion (2d ed.; New York, 1960); and Rupert N. Richardson and Carl Coke Rister, The Greater Southwest (Glendale, Calif., 1935).

illegally--, Oklahoma Territory was not officially opened until the spectacular "run" of April 22, 1889, when some 50,000 eager settlers laid claim to 1,920,000 acres between noon and nightfall.¹

In looking at Oklahoma in the early twentieth century, the fact that it was above all a Western state and a part of the last great western frontier assumes primary significance. Consequently, the basic reactions of Oklahomans primarily reflected the characteristics and points of view of the West. Indeed, only a quarter of a century had elapsed between the "run" of 1889 and the declaration of war in Europe. Hence, the development of an aggressive participation in the war and resort to stern measures when the response was not as ready or enthusiastic as might be desired should not be surprising. These were characteristics of the frontier. This does not imply irresponsibility and defiance of law but rather a frontier-engrained reliance upon self-initiative and

¹Significant source material accounts on the territorial and early statehood periods appear in the Lee Cruse, C. N. Haskell, William H. Murray, and Thomas P. Gore Papers, Division of Manuscripts, University of Oklahoma; also the Peter Hanraty Papers, Indian Archives Division; and the Robert L. Williams Press Copy Books (1897-1907) and Papers (1907-1919), Library, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City. [All unidentified archival collections hereafter cited are located in the Division of Manuscripts, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.] For particularly valuable and colorful accounts of the "Boomers," "Sooners," the 1889 "run," and other pioneer developments see the Fred L. Wenner Papers; also the Indian-Pioneer Papers (typewritten, 116 vols.), Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, or the Frank Phillips Collection, University of Oklahoma.

on-the-spot decisions.¹

The tumultuous "Ink Bottle Rebellion" in 1915 illustrates this point. The highly controversial universal registration [election] law designed by the governor to curb Republican and Socialist political activity was being debated and the atmosphere was tense. The "call to battle" came when a leading Republican called a prominent Democrat a liar. An eye witness account termed it a "mean situation" during which "ink bottles hurtled through the air, guns were drawn and cussing was the order of the day." Arthur Geissler, Republican chairman, was knocked out, and others suffered minor casualties. Luther Harrison, Seminole County editor-legislator and a leader of the Democrat forces, eventually restored order by shouting, "Brethren let us sing 'Nearer, My God, to Thee'." Reporters crashed through a locked door in a wild scramble to report the incident.²

¹Notable among Oklahomans contemporary with the period who support this point of view are the eminent historian, Edward Everett Dale and the most scholarly of the Socialist leaders, Oscar Ameringer. Interview with Edward Everett Dale, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Oklahoma, August 23, 1956; Oscar Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken: The Autobiography of Oscar Ameringer (New York, 1940), p. 260. Ameringer observed: "I have called Oklahoma the 'last American frontier,' . . . The frontiersmen of Oklahoma were almost exclusively of old American stock, and they were radical Americans."

²Malvina Stephenson, "Covering the Oklahoma House of Representatives" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1936), pp. 97-98; Edward E. Dale and James D. Morrison, Pioneer Judge: The Life of Robert Lee Williams (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1958), p. 250.

Governor Robert L. Williams, termed by some the "Old Hickory of Oklahoma" and bearing marked similarities to the forthright Tennessean, is reported to have participated in a knife-jabbing altercation with a friend. The incident resulted from an argument over the constitutionality of Lieutenant Governor Martin E. Trapp's seeking the governorship in the 1926 election. Trapp had served three years as governor following John C. Walton's impeachment and many questioned his right to succeed himself. No physical damage resulted as friends hastily separated the combatants.¹

Concomitant with this frontier state of mind and pattern of action in Oklahoma during the early decades of the twentieth century was the existence of an almost exclusively native-American population. In 1910 only 40,442 of the 1,657,155 people in Oklahoma were foreign-born, or a mere 2.4 per cent. Of this foreign-born total, 40,084 were Caucasian; 123, Negro; and 187, Oriental. The remaining forty-eight were apparently Indians of Mexican or Canadian origins since the census reports indicate no Malayan representation. Of the preponderant native white element totaling 1,404,447, or 84.8 per cent, an additional 49,877,

¹Interview with James D. Morrison, Professor of History and Dean of Instruction, Southeastern State College, Durant, August 1, 1956. Among others, Jesse J. Dunn, a member of Oklahoma's first Supreme Court of which Williams was Chief Justice, made the Jackson-Williams comparison in a speech at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, pp. 256-57.

or 3.0 per cent, were of foreign parentage and another 44,167, or 2.7 per cent, had one foreign-born parent. Thus, of the total population in 1910, not more than 134,128, or 8.1 per cent, were closely allied by birth or immediate ancestry to foreign influences and points of view.¹

The Indian portion of the population bears special examination because of the rapidly reversing roles of the two races, white and red. While the number of Indians remained almost constant in the census reports of 1890, 1900, and 1910--64,456, 64,445, and 74,825, respectively--the per cent of the total population represented in each instance sharply decreased, declining from 24.9 to 8.2 to 4.5. In the same decades, respectively, the white element jumped from 172,554 to 670,204 to 1,444,531, or 66.7, 84.8, and 87.2 per cent respectively. Only the Negro percentages of the population total during these three decades remained almost constant at 8.4, 7.0, and 8.3, representing aggregates of 21,609, 55,684, and 137,612.²

An analysis of geographical origins of the 1,616,713 native-American Oklahomans in 1910 reveals the unmistakable frontier character of those occupying the Sooner State. Almost one-third of the people--515,212--were Oklahoma-born, a figure

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population, I, p. 762; III, p. 461.

²Ibid.

which included the great bulk of the Indian population. Close to another one-third--500,491--came from the southern and bordering states of Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri. Almost one-eighth of the total Sooner populace--205,462--migrated from Texas. More than two-thirds, or 1,086,189, of all American-born Oklahomans came from states basically southern as to culture and economy, while 521,867, or almost one-third, originated in Northern states. Kansas, immediate neighbor to the north, was the largest single contributor in this group with 101,179--approximately one-fifteenth of the Sooner total.¹

While Oklahoma had a decided southern regional majority and recrudescant sectional loyalties and points of view still existed in the World War I period, these had become much more a traditional pattern than a sharply divisive force, and particularly where national and international issues were involved. Fiery Alabama-born Robert L. Williams, Oklahoma's wartime governor, possessed a deep devotion to the South and its traditions, yet shortly after the Lusitania sinking in 1915 he declared:

¹Ibid.; III, p. 461. The nine southern states and their contributions to Oklahoma's 1910 population were: Texas, 205,462; Missouri, 162,266; Arkansas, 132,963; Tennessee, 62,455; Kentucky, 43,431; Alabama, 33,198; Mississippi, 28,261; Georgia, 20,485; and Louisiana, 13,313. The seven northern states: Kansas, 101,179; Illinois, 71,085; Indiana, 41,249; Iowa, 41,186; Ohio, 33,094; Nebraska, 16,844; and Pennsylvania, 15,135. The North-South totals do not include the 8,657 native Americans born outside the continental United States.

My grandfather and my father were Confederate soldiers, but I am glad the Union was preserved. If we had been dismembered we would be a lot of little states today, instead of a great republic that is able to see in the midst of this great war what is right and then do it.¹

Thomas P. Gore was born in Mississippi and Robert L. Owen in Virginia and both had immediate ancestors in the Confederate forces, yet neither senator made a particular point of the Southern position or his own origins. Oklahoma Confederate and Union veterans had held joint yearly meetings at Arapaho since 1910 and had had "many a good handshake."²

While North-South and racial differentials continued to be a determinant in the Oklahoma climate of opinion in the early twentieth century, the important fact is that the state's population was indigenous to its geographical frontier. The vast region extending from the Mississippi River through the Great Plains, essentially the Louisiana Purchase and Texas, furnished 73.8 per cent of Oklahoma's native Americans. Of even greater consequence is the fact that well over one-third of these Oklahomans--601,670 or 37.2 per cent--were natives of the four major border states of Texas, Arkansas,

¹Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, pp. 2, 4, 10, 60, 248, 377; Oklahoma Guide, p. 38; Daily Oklahoman, May 14, 1915, p. 4.

²Gore's father and three uncles were Confederate veterans. Cong. Record, 65 Cong. 2 Sess., March 2, 1918, p. 2912; Monroe Lee Billington, Thomas P. Gore: "Oklahoma's Blind Senator" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1955), p. 3 (n. 4). Owen's father was a Confederate colonel. Wyatt W. Belcher, "Political Leadership of Robert L. Owen," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXI (Winter, 1953-54), p. 362; A. J. Harmon to R. L. Williams, May 22, 1918, Williams Papers, No. 90416.

Missouri, and Kansas. The East North Central and East South Central states, extending roughly from the Allegheny Mountains to the Mississippi River, provided less than a third of all native-born Oklahomans--484,652 or 29.9 per cent. With the exception of Pennsylvania, the Atlantic Coast region beyond the Alleghenies and, similarly, the area west of the Great Plains were of minor importance as sources of Oklahoma population.¹

Having considered the native population in pre-World War Oklahoma, an examination of the foreign elements merits attention. Only 2.4 per cent of the total population was foreign-born in 1910. When native-born Oklahomans with one or both parents of foreign birth are included the figure reaches 8.1 per cent. Statistically these figures are of minor consequence, but the origins of this minority element are important when considering Oklahoma public opinion during World War I. Of the foreign-born, 25.2 per cent were German and an additional 10.6 per cent were Austrian and Hungarian. Hence, 35.8 per cent of Oklahoma's foreign-born population was native to the two major Central Powers. However, this represented only 14,325 persons out of a total population of 1,657,155.²

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population, I, p. 16; III, p. 461. Pennsylvania supplied 15,135 Oklahomans.

²Ibid., III, p. 461. The four Central Powers nations were Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria. Oklahoma had no Bulgarians in 1910 and only 510, or 1.2 per cent, were Turks.

But this figure does not necessarily give a complete picture of potential pro-Teutonic sentiment. Most of the Russians in Oklahoma were of the "German-Russian" variety and leaned more to the German point of view, at least early in the war. They made up an additional 14.5 per cent of the foreign-born population.¹ Likewise, the Irish in America--at least early in the war--often supported the Central Powers point of view, not because they were pro-German but because they were Anglophobes.² The Irish comprised 4.5 per cent of

¹Hildegard Binder Johnson, in conclusions based on thorough research and analysis, contends that the "Russlaenders" were the most conclusive example of "people of German tongue and culture come to North America . . . [who] do not appear as 'born in Germany' in any statistical table. Yet after having maintained cultural and linguistic characteristics as minority-groups in non-German countries of Europe . . . often proved less assimilable in the United States than immigrants from Germany." Hildegard Binder Johnson, "The Location of German Immigrants in the Middle West," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, XLI (March, 1951), pp. 1-2. Thirteenth Census of the United States, Population, III, p. 461. See also Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, pp. 269-70.

²The pro-German inclinations of Irish-Americans in the 1900-1918 period is capably developed in Carl Wittke, The Irish in America (Baton Rouge, 1956), pp. 273-85. Wittke states: "An all-consuming Anglophobia accounted for the 'pro-German' attitude of the Irish-American press and many prominent Irish-Americans." This rapprochement began in 1898 when both groups feared a secret Anglo-American alliance was imminent. According to Thomas A. Bailey, as early as 1854 the British were "shocked" that "hereditary anti-British feeling, reinforced by the presence of tens of thousands of Irish immigrants, caused many Americans to conclude that in any war between Britain and a foreign power, the foreign power must be in the right." In the British-Venezuela boundary dispute in 1887-1897 "voices at mass meetings cried in a thick brogue, 'hurray for war!' and 'to hell with England!'" The Crampton and Sackville-West incidents and Britain's "ruthless suppression of an Irish revolt in the spring of 1916" further intensified American Anglophobia. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (6th ed.; New York, 1958), pp. 281, 403-407, 436-49, 586, 596.

the foreign-born population in Oklahoma. Thus, if the German-Russian and Irish elements are added to the previous figure, the total potential supporters for the Central Powers climbs to fifty-six per cent of the foreign-born. Of course, not all of these people were ardent advocates of the German-Austro-Hungarian cause, and the total at best numbered only 22,442. Adding those with one or both parents foreign-born, the aggregate of potential Teutonic sympathizers amounted to only 78,649. This was a mere 4.74 per cent of the total Oklahoma population in 1910.¹

The five major Entente Powers in Europe, along with Canada, furnished some 28.7 per cent of all the foreign-born in Oklahoma as compared with 37.0 per cent from the Central Powers which represented totals of 11,542 and 14,835 respectively. However, by including those with one or both parents foreign-born, the Entente and Central Powers groups increased, respectively, to 36,858 and 52,073, or 27.5 and 38.8 per cent.² It becomes evident, then, that emigration from nations of the Central Powers, at least into Oklahoma, began

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population, III, p. 461.

²Ibid. Great Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, and Greece were the five Entente Powers represented in the Oklahoma population statistics in 1910. The figure for Great Britain included England, Wales, and Scotland. Russia, although one of the Entente Powers, is not included because Russians in Oklahoma were preponderantly pro-German Russlaenders. The Anglophobe Irish also were omitted.

one generation prior to that of the Entente nations. This was particularly true of the Germans.

Since a major point often has been made of England's role in bringing about American participation in World War I, a cursory analysis of the British population in Oklahoma is in order. Among the foreign-born element in Oklahoma the English total in 1910 was 2,978, or 7.4 per cent; that of the Welsh, 365, or 0.9 per cent; and the Scotch, 1,218, or 3.0 per cent. These aggregated only 4,624, or 11.3 per cent, as compared with the German figure of 10,089, or 25.2 per cent. Even when the 2,831 Canadians--7.1 per cent--are added to the British column the sum total of 7,455--18.4 per cent--falls far short of the German total. Indeed, the total figure for all six Entente nations exceeds that of the Germans alone by only 1,453. The inclination of most Oklahomans and other Americans toward the British position, of course, rested upon a basic common heritage of language, culture, law, and governmental institutions in addition to adroit propaganda techniques and control of the sea lanes, trading facilities, and the pound sterling area. While Oklahoma's population spread was not typical of the nation as a whole, numerical superiority had never been an important factor supporting the British position.¹

¹Ibid. If the nationality totals include, in addition, those with one or both parents foreign-born, then the British total increases to 19,380, or 14.5 per cent; the Canadian to 9,980, or 7.4 per cent; the British-Canadian to 29,360,

Two final elements in the population complex merit examination as factors pertinent to the pre-war Oklahoma environment. These are the preponderance of the rural element and the rapid growth experienced in the two decades ending in 1910, three years after statehood. In 1910 all but 320,000 of Oklahoma's 1,657,155 residents, or 79.71 per cent, were classified as "rural." This, of course, was not unusual in a young state located on the nation's last frontier where the major emphasis was on agriculture. In this particular the "border state" location of Oklahoma again enters the picture. Oklahoma lay on the extreme southern periphery of the mid-western states commonly regarded as the major locales of isolationism and from which large elements of the Sooner population had come. By the same token, Oklahoma was identified with the South and shared appreciably that area's citizenry and sentiments which were less inclined toward isolationism.¹ Thus it appears that the presence of these

or 21.9 per cent; and the Entente nations to 36,858, or 27.5 per cent, as compared with 41,785 Germans, or 31.2 per cent. H. C. Peterson, Propaganda for War: The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914-1917 (Norman, 1939), pp. 1-330 among others, develops in particular, the impact of British propaganda in the United States. See especially pp. 1-108, 326-30.

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population, III, p. 461. The Census Bureau classifies as rural "all unincorporated territory and . . . incorporated places . . . of less than 2,500 inhabitants." Ibid., I, p. 53. Isolationism and its existence and degree of influence in the Midwest, the South, and Oklahoma are considered in Chapter III, "Europe Goes to War: Sooner Reactions."

divergent views in respect to isolationism and foreign policy were a unique aspect in Oklahoma, along with the preponderant rural population.

The factor of phenomenal growth needs only a final summation. The Bureau of Census in 1910 took particular cognizance of this phenomenon:

Oklahoma was organized as a territory in 1890, and appears in the Federal census reports for the first time in that year. During the first decade, 1890-1900, the growth of the Territory which now comprises the state of Oklahoma was very rapid, its population increasing over three times, while during the last decade, 1900-1910, the population a little more than doubled. During the first seven years of the last decade [to 1907, the year of statehood] the average yearly increase was 89,112, while during the last three years the corresponding increase was 80,993. The population of the state in 1910 was more than six times as large as the population of the same area in 1890, while the population of the United States in 1910 was nearly one and one-half times that in 1890. The rate of increase in the population of Oklahoma during the decade 1890-1900 was nearly ten times that for the United States, and during the last decade, 1900-1910, a little more than five times.¹

That such a deluge of settlement occurred is not surprising in the light of the most extraordinary circumstances that prevailed. Nonetheless, Oklahoma's precipitate development was indeed unique, for no other state experienced either so rapid or so heterogeneous an influx of settlers, and the

¹Ibid., III, p. 434. The population increase between 1890 and 1900 was 531,730, a 205.6 per cent rate of increase; that in the 1900-1910 decade 866,764, or 109.7 per cent. In the first instance, Oklahoma far outstripped all other states and territories as to influx of settlement, an indication that it was the nation's "newest" major frontier. Ibid., I, p. 27.

impact of these divergent forces tended to produce an equally divergent point of view.

The cultural and economic status of the Sooner population merit at least cursory examination because of their significant impact on the Oklahoma climate of opinion in the pre-war and wartime years. Among these, the status and role of the Indian in Oklahoma has no parallel in the history of the United States. While Caucasian pressure in the form of federal intervention and sheer numbers eventually decreased the Indian monopoly, the Five Civilized Tribes never were reduced to inferior status. Actually, in the course of events that produced the constitution and statehood, statesmen from Indian Territory assumed the major role and continued thereafter to occupy positions of prominence. In the cultural field as well, Oklahoma Indians distinguished themselves. Indeed, as a prominent source indicates, Oklahoma's Indian element

. . . had a share in public affairs out of all proportion to their numbers. . . . A people numbering less than five per cent of the total population has given to Oklahoma probably twenty per cent of its most prominent public officials. It is doubtful if any group of similar numbers in America has produced so many skillful political leaders or able statesmen as have the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes.¹

¹Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, p. 8. Prominent Indian statesmen included Senator Robert L. Owen; Representatives Charles D. Carter, William W. Hastings, and Thomas A. Chandler; and Houston B. Tehee, Registrar of the United States. William H. Murray, James S. Davenport, and Lee Cruce were prominent intermarried citizens. Cultural leaders included: Alex Posey, poet; John M. Oskison, novelist;

An examination of the Indian element in Oklahoma in 1910 sheds considerable light on the status of this significant group. While Oklahoma's white population in 1890 exceeded the total Indian element by only two and one-half times, by 1900 it was ten and one-half times larger and in 1910 almost twenty times greater. In 1890 the Indian element had outnumbered the Negroes in Oklahoma three to one, yet by 1900 the two groups were about equal and in 1910 the latter were almost twice as numerous. Hence, while the white population had increased some eighty-two times in two decades and the Negroes had experienced a sixfold expansion, the Indian element had remained virtually static, increasing by only 10,369 individuals. Of the 74,825 Indians living in Oklahoma in 1910, three-fourths, or 56,509, were members of the Five Civilized Tribes.¹

Oklahoma's Indian population in 1910 comprised 28.2 per cent of the entire national total of 265,683 and was the most composite group among all the states and territories.

Tessie Mobley, music; Monroe Tsatoke and Woodrow Crumbo, artists; and Will Rogers, the inimitable humorist. In the professional world were: Joseph M. Thompson, surgeon; Henry J. Bond, national church leader; Muriel H. Wright, historian; and Roberta E. Campbell Lawson, educator and war worker. Lyle H. Boren and Dale Boren (eds.), Who Is Who in Oklahoma (Guthrie, 1935), passim; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 308-33, 419-24; Dale and Wardell, ibid., pp. 300-33, 495-528.

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population, III, p. 461; Indian Population, 1910, p. 23.

In addition, among the states with the largest Indian population, Oklahoma had by far the greatest percentage of mixed bloods--some 48,938--since only 25,887 reported themselves as full-blood Indians. The Five Civilized Tribes were well advanced educationally, culturally, and economically. In 1910, for example, only 12,297, or one-sixth of Oklahoma's 74,825 Indians, were listed as illiterate.¹ Were it possible to segregate the statistics for the Five Civilized Tribes from the overall total, the percentages of literacy and ability to speak English would be much higher, comparing favorably with those of the white population.

The economic status of the Oklahoma Indians reflected the same degree of advancement. Some 57.7 per cent of all males and 22 per cent of all females over ten years of age were engaged in gainful occupations, again including the less prosperous and more immediately resettled Plains Indians. Among the Five Civilized Tribes, the Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws in particular, there was a considerable degree of prosperity, including a number of planters of considerable wealth. Chief among these was the Choctaw, Captain Robert M. Jones of Rose Hill, who managed five plantations and at one

¹Ibid., Indian Population, 1910, pp. 10, 11, 45, 215, 232. Grant Foreman, The Five Civilized Tribes (Norman, 1934), pp. 19, 36, 58-64; Angie Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic (Norman, 1934), pp. 59-62; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 87-108, 171-91; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 75-90, 142-54, develop the advanced state of education, religion, and culture among the Five Civilized Tribes.

time reportedly owned over five hundred Negro slaves. Additional business interests included a store in Doaksville, steamboats on the Red River, and slave markets. Benjamin Marshall, a Creek; General George Colbert, a Chickasaw; and John Ross, a Cherokee were other wealthy slave-holding planters. Most Indians, of course, had never owned slaves, and the reverses of the War Between the States reduced their economy to livestock grazing and small-scale farming.¹

The great bulk of Oklahoma's 74,825 Indians in 1910 lived in the eastern half of the state known as Indian Territory. The heaviest concentration was in the northeastern sector of this region. Eight northeastern counties had Indian populations exceeding 2,500 each and together represented more than a third of the state's total. Of the twenty-nine counties with a thousand or more Indians each, twelve were located in the northeast, four in the east and southeast sector, four in the east-central, three in the south-central, two in the north, and only four in the entire western half of the state. Public opinion in Oklahoma generally considered Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes and the whites as equals. A major exception were the Seminoles whose civilization was

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, Indian Population, 1910, p. 251. Gainful workers were "all workers except women doing housework in their own homes . . . and children working at home . . . or at odd times on other work." McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 168-71, 175-78, 182-83, 190, 200, 204-205, 229-34; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 138-42.

much less advanced, particularly when compared with other of the Five Civilized Tribes.¹

The status of the Negro in the Sooner state was not nearly so fortunate as that of the Indians. The Southern tradition and point of view largely prevailed throughout the state and Caucasians and Indians alike regarded the Negro as inferior. This is not surprising since members of both races had owned Negro slaves prior to the Civil War. The abolition of slavery was more readily accepted by the Indians; in fact, the Cherokees had done so voluntarily in 1863, three years prior to mandatory manumission. Nonetheless, firmly established patterns of thought and action had been set by both Indians and whites which continued with little change for another century. The abolition of slavery neither lessened the number of Negroes in Oklahoma nor materially enhanced their economic and social status. Their numbers increased from 21,609 in 1890, to 55,684 in 1900, and to 137,612 in 1910.²

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, Indian Population, 1910, p. 29. Indian population figures are cited for each of the sixty-eight counties then organized. McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 158-61; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 86-87.

²Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population, III, p. 461. For the status of the Negro in Indian Territory after 1865 see A Compilation of All the Treaties Between the United States and the Indian Tribes (Washington, 1873), Cherokee constitution, pp. 85-97; Creeks, pp. 114-22; Choctaws and Chickasaws, pp. 285-303; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 200, 232-33; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 276-77. The Choctaws and Chickasaws had a choice

Despite the general attitude as to their inferior status, there were no apparent discriminations against the Negro in the Oklahoma state constitution adopted in 1907, other than Article 13, Section 3, that "separate schools for white and colored children with like accommodations shall be provided by the legislature and impartially maintained."¹ In 1908 the First State Legislature implemented the constitutional provision for "separate but equal" schools and, in addition, provided for separate waiting rooms and means of public transportation. An attempt to disfranchise Negroes was made in 1910 when the infamous Grandfather Clause was added to the state constitution by the not too impressive margin of 135,443 to 108,205. Five years later, however, this provision was invalidated by the United States Supreme Court. This Supreme Court decision was not too happily received in Oklahoma. The Daily Oklahoman, an ardent champion of

between incorporating the Negro freedmen into the tribe or financing their removal and establishment elsewhere by the national government. The Negro freedmen usually engaged in subsistence-level farming on the land allotments, whereas the Indians, with almost unlimited tribal acreage, moved more into grazing activities and the employ of free labor.

¹Oklahoma, Constitution (1907), Art. 13, Sec. 3. The Bill of Rights (Article 2) contained no apparent limitations and Article 3, Sec. 2, stipulated "that the Legislature shall never enact any law restricting or abridging the right of suffrage on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." It is interesting to note that Article 13, Sec. 3 defines "colored children" as "children of African descent," and "white children" as "all other children."

Governor Williams, reacted violently in an editorial entitled, "That Supreme Court Decision." The Oklahoman hotly asserted: "This is a white man's state and . . . must forever remain a white man's state."¹

Meanwhile, the Fifth Legislature had, in 1915, enacted into law the much maligned "Universal Registration Law" which indirectly curtailed the Negro vote through political restrictions aimed particularly at the Republican and Socialist parties. Negroes also experienced an inferior social status. Eugene M. Kerr, Muskogee Times-Democrat publisher, recommended a negro janitor to Governor Williams in these terms:

Tom says he is a democrat, and I suppose that if any negro is ever a democrat Tom is, but I very seriously doubt there being any. However, he is a good workman, knows his place thoroughly [*italics mine*] and would be quite a proper man to appoint if there is room for him.

When Caesar Payne, wealthy and prominent Seminole County negro, was killed in "one of the periodical fights" among the "toughs" in that area, the Ada Star-Democrat spoke of him as being "known among the whites as a good nigger and had a good influence upon the lawless blacks who inhabit that part of the country."²

¹"Conclusions Drawn from the Primary Vote," Harlow's Weekly, XI (Aug. 12, 1916), p. 3; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 319, 329; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 322-23; Daily Oklahoman, June 23, 1915, p. 6; Oct. 28, 1915, p. 6. See also Renfrew's Record, June 25, 1915, p. 1, which indicates that such a sentiment existed even among the more progressive element in the state.

²Daily Oklahoman, May 5, 1916, p. 1; Eugene M. Kerr to Robert L. Williams, May 30, 1917, R. L. Williams Papers, No. 79230; Ada Star-Democrat, cited by the Wewoka Democrat, Nov. 19, 1914, p. 1.

Even northern-born and Republican Congressman Dick T. Morgan, writing to his wife from the nation's capital, reported: "The permanent white waitress did not stay a week. So I have a colored 'lady' [the quote marks are Morgan's] again." The Enid Events, a Republican paper, took a more sympathetic view of the situation, observing that "when given half a chance the negro will redeem himself." Nor was this attitude a white man's monopoly. Census officials reported the Indian as "disinclined to admit Negro blood," and in 1910 only 0.8 per cent of Oklahoma's Indians reported an admixture of Indian and Negro blood and an additional 0.7 per cent a combined Indian-Negro-Caucasian heritage. Outside of their own sphere Negroes exercised almost no political or cultural leadership, although A. C. Hamlin was elected as a Republican member of the state legislature from Logan County in 1908.¹ Economically, Negroes were no worse off than many of the poor whites. The percentage of farm tenancy was actually greater among the whites than the colored. True, only 20,671 of the state's 190,192 farms were operated by non-whites, but percentagewise, 55.8 per cent of all white

¹Dick T. Morgan to Mrs. Morgan, Sept. 26, 1918, Dick T. Morgan Papers, Family and Personal Correspondence; Folder, Sept., 1918; Enid Events, Aug. 9, 1917, p. 2; Thirteenth Census of the United States, Indian Population, 1910, pp. 31, 39; Directory of the State of Oklahoma, 1953, p. 144.

farmers were tenants in 1910 as compared with 45.9 per cent among the colored.¹

The foreign element presented no basic problems for native-born Oklahomans. Two reasons accounted for this; they were few in number, and the frontier-inherited inclination was to accept all newcomers at face value providing they were industrious and responsible. The fact that there were so few foreign-born, only 2.4 per cent in 1910, simplified the process of adjustment to the Oklahoma environment. Being scarce, it was difficult for them to congregate into communities of their own kind and avoid outside influences. Moreover, the rural nature of Oklahoma further encouraged their dispersion. There were, however, three noteworthy exceptions to this pattern. A number of German and Czechoslovakian communities formed in the western and central counties, respectively. Corn, Colony, Cordell, and Bessie in Washita County; Thomas in Custer County; and Okarche on the extreme northern border of Canadian County were considered "Little Germanies." Except for the Okarche settlement, these were largely Mennonite and Brethren settlements whose

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Agriculture, VII, pp. 353-56; "Tenancy on Oklahoma Farms," Harlow's Weekly, VII (Nov. 7, 1914), p. 122. In this instance the census officials defined the term "colored" as all non-white people. The factor of subsistence is reflected in the various acreage figures. The average size of the farms of colored tenants in 1910 was 70.8 acres; of white tenants, 124.3 acres. Among farm owners, the colored average was 143.5 acres; the white, 193.9 acres. *Ibid.*, p. 354.

pacifist and Socialist leanings resulted in persecution during the war years.¹

The Okarche Germans were largely Catholic and Lutheran with some Evangelicals and Mennonites. The Cordell and Okarche settlements contained the largest group of Germans and, along with Corn, were the most prosperous. There were, of course, substantial German elements in such cities as Enid, Oklahoma City, El Reno, Kingfisher, and Guthrie, but not to any preponderant degree. The five colorful, prosperous, and highly cultured Czechoslovakian communities were clustered within a fifty mile radius of Oklahoma City. Along with Oklahoma City, these included Prague, Yukon, Wheatland, and Mishak. The latter four were all under 1,500 in population. There was no particular "Little Bohemia" section in Oklahoma City, but its Czech population was considerable. Prague, too, was a significant center. The Czechs were noted for the fraternal and cultural "Sokols," and were loyal,

¹W. A. Willibrand, "German in Okarche, 1892-1902," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVIII (Autumn, 1950), pp. 284-91; Ibid., "In Bilingual Old Okarche," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXIX (Autumn, 1951), pp. 337-44; Edmund Paul Frank, "A History of Lutheranism in Oklahoma," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1947), p. 37; interviews with Miss Elsie D. Hand, Librarian, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, July 25, 1956; and M. G. Tucker, Norman, Oklahoma, August 5, 1956; Hildegard Binder Johnson, "The Location of German Immigrants in the Middle West," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, XLI (March, 1951), pp. 1-2, 40; Carolyn Thomas Foreman, Oklahoma Imprints, 1837-1907, A History of Printing in Oklahoma Before Statehood (Norman, 1936), pp. 290, 307, 309, 327, 371, lists German newspapers operating in Cordell, El Reno, Enid, Guthrie, and Kingfisher in the period from 1898 to 1902.

prosperous, and highly regarded citizens.¹

The mining areas represented the only large scale conglomerate of foreign-born Sooner citizenry. Already in the territorial period the McAlester mines in the Krebs-Coalgate-Lehigh-Alderson area contained large numbers of foreigners. In his extensive research on the coal industry in Oklahoma prior to statehood, Gene Aldrich found that the English, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish first came in the 1870's followed by the Italians, Lithuanians, Slovaks, Poles, Magyars, and Russians in the 1880's. The British groups were most numerous; the Italians second. The foreign-born outnumbered the native-American miners "by two to one," hence represented some 4,000 in 1907. Coalgate, in 1902, had "a high per cent of foreign and Negro miners." Among the thirteen fatalities in a Wilburton mine accident in 1914, two were Americans; one, German; seven, Austrian; and three, Negro. A prominent Oklahoma historian provides the following summation:

By 1889 the mining population was about two thousand and composed largely of Europeans--Czechs, Slovaks,

¹Ibid.; William Earl Martin, "The Cultural Assimilation of the Czechoslovak in Oklahoma City (A Study of Cultural Contrasts)" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1935), pp. 77-87, 133-35, 163-65; Roy A. Clifford, "A Social and Economic Survey of Prague, Oklahoma, and Vicinity" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1947), pp. xii, 1-6, 34, 37-38; 68. See Martin, p. 114; and Foreman, Oklahoma Imprints, pp. 368, 390, for a listing and description of Czech publications. Martin, pp. 80, 135 develops the various fraternal, cultural, and recreational unions.

Slovenes, Hungarians, Belgians, Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Swedes, and Italians. Within five years the number had more than doubled and included, in addition to the groups mentioned and some American miners from eastern coal fields, several hundred Negro miners from Texas.¹

To a much lesser degree this admixture of foreign elements also was evident in the lead and zinc district in Ottawa County and in the oil industry extending from Oklahoma City north and northeast to Tulsa, Ponca City, and Bartlesville. Arrell M. Gibson, University of Oklahoma archivist and a leading authority on the Tri-State lead and zinc industry, states that "previous to 1915, outsiders had not come in any large number" to that region although one heard "a few emphatic 'cuss words' of Cornish origin." In his significant Mid-Continent oil study, Professor Albert R. Parker concludes that "less than five per cent" of the 47,000 regularly employed Mid-Continent oil field workers in 1920 were foreign-born and "even fewer were Negro."² Such groups, therefore,

¹Gene Aldrich, "A History of the Coal Industry in Oklahoma to 1907" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1952), pp. 37, 43-45, 199-201; Wilburton News, Sept. 25, 1914, p. 1; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 268, 415.

²Arrell M. Gibson, "A History of the Lead and Zinc Industry of the Tri-State District" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1954), pp. 338, 359-60; Albert Raymond Parker, "Life and Labor in the Mid-Continent Oil Fields, 1859-1945" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1951), pp. 40, 102-103; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, p. 415.

were the exception and not the rule. Oklahoma's population was preponderantly native-American.

A final element bearing vitally on the pre-World War population and culture complex in Oklahoma is that of church affiliation and the impact of religious and moral ideology concerning war upon Oklahomans. Only 25.01 per cent of Oklahoma's populace claimed church membership in 1916, some 424,492 of the 1,657,155 population total. This figure marked a percentage decrease in church affiliation over that existing in 1906 when 33.34 per cent, or 263,550, of 790,391 Sooners were church-affiliated. However, in 1890 only 13.34 per cent, or 34,619, of some 258,657 Oklahomans had claimed formal church membership.¹ These figures, of course, do not necessarily provide a true measure of the degree of religious conviction in the state. Oklahoma was a frontier in 1890 and still a territory in 1906. Like all frontier regions, the appearance of formally-organized church bodies lagged appreciably behind the initial great rush of settlement. In Oklahoma, as in other frontier regions, a parallel existed between the extent of church affiliation and the time since statehood had been achieved. In other words, the number of formal church bodies,

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population, III, p. 461; Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies, 1916. Part I, p. 112. Actually, church affiliation in Oklahoma in 1916 probably was closer to 23 per cent if one considers half of the increase over 1910 in the 1920 population total as having occurred by 1916. Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Population, II, p. 812.

congregations, and church members tended to increase with each succeeding year of political maturity.¹

The Oklahoma church population of 424,492 in 1916 included 88 per cent Protestant, 11.2 per cent Roman Catholic, and 0.8 per cent Jewish. The preponderant Protestant groups, representing 58 per cent of all Sooner church members, were the various Baptist Conventions with 30.5 per cent and the Methodist groups comprising 27.5 per cent. Following these were the Disciples of Christ and Churches of Christ, 14.9 per cent; the Roman Catholic, 11.2 per cent; and the Presbyterians, 6.0 per cent. All other church groups had membership under one per cent, with the Lutherans, United Brethren, Episcopalians, and Congregationalists each approximating that figure.²

Historically, all the majority religions found in Oklahoma in 1916 had arrived at doctrinal positions that accepted and, in some instances, even justified war as a Christian duty. These religions represented 98.7 per cent of the state's church-affiliated and 24.69 per cent of the total population. However, the views on war entertained by the

¹Statistics support this conclusion. In 1916, 45.58 per cent of the nation's 91,972,266 people claimed church membership, whereas among Oklahoma's neighbors, Texas reported a religious affiliation of 45.8 per cent; Arkansas, 37.04 per cent; and Kansas, 36.09 per cent.

²Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies, 1916, Part I, pp. 112, 299-301.

forty-odd Pietistic groups and, in lesser degree, the Quakers were diametrically opposed to those of the major church bodies. These pacifist-inclined groups comprised only 5,472, or 1.3 per cent, of Oklahoma's church membership. Of this total, 2,159 were Quakers; 1,473, Mennonite Brethren; 915, General Conference Mennonites; and 925, German Baptist Brethren commonly referred to as Dunkers. Thus, in Oklahoma, as elsewhere in the nation, the predominant religious view against war was that expressed by William Warren Sweet. Sweet, a prominent American religious leader, maintained that while the Christian "deplores war and is always depressed by a warring world, . . . he cannot escape his obligations to society."¹

Three things, above all others, characterized Oklahoma, a new state in a new century, on the eve of World War I. Despite North-South and racial differences, Oklahoma was primarily a Western state and a part of the last great

¹William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York, 1950), p. 394. For the Protestant and Catholic positions on war see ibid., pp. 391-427; Jerald C. Brauer, Protestantism in America (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 249-61. For more specialized studies see Gaius Glenn Atkins, Religion in Our Times (New York, 1932); Rufus M. Jones, The Faith and Practice of Quakers (London and New York, 1937); Rufus D. Bowman, The Church of the Brethren and War, 1708-1941 (Elgin, Ill., 1944); Franklin Hershberger, War, Peace and Non-resistance (Scottsdale, Pa., 1944). The zealous role of most American churches and leaders in supporting the war is ably presented in Ray H. Abrams, Preachers Present Arms (Philadelphia, 1933). One pastor declared: "It is . . . a Holy War." Brauer, ibid., p. 254.

western frontier. Equally important, the state's population was both preponderantly native-American and rural and indigenous to its geographical region. The minute foreign element was widely dispersed and largely well assimilated although one-half had potential pro-German origins. The rural element, in particular, strongly reflected the isolationist sentiments of the similarly constituted Midwest and South. Consequently, the basic reactions of Oklahomans, despite numerous divisive forces, fundamentally reflected the characteristics and points of view of the West.

Population figures reflected the rapidly reversing roles of the two races, white and red. However, the culturally- and economically-advanced Five Civilized Tribes were generally considered on an equal plane with the whites and played a significant role in Oklahoma affairs. Both groups regarded the Negro as inferior. While only one-fourth of all Oklahomans claimed church membership, an overwhelming majority of the religious bodies represented subsequently accepted and supported American entry into World War I. A phenomenal sixfold population increase between 1890 and 1910 and a corresponding social, cultural, and economic advance marked the state's continuing growth. Oklahoma was still a young state in 1914, but she was ready to assume a larger role in the area of national and international affairs.

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CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL CLIMATE: PARTIES OF CONSERVATISM AND PARTIES OF PROTEST, 1906-1914

In the initial decade of statehood from 1907 to 1916 tremendous enthusiasm, boundless energy, and bustling activity were the marked characteristics of Oklahoma's rapidly expanding population. These characteristics applied to economic and political activity alike. While six of the seven territorial governors had been Republican appointees and the elected officials of that period had come from both parties, the Democrats dominated the scene after statehood. In the period from 1907 to 1916 all three governors, both United States senators, twenty-eight of the thirty-nine successful congressmen, most of the membership of both branches of the legislature, virtually all other state officials, and the majority of the local public servants, except in the northern third of the state, were Democrats. Populist views, strong in the territorial period, continued to be a factor in the contest for the more radical vote, and the more youthful

Socialist and Progressive movements also sought support in the period after 1900.¹

The Republicans, of course, were the most substantial and consistent minority. In the upper third of the state where the great bulk of the inhabitants were of northern origins--particularly from Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania--the Republicans quite consistently were the majority party. In addition, they commanded considerable strength in the lower segment of the first three congressional districts as they existed prior to the 1915 reapportionment and which extended roughly through the northern half of the state.² Three Republican congressmen, Bird S. McGuire (1907-1915), Dick T. Morgan (1908-1920), and Charles E. Creager (1908-1910) held office in the pre-war period. However, the Democrats gained a majority in the Oklahoma congressional delegation in five of the six elections prior to American entry in the war. They also won the 1918 wartime

¹McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 317-30; Oklahoma Guide, pp. 35-39; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 310-31; develop this situation as do all the state histories cited in n. 2, p. 1. The Directory of the State of Oklahoma, 1953 provides state election statistics.

²Congressional Directory, 61 Cong., 2 Sess., 1909, p. 438 provides a map showing the five original Congressional districts, as do all subsequent directories through the 63 Cong., 3 Sess., 1915. See ibid., 64 Cong., 1 Sess., 1915, p. 461, and subsequent directories for a map indicating the redistricting of the state from five to eight districts in 1915.

election and, altogether, maintained a four-to-one majority in 1914, 1916, and 1918.¹

All other major posts were held continuously by Democrats in the pre-war and wartime period. Thomas Pryor Gore and Robert Latham Owen served consecutive terms as United States senators from 1907 until 1921 and 1925, respectively, while the four-year governor's post was held successively by Charles N. Haskell, Lee Cruce, Robert L. Williams and J. B. A. Robertson between 1907 and 1923. All of these men were of southern origins except Haskell, an Ohioan; and Robertson, an Iowan; and all save Gore and Robertson came from the eastern or "Indian Territory" portion of the state. Thus it is evident that in the pre-war period the Democrats formed the major political power in the state, and that the Republicans were only a troublesome minority which won an occasional congressional contest and a few seats in the legislature. The Republicans could command a continuous majority only in the northwestern and northeastern sectors of the state.²

¹Ibid., 60 Cong., 1 Sess., 1907, pp. 102-103, and subsequent directories provide biographical information and election data on Republican Congressmen McGuire, Morgan, and Creager as well as their more numerous Democratic colleagues. See also Boren and Boren (eds.), Who Is Who in Oklahoma, passim; Rex F. Harlow, Oklahoma Leaders (Okla. City, 1928), passim; ibid., Successful Oklahomans (Okla. City, 1928), passim. See also n. 1 of this chapter.

²Ibid. For source accounts of both personal and official activities see the Gore, Owen, Haskell, Cruce, and R. L. Williams Papers, previously cited, and the J. B. A. Robertson Papers, File IX, Drawer 4, Frank Phillips Collection,

Socialism grew out of Populism in Oklahoma Territory,¹ and it gained a firm foothold after 1900. Both were rural protest movements, and both sought to change basic political and economic institutions. Unlike areas possessing major urban-industrial development, Socialism in Oklahoma was rural in origin and committed to an agrarian policy. While adhering nominally to the ideological tenets of national and international Socialism, the Oklahoma movement concerned itself almost exclusively with the ills of agriculture and the tenant farmer, in particular. Indeed, among its entire state leadership, only Oscar Ameringer and Dan Hogan could be considered doctrinaire Socialists. In his significant study on Oklahoma Socialism, Donald K. Pickens views it as a rural protest movement for which "Populism was . . . [the] foundation." "Oklahoma Populism-Socialism," he maintains, "came from Lockean thought, colored greatly by evangelical

University of Oklahoma. Owen was born in Virginia, Gore in Mississippi, Cruce in Kentucky, Williams in Alabama.

¹The American Socialist Party was formed in 1901 and claimed a membership of 10,000, which Morris Hillquit later admitted "was born somewhat more of our enthusiasm than of actual fact." Membership expanded to 150,000 by 1912, polling six per cent of the presidential vote and capturing "more than a thousand" public offices--largely local. A left wing appeared in 1915, a portion of which formed the American Communist Party in 1919. Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, The American Communist Party, A Critical History (1919-1957) (Beacon Hill, Boston, 1957), pp. ix, 1-17.

Protestantism and descended from the Locofocoism of the Jacksonian Era."¹

Populism and Socialism, of course, differed widely on the national level, but when the Populists fused with the Democrats in 1896, in Oklahoma, at least, "the spirit and the sociological basis of populism went into the Socialist Party." Indeed, in 1899, the editor of the Alva Review declared: "We do not see the need of organizing a new party at this time as the demands of the Populist party are right in line with those of the new Socialist party with few exceptions." High interest rates, along with periodic droughts and low prices, led to wide-spread agricultural discontent and agrarian radicalism. State ownership and control of basic industries, transportation, and communication; state banks, insurance, and elevators; and a \$1,000 tax exemption for dwellings, tools, and the basic essentials to gain a living were other demands. In his excellent monograph on Socialism

¹Donald K. Pickens, "The Principles and Program of Oklahoma Socialism, 1900-1918" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1957), pp. vi-vii, 1-7 [pp. 8-36 are also directly pertinent]. See also David S. Shannon, The Socialist Party of America (New York, 1955), pp. 33-35; Charles C. Bush, "The Green Corn Rebellion" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1932), pp. 1-8; James Morton Smith, "Criminal Syndicalism in Oklahoma; A History of the Law and its Application" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1946), pp. 4-5; James Arthur Robinson, "Loyalty Investigations and Legislation in Oklahoma" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1955), pp. 30-31; Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma," pp. 174-75; Oklahoma Guide, pp. 33-35; Walter M. Harrison, Me and My Big Mouth (Oklahoma City, 1954), pp. 63, 86-87.

in the United States, David Shannon devotes more attention to the movement in Oklahoma than in any other state. He points out that Sooner Socialist strength "was considerable because there the party was clever at adapting techniques and programs fitted to the local rural tradition" and, further, that the state program "was a blend of Socialism and Populism constructed in a manner to appeal to the attitudes of Western farmers." Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, and Kansas shared in lesser degree this "kind of emotional and radical socialism that caused Berger, Hillquit, and most modern Eastern Social democrats to shudder."¹

The tenantry problem in east central Oklahoma, with its vicious and tragic social and economic overtones, made thousands of destitute, hopeless, superstitious, and largely illiterate share-croppers fair game to the attractive Socialist program.² The propaganda was convincingly presented

¹Pickens, "Oklahoman Socialism, 1900-1908," pp. vi, 6; Alva Review, Nov. 2, 1889, p. 2; Shannon, Socialist Party of America, pp. 25, 33-35. See also Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, pp. 260, 264-65, 278. The Hanraty Papers contain extensive evidence of the interest of non-socialist Oklahomans in the tenets and literature of the Socialist Party. Victor L. Berger and Morris Hillquit, both doctrinaire Socialists, were pioneer leaders in the American Socialist movement.

²Pat Nagle, in the first issue of his Oklahoma Tenant Farmer, claims there were 110,000 Sooner share-croppers in 1915. Cited in "Socialism a Menace to Present Political Order," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Sept. 25, 1915), pp. 258-59. Luther Harrison, Wewoka Democrat editor, cites the same figure in "Legislature and Tenant Problem." Harlow's Weekly, XII (Jan. 31, 1917), p. 5. The 1910 census report listed 104,137 tenants and 86,055 landowning farmers in Oklahoma. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910,

by zealous party workers such as Oscar Ameringer who "traveled by horse and buggy in the back roads and country lanes, taking collections to pay his way, and boarding with the comrades to eke out an existence." Another organizer with Oklahoma connections was glib-tongued but less literate Dallas A. Anderson who as early as 1908, boasted to his friend, Charles L. Daugherty, a staunch Democrat and State Commissioner of Labor:

I have been on the Socialist Stump for 5 weeks and I think I have done some good work . . . and I do not hesitate to speak my peace [sic]. . . . Look out for us. Chas. when we win we won't have any use for \$15,000.00 Investors Associan [sic] Presidents but will put them on the Section to work.¹

Agriculture, VII, p. 353. Nagle's article contends that 25,000 of the land-owning farmers "are not real farmers--they are side-liners--landlord farmers, banker farmers and other exploiters. It is safe to say that of the real farmers of the state 80 per cent are mortgaged and travelling the road that leads to tenancy." Harlow maintains that Sooner tenantry increased from five per cent in 1890 to 44.5 per cent in 1900 and 54.7 per cent in 1910. Harlow's Weekly, VII (Nov. 7, 1914), pp. 120-22.

¹Harrison, Me and My Big Mouth, p. 87. Ameringer If You Don't Weaken, pp. 227-42, 259-61, 347-50 provides a colorful and detailed account of his activities "on the Socialist circuit." For the nature, extent, and evils of tenantry in Oklahoma see Bush, "Green Corn Rebellion," pp. 1-7; Harrison, ibid., p. 63; Shannon, Socialist Party of America, pp. 35-36; N. H. Lingenfelter, "Growing Landlordism," Oklahoma Graphic, I (March, 1915), p. 12; Harlow's Weekly, VII (Nov. 7, 1914), pp. 120-22, IX (Sept. 25, 1915), pp. 258-59; IX (Oct. 2, 1915), pp. 267-68; IX (Nov. 6, 1915), pp. 349-52; X (Jan. 31, 1916), pp. 5-6; XI (Nov. 8, 1916), pp. 9-10; Anderson to Daugherty, Nov. 20, 1908, Charles L. Daugherty Papers, File A, 1908-1912.

Religion, too, played into the hands of the Socialists in a region which possessed a "heritage of religious evangelism." Among the culturally and economically debased element comprising the majority of their membership, religion, while grimly earnest, was "shrouded in superstition, and frequently in a peculiar mysticism, . . . intolerant and often wildly demonstrative." Socialism, with its denunciation of capitalism as the source of all political, economic, and social ills, provided a concomitant emotionally-based spiritual outlet. Influential, too, were men such as Thomas W. Woodrow of Hobart, a black-bearded, "Moses-Type" Universalist preacher, whose publication, Woodrow's Magazine, proclaimed from its initial masthead in 1914, "Socialism from the Standpoint of Christianity. Christianity from the Standpoint of Socialism"; and in 1916, "For Socialism by Industrial Rather than Political organization." Quoting Exodus 19:5, ". . . All the earth is mine," Woodrow declared:

This means collective ownership of all land by all the people. . . . Land not being the product of human labor is not subject to human ownership. . . . An Open Hint to John D. Rockefeller, J. Pierpont Morgan, et al. Also a warning to evade "sure destruction [earthly]" by disposing of their possessions, thus, observing Jesus' advice to the rich man "to distribute his wealth among the people that he might inherit peace and security of life."¹

¹Shannon, Socialist Party of America, p. 26; Bush, "Green Corn Rebellion," p. 3; Woodrow's Magazine, I (May, 1914), p. 2; I (Sept., 1915), pp. 27, 29; I (Nov.-Dec., 1916), p. 1. These magazines are a part of the Thomas W. Woodrow Papers. Woodrow was no down-at-the-heels itinerant but a man

Uniquely adapted to both the Western tradition and the strata of society providing the bulk of the Socialist membership was the encampment system. Inaugurated in 1907 as a supplement to schoolhouse meetings as a means of gaining socialist converts, it proved both highly popular and successful, filling a void in the lonely lives of isolated farm families. Oscar Ameringer, who spearheaded the system and often served as moderator at these meetings, termed them "lineal descendants of the religious and Populist camp meetings of former days." These summer picnic affairs, usually held in a large tent or grove of trees, were carefully planned, well-publicized, and featured such national Socialist leaders as Eugene Debs, Kate Richards O'Hare, Caroline Low, the ex-Kansas City school teacher, Otto Branstetter, Walter Thomas Mills, and Oscar Ameringer. Usually these gatherings lasted from three days to a week and drew as many as five thousand people. Entire farm families traveled up to a hundred miles, bringing their own provender and sleeping either on the ground or in their farm wagons. Firewood, water, and toilet facilities were furnished by the Socialist organization, and the minimal funds needed were collected by passing the hat at the meetings and by solicitations from trade-conscious merchants who on occasion

of sincerity and intelligence who had migrated to Oklahoma in 1902 after residence in Kansas and Iowa. His equally remarkable wife practiced medicine in Hobart until her death in 1950 at the age of ninety.

even hung out the red flag as personal convictions fought a losing battle against desire for the dollar.¹

In addition to speeches, there were mass Socialist-indoctrinating classes in history and economics where the works of both Socialists and national scholars were utilized. Music ranged from group singing of mawkish party-rallying parodies on folk-songs and hymns to Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert rendered by the versatile Ameringer quartet.² Among the encampments held in 1914 were those at Mountain Park, Cordell, and Fairview in southwestern, west central, and northwestern Oklahoma, respectively. In 1915, reports indicated that some 205 encampments were held throughout the

¹Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, pp. 255, 263-69; Shannon, Socialist Party of America, pp. 25-27, 56; Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma," pp. 174-75; Harrison, Me And My Big Mouth, pp. 86-87; Dale interview, Aug. 23, 1956; Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, p. 207; "Socialism a Menace to the Present Political Order," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Sept. 25, 1915), p. 258. Headline speakers received "the customary hundred dollars honorarium and expenses." Ameringer, ibid., p. 268.

²Ibid. Popular musical favorites were "The Red Flag," and "I Will Join the Party, Mother." The former, sung to the tune of "Maryland, My Maryland," had this rousing chorus: "Then raise the scarlet standard high, Within its shade we'll live and die. Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer, We'll keep the red flag flying here." "Just before the Battle, Mother" provided the melody for the second favorite which sentimentally declared: "Yes, I'll join the party mother, Join it body, mind, and soul, With my comrades, like a brother, Fighting e'er to gain a goal." The quartet consisted of a French horn, two trumpets, and tuba played, respectively, by the talented Ameringer and his three sons. Shannon, Socialist Party of America, pp. 26-27; Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, pp. 244, 249-51, 265-67. Carl Sandburg recalls that Ameringer was also an excellent clarinetist. Interview with Carl Sandburg, Moorhead, Minnesota, November 9, 1959.

state and were "very largely attended." The outstanding success of such widespread 1915 encampments as those at Elk City, Moore, Tishomingo, and Ardmore caused Harlow's Weekly to conclude:

The Socialist is not a foreign element who can be sent away. . . . The only successful method of meeting such radical tendencies is to modify the conditions which produce them. There must be a fundamental change in the methods of dealing with land ownership, land loans, and tenantry in Oklahoma.¹

Next to the misery and resentment endemic in share-cropping and attendant socio-economic evils perhaps no factor so enhanced the cause of the Socialist party as did these encampments.

The Socialist press, of course, played a vital role in spreading the gospel of Socialism. Five publications, two of them state-based, had a wide Oklahoma following. Among these were the Oklahoma Tenant Farmer, edited by the colorful and capable Pat Nagle of Kingfisher, and Ameringer's The American Guardian. The purpose, quality, and impact of these publications were of major proportions and made a profound

¹Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, pp. 207-208; Dale interview, August 23, 1956; Sword of Truth (Sentinel), July 15, 1914, p. 2; Fairview Republican, June 26, 1914, p. 1; July 17, 1914, p. 7; "Socialism a Menace to Present Political Order," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Sept. 25, 1915), p. 258; "One Way of Dealing with Socialism," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Oct. 2, 1915), pp. 267-68. See the Daily Ardmoreite, August 20, 1915, p. 1, for the official program and comments on the Ardmore encampment; the Elk City News-Democrat, August 19, 1915, p. 1, for the encampment there featuring Caroline Low; and The Daily Transcript (Norman), Aug. 18, 1915, p. 1, for the Moore meeting.

impression on leading Sooner journalists. Harlow's Weekly termed the former as "perhaps more influential even than the Appeal to Reason" in Oklahoma, even though the latter was the socialists' major publication in the Southwest, and adjudged Nagle's first issue as

. . . perhaps the most powerful political document that has appeared in the state. The evident purpose of The Tenant Farmer is to cement into the socialist political organization the 110,000 tenant and mortgaged farmers of Oklahoma, as is evidenced by the lead article, which is a tremendously potent appeal to prejudice and passion, fortified with undeniable facts.

Walter Harrison, wartime editor of the Daily Oklahoman, later termed the Guardian as editorially "far more important than any other newspaper ever published in Oklahoma."¹

Also widely read by Oklahoma Socialists were three national party publications, the Appeal to Reason, the National Rip-Saw, and the Milwaukee Leader. The Appeal, published by Julius A. Wayland, aptly combined a "highly moral tone" and "a vigorous and incessant indictment of industrial capitalism" that kept the "Socialist chip on its readers' shoulders." Relying heavily, as did the Oklahoma Tenant Farmer, on the theme of the "fate worse than death" that befell

¹Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, pp. 278-79, 358-64, 374, 380, 390, 394-98, 401; Shannon, Socialist Party of America, p. 260; Harrison, Me and My Big Mouth, pp. 84, 87-90; Ralph Holsinger, "Socialism in the United States" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1928), p. 117; "Socialism a Menace to Present Political Order," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Sept. 25, 1915), pp. 258-59. The Industrial Democrat (1910), the Oklahoma Pioneer (1915), and the Oklahoma Leader (1920) were less successful Ameringer publications.

rural youth of either sex who sought employment in the industrial centers of cynical and lusting capitalists, this paper had a circulation of 40,000 in the Sooner state and a special "Oklahoma edition" edited by J. O. Welday, an ex-Oklahoma City high school teacher and "one of the brightest minds in politics in Oklahoma." Widely-read, too, was the National Rip-Saw edited by Kansas-born Kate Richards O'Hare. Mrs. O'Hare's popularity as an encampment speaker and winner of farmer converts to the socialist cause in Oklahoma and the Great Plains area immeasurably enhanced Rip-Saw circulation. Both were weekly publications. The fifth major publication was the Milwaukee Leader, a daily edited by nationally prominent Victor L. Berger. Ably staffed--including Ameringer and Carl Sandburg--many regarded it as "the spearhead of the Socialist party in the United States."¹

Not only did Socialism have widespread appeal among Oklahoma farmers, but it was largely a native-American movement both as to leadership and membership. Many Oklahomans proclaimed adherence to Socialism and at the same time aggressively declared themselves to be "one-hundred per cent Americans." Since only 2.4 per cent of all Oklahomans were foreign-born, it was to be expected that most members and leaders of the Socialist party would be native-Americans.

¹Shannon, Socialist Party of America, pp. 26-29, 32; "Socialism a Menace to Present Political Order," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Sept. 25, 1915), pp. 258-59; Sandburg interview, Nov. 9, 1959. Eugene V. Debs once served on the Appeal staff.

Among the American-born leaders were such men as Patrick Nagle, editor of the Oklahoma Tenant Farmer and candidate for senator in 1916 and governor in 1918; Fred Holt, gubernatorial candidate in 1914; H. M. Sinclair, secretary of the Oklahoma Socialist party; J. O. Welday, editor of the Oklahoma edition of the Appeal to Reason; Dan Hogan, pioneer journalist and organizer; and the Socialist-Preacher, Thomas W. Woodrow. Ameringer was Oklahoma's only notable exception. Some of the out-of-state leaders such as Hillquit and Berger were foreign-born, but they had much less influence in Oklahoma than Eugene V. Debs, Kate Richards O'Hare, and Caroline Low, all native Americans.¹

However, it must not be inferred that Oklahoma's uniquely regional brand of socialism was completely out of touch with, or had foresworn allegiance to, either international socialism or the Socialist Party of America. H. M. Sinclair, secretary of the party in Oklahoma, made this clear during the 1914 political campaign. After predicting a socialist vote that would "approximate 100,000," he declared: "Men do not go back to the old political parties after getting a fair understanding of the Marxian philosophy." Professor Shannon

¹Bush, "Green Corn Rebellion," p. 1, Appendix A; Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma," p. 174; "One Way of Dealing with Socialism," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Oct. 2, 1915), p. 267. Ameringer and Berger were born in Germany, Hillquit in Latvia. Holt and the Hogans were from Arkansas; O'Hare, Low, and Woodrow, Kansas; Debs, Indiana; Welday, Ohio. Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, pp. 3, 267, 313; interview with Mrs. Oscar Ameringer, March 25, 1960.

corroborates this point, observing that "Oklahoma Socialists did not lose sight of their more truly Socialist demands." Yet, most Oklahomans were pragmatic Socialists rather than pure Marxists. This situation was reflected in the Oklahoma Socialist Party platforms of 1912, 1914, and 1916. Article I in each instance reaffirmed "allegiance to the principles of international socialism as enunciated in the platform and program of the American Socialist party." Further, Article II declared the party's "object to be the . . . seizing of the powers of government of the state of Oklahoma and using such powers for the immediate betterment of the condition of the workers and eventually bringing about a classless society."¹

Despite these strong Marxist statements, however, Oklahoma Socialists were far more interested in alleviating the problems of Sooner tenant farmers and small farm owners. Indeed, not one of the twenty-six planks in the 1914 platform dealt directly with national policy. They did include state-level demands for laws setting a maximum interest rate, various forms of state insurance for farm enterprises, a \$1,000 farm property tax exemption, state loans at low interest rates, state-owned grain elevators and warehouses, and many

¹H. M. Sinclair, "The Real Democracy of the Socialist Party," Harlow's Weekly, V (April 25, 1914), pp. 63, 66; Shannon, Socialist Party of America, pp. 35-36; Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, p. 274; Socialist Party of Oklahoma, Platform and Campaign Book, 1912; 1914; 1916 (Oklahoma City, 1912, 1914, 1916) [copies in Library, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City].

others. As David Shannon correctly observes, "all these demands were firmly in the populist tradition" and helped "to create a strong movement in Oklahoma."¹

While these platforms made no direct statement opposing war, such a position was implicit, for the national party had adopted a strong anti-war plank and the state organization supported the national platform. Further, the Oklahoma party in 1914 adopted a resolution which stated "that if war is declared by the United States the socialists of Oklahoma shall refuse to enlist . . . [and we will] use our influence to the end that all toilers shall refuse to work for the master class during such a war." Indeed, an international committee was established to promote peace sentiment.² Clearly, these official pronouncements demonstrated two significant facts: Oklahoma Socialists basically were interested in practical, state-level reforms and they strongly opposed war.

While there were Socialists in all seventy-seven of Oklahoma's counties in 1916, the two major strongholds of the party were in the west and the south and east central regions. Beckham, Roger-Mills, Greer, Kiowa, Washita, and Dewey were

¹Ibid. The 1916 platform contained over thirty-five planks.

²Ibid.; Proceedings of the State Convention of the Socialist Party of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City, 1914), pp. 14-15.

the focal point of western activity; Johnston, Bryan, Seminole, Hughes, Pontotoc, Pittsburg, and Pottawatomie the hard core in the south and east central area. Dewey County cast one-third of its entire vote for socialist candidates. Of all the Sooner counties, twenty-one, or 27.27 per cent, showed strong socialist support with vote totals running from twenty to twenty-eight per cent. Nine of these counties were western; the remainder east central or southern. Forty-nine, or 53.24 per cent, of the counties cast between ten and nineteen per cent of their votes for the Socialist ticket, while the remaining fourteen, or 18.18 per cent, indicated only slight Socialist support varying between four and nine per cent. This latter group was located entirely in the eastern and northeastern portion of the state, except for Oklahoma County. There were relatively few Socialists in the "Panhandle," the two tiers of counties situated along the eastern border, and the eastern half of the extreme southern region.¹

¹"Socialism's Relation to the Rebellion," Harlow's Weekly, XIII (Aug. 15, 1917), pp. 3-6. For the location and other data on Socialist counties and communities in Western Oklahoma see the Sam Williams Papers. Williams' Council of Defense and Liberty Bond activities brought him into frequent contact with the Socialists. Bush, "The Green Corn Rebellion," provides data on the east central or "Green Corn" area. See also R. L. Williams Papers, No. 79370; Smith, "Criminal Syndicalism in Oklahoma," p. 4; Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma," p. 174; Robinson, "Loyalty Investigations in Oklahoma," p. 30; "Socialists Protest Draft Law," Harlow's Weekly, XII (June 13, 1917), pp. 3-4; "One Way of Dealing with Socialism," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Oct. 2, 1915), p. 267. The Socialists were particularly active in fifty-four Oklahoma communities.

Numerical strength, of course, was not the sole determinant of socialist activity. The degree to which violence was espoused; the type of leadership; and racial, cultural, and economic factors likewise were significant. Paramount among these influences was the "strain of anarchosyndicalism . . . or at least a hazy philosophy of violence" found in large measure among the Socialists in the east central region and in a lesser degree in the eastern and southern areas. These theories espousing violence were disseminated among the destitute and ignorant share-croppers by clever anarchistic and I.W.W. leaders who posed as Socialists and took special form in such organizations as the "Renters Union," the "Working Class Union," and the "Jones Family," which were neither condoned by nor had connections with the official Socialist party. These people voted socialist but were not party members, indeed, they often were too poor to pay the very modest "Red Card" dues.¹

There was little or no syndicalist activity or support in the western counties. While there were many tenant farmers and prosperity was limited, the destitute and desperate conditions of the sharecroppers did not prevail. Populated by both northern and southern elements, the latter did not stem from the "hill country" of Tennessee, Arkansas, and

¹Shannon, Socialist Party of America, pp. 106-107; Bush, "Green Corn Rebellion," pp. 8-11; Harrison, Me and My Big Mouth, pp. 63-64.

other similarly situated states of the South. The foreign-born element in the several German communities in the west were schooled in the European socialist tradition and, in addition, were better off economically than the sharecroppers of the east central region. They were not interested in syndicalist activity.¹

Support of the socialist cause at the polls and actual party membership were, of course, by no means synonymous. In 1910 the files of the national executive secretary listed 5,842 dues-paying Oklahoma Socialists. These bona-fide party members, therefore, represented 23.65 per cent of the total Socialist vote of 24,707 cast in the 1910 elections. In 1912 H. M. Sinclair, Secretary of the Oklahoma Socialist party, reported some 3,500 "Red Card" members, or only 8.42 per cent of the 41,560 votes captured by the party. Two years later State Secretary Sinclair reported a paid-up party membership "much in excess of 10,000," which, he predicted, would represent ten per cent of the Socialist vote in that year which he believed would "approximate 100,000." This claim, made in April, proved extravagant, for while the party made its strongest bid in Oklahoma that year, its candidates for the major state offices polled between 53,229 and 53,266 votes. Thus the party membership accounted for 26.56 per cent of

¹Bush, "Green Corn Rebellion," p. 1; "Socialism's Relation to the Rebellion," Harlow's Weekly, XIII (Aug. 15, 1917), p. 4.

the actual Socialist vote cast, the largest percentage of party member representation in any Socialist election total up to that time. In 1910 Oklahoma led the Nation in Socialist membership with a total of 5,842. Even the populous and industrial New York trailed in second place by eight hundred members. By 1916 these two states had reversed positions.¹

Socialist strength at the polls increased steadily in the years between 1900 and 1914. Loudermilk, the party's candidate for territorial delegate, gained 4,443 votes in 1904; 4.79 per cent of the total vote and an increase of 57.24 per cent over 1900. The total Socialist vote in 1900 exceeded previous support by two and one-half times. The election in 1907 to ratify the newly-formed constitution and to elect the initial slate of state officials recorded a total of 10,646 Socialist votes. Although less than one-tenth of the support polled by Governor-elect Charles N. Haskell,

¹Report of J. Mahloy Barnes, National Executive Secretary of the Socialist Party, to the National Committee and the State Secretaries, Chicago, Jan. 4, 1911, Box 3, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison; Membership Report, 1916-1917, Socialist Party Collection, Duke University, both cited by Shannon, Socialist Party of America, p. 34. H. M. Sinclair, "The Real Democracy of the Socialist Party," Harlow's Weekly, V (April 25, 1914), p. 63; "About Politics and Politicians," Harlow's Weekly, VII (Sept. 5, 1914), pp. 11-12, 16-17; Journal of the Senate of the Fifth Legislature of Oklahoma, 1915, pp. 8-22; Oklahoma State Directory, 1953, pp. 93-95. Socialist Party membership among Oklahoma's neighbors in 1910 was: Texas, 2,079; Missouri, 1,558; Kansas, 1,300; Arkansas, 472. Mid-western states: Illinois, 4,173; Ohio, 3,203; Wisconsin, 2,703; Eastern states: Pennsylvania, 5,018; Massachusetts, 2,856.

Socialist strength did increase to almost two and one-half times the 1904 total. Significant, too, was the election of Robert L. Owen and Thomas P. Gore as the state's first United States senators. Both men served ably, continuously, and conspicuously during the entire pre-war and wartime period. The rural vote, a continuing source of loyal support, elected Gore.¹

In November, 1908, Oklahoma participated in its first national election. While the electorate gave its support to the Populist-inclined William Jennings Bryan by a margin of 11,848 votes, the Republicans and Socialists made significant gains. The former captured all three of the northern congressional districts and three-to-two control of the Sooner House delegation. Dynamic Eugene V. Debs, a familiar and popular figure among Sooner Socialists through his encampment appearances, polled 21,729 votes, or 8.58 per cent of the total vote cast. Numerically, the Socialists had their greatest strength in the western and east central portions of the state, for District IV tallied 5,760 Socialist votes; District V, 5,478; District II, 4,443; District III, 2,082; and District I, 2,021. Gore, recipient of the "short term"

¹H. M. Sinclair, "The Real Democracy of the Socialist Party," Harlow's Weekly, V (April 25, 1914), p. 63; The World Almanac and Encyclopedia, 1908, p. 733; 1912, pp. 728-29; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 310-12, 316, 321-22; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 317-19; Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 34-43. The Haskell Papers provide valuable data.

in 1907, was re-elected to the Senate by a wide margin.¹

The subsequent 1910 election, a state level contest, marked a recession in Republican fortunes and no really basic change in the Socialist position. Control of the Congressional delegation reverted into Democratic hands by a three-to-two margin, where it remained until the large scale post-war reversal in 1920. In the two narrowly won Republican contests--Morgan and McGuire--the Socialists actually held the balance of power, while in the Third District, Socialist G. M. Snyder came within 613 votes of Democrat James S. Davenport's successful plurality. Except for a few legislative seats, all other state positions were filled by Democrats, including Lee Cruce of Ardmore as the second governor. Significantly, J. T. Cumbie, the Socialist candidate, polled 24,707 votes in the gubernatorial contest, 4,016 more than the Cruce plurality of 20,691 over Joseph W. McNeal, the Republican aspirant, who gained totals of 120,218 and 99,527 respectively. Thus, while the Socialist vote increased from 21,089 in 1908 to 24,707 in 1910, a gain

¹Oklahoma Guide, p. 36; Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 39, 42-43; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 312, 322-23; World Almanac and Encyclopedia, 1909, pp. 653-54; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, p. 318; Congressional Directory, 61 Cong., 3 Sess., 1910, pp. 100-102, 446; 62 Cong., 2 Sess., 1911, p. 84. Edgar E. Robinson, The Presidential Vote, 1896-1932 (Stanford, 1947), pp. 13-14, 39, 41, 44-46, 51-52, 299-305 provides detailed statistics on the 1908 presidential election. At the time of inaugural in 1907 the U. S. Senate by lot had designated Gore as the short term or "junior" senator. He was reelected by the state legislature on January 20, 1909, by a 100-48 vote over Republican Dennis Flynn.

of but 3,618, and the party won no major political office, it did command a strategical balance of power in three of the six most important state-level election contests.¹

The eventful election of 1912 provided both national and state-level political pyrotechnics. It marked the birth of the Progressive party and, while in terms of political longevity and the winning of major offices the event proved to be an abortive accouchement, it did decide the 1912 election. State law prevented the appearance of Theodore Roosevelt and other Progressive party candidates on the 1912 ballot in Oklahoma. However, the significant fact remains that the progressive principle was very much alive in the Sooner state. The various Farmers' Alliances and the Populist Party, the original "seedbed of progressivism," had been "cradled . . . in the Middle West." Many Oklahoma Democrats, including Senator Gore, Supreme Court Justice Jesse Dunn, and Ira N. Terrill, had been "rampant Populists." Others, such as Congressmen "Alfalfa Bill" Murray and

¹Congressional Directory, 62 Cong., 2 Sess., 1911, pp. 84-85; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 321-22; Oklahoma Guide, p. 36; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 325-26; Sinclair, "The Real Democracy of the Socialist Party," Harlow's Weekly, V (April 25, 1914), p. 63; World Almanac and Encyclopedia, 1912, pp. 728-29. In the plurality Republican elections in Districts I and II the Socialist congressional candidates held the balance of power although their combined vote therein was 7,904 as compared with 12,093 in Districts IV and V where the Democrats polled 50,599 and the Republicans 25,404. See the Cruce Papers for detailed data on the Cruce election and administration.

Joseph B. Thompson labeled themselves "progressive Democrats."¹

Oklahomans did deliver 161,418, or 63.45 per cent, of their votes to "progressive" presidential candidates. The victorious Woodrow Wilson received 46.84 per cent of the Oklahoma vote; Debs, the Socialist, 16.61 per cent. Wilson's nationwide average was 41.82 per cent; Debs, 5.97. The tripling of the latter's nationwide percentage in Oklahoma clearly indicated the major role of Socialism in the Sooner state. The Republican Taft, the lone conservative, polled 35.69 and 23.17 per cent of the Oklahoma and national vote, respectively. In terms of the Oklahoma popular vote, Wilson received 119,156; Taft, 90,787; Debs, 42,262; and Chafin, 2,185. Chafin, the Prohibition candidate, received disappointing support from constitutionally "dry" Sooners, gaining but 0.86 per cent of their votes over against a national percentage of 1.39. Robert L. Owen was returned to

¹George E. Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement (Madison, Wisc., 1947), p. 11; Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 10-13; Belle Case La Follette and Fola La Follette, Robert M. La Follette (2 vols.; New York, 1953), I, p. 460; Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, p. 207; Dale interview, Aug. 23, 1956; Congressional Directory, 63 Cong., 1 Sess., 1913, pp. 92-94; "Current Events and Comments," Harlow's Weekly, XI (Sept. 27, 1916), p. 3. Outstanding monographs on the Progressive Movement and Party include Mowry, *ibid.*; Claude G. Bowers, Beveridge and the Progressive Era (New York, 1932); Amos Pinchot, History of the Progressive Party, 1912-1916, ed., Helene Maxwell Hooker (New York, 1958); Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917 (New York, 1954).

the Senate although his plurality of 42,989 votes was almost equalled by the 40,860 ballots cast for his Socialist rival, John G. Wills. The population gains reported in the 1910 census qualified Oklahoma for three additional congressmen who were elected at large. Democrats won all three posts, increasing their House margin to six-to-two. McGuire and Morgan, the Republican incumbents, survived by margins under a thousand votes. Renshaw and McKenzie, their Socialist adversaries, held the balance of power with 4,447 and 7,453 votes, respectively. The Republicans salvaged only twenty-six legislative seats; the Socialists, despite steadily increasing support, gained none.¹

The Socialist cause in 1912 was enhanced by the development of a more effective party press and a party platform advocating, among other things, extensive ownership of state industries, woman suffrage, and "capturing the powers of government of the state of Oklahoma . . . for the betterment of the condition of the workers." While there

¹Congressional Directory, 63 Cong., 1 Sess., 1913, pp. 91-94; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, p. 323; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, p. 327; Oklahoma Guide, p. 37; World Almanac and Encyclopedia, 1914, p. 765; Oklahoma State Directory, 1953, pp. 133, 144-46. In other close congressional races, the Socialist vote total and Democrat plurality, respectively, were: Irvin, 6,463; Davenport, 6,300; Holt, 11,321; Carter, 23,987; Stallard, 11,033; Ferris, 29,574. See Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population, III, p. 466, for statistics on the 209.8 per cent population increase over 1900 to 1,657,155. Murray, Joseph Thompson, and Claude Weaver won the at-large congressional seats.

was no direct statement opposing war, the initial plank reaffirmed the principles of International Socialism and the national platform which did.

The fact that three counties polled more than a thousand Socialist votes each in 1912 and ten others more than eight hundred demonstrated the growing Socialist strength. Of these thirteen counties, five were east central, four were western, two south central, and one each in the central and extreme southeastern areas. On the other hand, the five counties registering Socialist vote totals less than two hundred were located in the Panhandle and the northeast corner, four in the latter area. These facts clearly demonstrated that there was little Socialist strength among the Indians, at least those in the region of the Five Civilized Tribes. On a percentage basis, of course, the western counties would have appeared to greater Socialist advantage than statistics indicated since settlement there was more sparse.¹ However, despite advancing Socialist strength and renewed Republican activity, Oklahoma remained solidly Democratic in 1912 and optimistically predicted a similar

¹Socialist Party of Oklahoma, Platform and Campaign Book, 1912 (Oklahoma City, 1912). See the Johnston County Socialist, Jan. 12, 1912, p. 1, for a strongly-worded attack on "BIG BIZ" and the even stronger "Socialism or Hell," Feb. 2, 1912, p. 1. These articles are typical of the developing Socialist press. See World Almanac and Encyclopedia, 1914, pp. 764-65, for the Socialist vote by counties. The top three were: Pittsburg, 1,438; Garvin, 1,053; Pottawatomie, 1,013.

national trend. While a minority victory, Woodrow Wilson's election--along with Grover Cleveland's two successful efforts, the only Democratic triumphs since 1856--provided not only the "New Freedom" program of progressive legislation but the wartime administration as well.

Sooners went to the polls in August and November of 1914 as the nations of Europe proceeded to war. And while political contentions soon were to be eclipsed by the immeasurably greater chaos of war, the Sooner political waters never had been quite so muddied. The Democratic machine for the first time since statehood was seriously challenged. Governor Lee Cruce, inexperienced politically, had not proved a strong party leader. Moreover, the state's economy was in temporary decline. Party solidarity, forged in the fires of the commonly-shared desire for statehood and an effective constitution and heretofore taken for granted, threatened to disintegrate. In the face of mounting internal troubles the majority party faced its most serious external threat. The Republicans were never more unified or better organized and, sensing a golden opportunity, presented their strongest slate of candidates since statehood. John Fields, capable and energetic farm editor and expert who carried a strong appeal with the rural vote, was nominated for governor.¹

¹McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 325-26; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 327-28. The party rift was serious. Later Williams wrote Haskell extending "sincere thanks . . . for your recent and efficient efforts in bringing

At the same time, the Socialists, steadily increasing in strength, were girding for an all out effort to secure major party status. Fred Holt, an aggressive United Mine Workers' official, and Patrick Nagle were the candidates for governor and United States senator, respectively. They were foremost among an exceptionally well qualified slate of Socialist candidates. In addition, the Progressive party was making its initial bid for the Sooner vote, and the usual scattering of die-hard Prohibitionists and independents were in evidence.¹

The campaign was both energetic and acrimonious, especially the governor's race. Democrat Robert L. Williams, stressed "honesty, economy, and efficiency in government," law enforcement, tax reduction and improvement in education, and called for elimination from office of the "dead-head, dead-beat, and the grafter." Campaign strategy featured the "R. L. Williams Good Government Club" on both the state and county levels, "Williams for Governor" buttons, and the alliterative slogan, "We will win with Williams."² Fields,

about harmonious relations between some of the warring democratic factions." Williams to Haskell, Aug. 20, 1914, Haskell Papers.

¹Ibid.; Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma: A History, II, p. 654; "About Oklahoma Politics and Politicians," Harlow's Weekly, V (April 25, 1914), pp. 19-20 carry brief accounts of the brilliant and unique Nagle.

²Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, pp. 219-21, 225. Pp. 204-26 survey the entire campaign and election results. Durant Weekly News, July 24, 1914, p. 1.

"a master of sarcasm, satire, invective, and facts," "beat the bushes at the forks of the creek" in a "relentless campaign." Styling himself as a "dirt farmer" and the enemy of the "floating political grafter whose farming consists in skinning his tenants," Fields adopted as his campaign slogan this intriguing doggeral:

A garden and a sow
A smokehouse and a cow
Twenty-four hens and a rooster
And you'll have more than you uster.¹

The Socialists, on the other hand, had begun their 1914 campaign even before the sparks of the 1912 election had burned out. In a November 13, 1912, editorial entitled, "We Will Work Wonders," the Sword of Truth, proudly proclaimed that "every comrade is aggressive--no drones wanted." The editor then declared:

Every year is Socialist campaign year. There is no slush fund--no Wall street contributions. The continual campaign is conducted by men imbued with the spirit of freedom and political equality.

Such a movement is irresistible. It can not be checked, nor swerved from the path that leads to industrial democracy--a Co-operative community. Opinions differ as to when this goal will be attained, but there is no reasonable doubt that it will be attained.

Between 1912 and 1914 the Socialist bombardment had been unceasing, and the following examples typify the Socialist

¹Harrison, Me and My Big Mouth, pp. 179, 184; Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, p. 225; advertisement in Oklahoma Farm Journal, XXII (Oct. 15, 1914), reprinted in "John and his 'Red Bug,'" The Reconstructionist, Sept. 2, and Sept. 9, 1922, in Field's second bid for the governorship.

propaganda: "The logic of capitalism. When the masters skin you, you musn't get sore"; "Capitalism is a family that starves half its children in order that the other half may have too much to eat"; and "How would you like to have public steam laundries instead of a private wash tub for your wife? That's Socialism." A 1913 article entitled "Organize! Organize!" and addressed "To the comrades" admonished: "We must work, work, work, incessantly. Passive Socialism is not real Socialism. The era of national decadence is upon us. . . . There is but one essential to success--co-operative action." Socialist women were exhorted: "If you are not willing to work, you are no better than a capitalist. . . . Let us work to help make Oklahoma 'THE FIRST SOCIALIST STATE.'"¹

Nor did the Socialists confine their propaganda and campaign efforts to their own press. Early in 1914 H. M. Sinclair, party secretary, sounded the call for even greater party loyalty and support and unceasing activity. Attempting to engender a maximum effort in the 1914 campaign, Sinclair issued this exhortation in Harlow's Weekly:

The emancipation of the workers will only be brought about by the workers themselves. "Let each help pay for his own freedom," is a party slogan the world over.

¹Sword of Truth, Nov. 13, 1912, p. 2; Jan. 1, 1913, p. 2 [quoted from Kate O'Hare's Rip-Saw]; April 30, 1913, p. 1; May 7, 1913, p. 1. The latter reprinted verbatim Woman's State Correspondent Mrs. M. A. Stallard's "An Appeal to Women."

Every real Socialist, therefore, helps pay for the expenses of the party propaganda . . . and is furnished with a red card. . . . The Socialist party will be the second political party in the state after the coming election. . . . Men do not go back to the old parties after getting a fair understanding of the Marxian philosophy. The party is here to stay.

The day prior to the general election in 1914, a quarter-page paid political advertisement emblazoned the upper portion of page three of the McAlester News-Capitol. Its central theme, intelligently developed by Sinclair, plead eloquently:

Put in power the party of the working class . . . placing a stop on hard times, inefficient and extravagant administration of County and State government. . . . Vote for the principles of the Bread and Butter Question. The Democrats are unable to put over 'Our Bob' and the Republicans are divided with the Progressives. Don't waste your vote on the other parties. Vote the Socialist ticket. It's a winner this year. . . . VOTERS IN OKLAHOMA MAY LEGALLY VOTE ANY TICKET THEY CHOOSE TOMORROW, REGARDLESS OF THE TICKET VOTED IN THE PRIMARIES.

It will be noted that issues and party principles rather than personalities featured the Socialist campaign. This was no accident but rather a party edict set forth in the Socialist party constitution. In a statement addressed "To Socialist Party Nominees," on July 1, 1914, the party's State Executive Committee made this crystal clear:

You are representatives of the party, members selected by the party to represent the political phase of the movement. . . . Under no circumstances are you to make a "good man" campaign or a campaign on your personal merit.¹

¹H. M. Sinclair, "The Real Democracy of the Socialist Party," Harlow's Weekly, V (April 25, 1914), pp. 62-63; McAlester News-Capitol, Nov. 2, 1914, p. 3; Sword of Truth, July 1, 1914, p. 6.

While the pacifist-inclined Socialists were the only party whose press devoted major space to the European war and had done so since 1912, their opposition to the war had been vigorous and unceasing. The Sword of Truth, the most influential weekly Sooner Socialist publication in the 1912-1914 period, led the anti-war onslaught. On November 11, 1914, the Sentinel paper boldly declared:

While capitalist sympathizers are either prostituting patriotism to the support of war, and timid fake moralists are using ineffective measures to stop the horror, . . . the International Socialist party is taking steps not only to prevent future wars, but also to arrest the European war now in progress. This is to be done by promoting an international agreement with the workers of the world to not shoot at each other at the command of the masters. . . . It is time for the workers of the world to serve notice on the arrogant masters that they will no longer bleed and kill at the dictation of those who trample them into poverty in the name of peace. Down with war! Long live the workers--live to become free!

A month later, the same paper carried a bitter attack on the Roman Catholic Church entitled, "War Is Legalized Murder." In the article George W. Cain charged that "instead of opposing war," the Catholic Church "is waging a relentless war on Socialism because Socialism is opposed to war." Severely castigating both Protestants and Catholics for teaching "that war is right," Cain admonished all church leaders:

Being in favor of the competitive system which is the system of warfare, then how can . . . [you] consistently oppose wars of bullets which are the direct fruit of the war of competition? . . . Commence at the bottom, and teach . . . that the war of competition is wrong, and . . . then it will be plain that wars of wholesale murder are wrong.

The Republican Administration's [Taft] proposed budget for 1913 of \$330,000,000 for the war and navy departments and only \$31,000,000 for agriculture also came in for severe censure.¹

The attack continued in 1913. "War is hell," declaimed the Sword of Truth, "our Christian government offers boys \$16 a month to go to hell." The tempo of opposition increased with the onset of war in 1914. In a highly emotional editorial appearing on August 19, the Sentinel paper arraigned the war as "the most horrible crime, the most awful murder in history. . . . If the kings and priests and capitalists want war, let them fight." Surveying the prospect of American involvement, Editor W. W. Hornbeck exclaimed, "Oh, Almighty God, forbid!" A week later the Socialist paper termed the conflict "a war of the dollar" and accused Wall Street of being a partner in the Kaiser's "tantrums." In September the Socialist press urged the Administration to "starve the war by forbidding the shipment of any food products to Europe," and to "give the people the sole power to declare war . . . [so that] war will cease." The following month it informed the public that the "greed of the master class" had caused the European conflict. Quite surprisingly, however, the Socialist party did not attempt to translate the question of war into a major or direct election issue in 1914.

¹Sword of Truth, Nov. 27, 1912, p. 1; Dec. 25, 1912, p. 1. The Johnston County Socialist at Tishomingo was also prominent.

The party platform did not include a specific anti-war plank although the convention did adopt a strong resolution urging Socialists to refuse either enlistment or war work in the event America entered the conflict. In addition, the convention established an international committee to promote peace.¹

The Progressive party, which had been barred from the ballot in 1912, campaigned with vigor and enthusiasm. Aided by a newly-formed press, the State Progressive Committee, with John M. Hale as chairman, had begun campaign activities. Forty-seven counties had been organized by April, 1914. Indeed, Hale reported that "thirty-two county newspapers were taking up the fight for the Progressives in a whole-souled way." The official party paper, The Bull Moose, had published its first issue in January, 1913, proclaiming itself "a paper that has no higher ambition than to be a modest laborer for the betterment of conditions for the whole people." It attacked "the thieving forces of Wall Street" and promised to expose "selfish combines," "office-seeking blood suckers," and "corrupt and hypocritical time servers."²

¹Sword of Truth, Jan. 1, 1913, p. 1; Aug. 19, 1914, p. 2; Aug. 26, 1914, p. 1; Sept. 9, 1914, p. 2; Sept. 10, 1914, p. 1; Oct. 28, 1914, p. 1; Socialist Party of Oklahoma, Platform and Campaign Book, 1914 (Oklahoma City, 1914). Proceedings of the State Convention of the Socialist Party (Oklahoma City, 1914), pp. 14-15.

²John M. Hale, "Progressives See Favor in Present Situation," Harlow's Weekly, V (April 25, 1914), pp. 31, 49. In the same issue see also Orville D. Hall, "Republican View

With four political parties actively campaigning, the election promised to be one of the most colorful and bitterly contested in Oklahoma's history.

The results on November 3 bore out the pre-election forecast. Although the Democrats captured seven of the eight state offices, two Republicans ran close races. The veteran incumbent, Morgan, won by 855 votes in the Eighth Congressional District; Joseph A. Gill lost by 1,238 in the First. A vote typical of the election trend, one where no particularly attractive candidate led to disproportionate results, was that in the state auditor's race:

E. B. Howard	Democrat	107,728
George H. Foster	Republican	75,404
S. H. Colwick	Socialist	52,605
B. F. Morris	Progressive	4,468
D. A. Holmes	Prohibition	677

Democratic totals for statewide offices varied from 104,117 to 111,443. Republican results ranged from 72,779 to 95,904. The Socialists made what was to be their strongest political effort. While far short of Party Secretary Sinclair's April prediction that "the total vote will approximate 100,000," they did reach a new high of 53,316, exceeding their 1912 peak by 1,756 votes. All their major candidates ran strong races, with Langston's 53,316 votes the individual high.¹

of the Present Campaign," pp. 18, 36. The Bull Moose, Jan. 4, 1913, p. 1. This was the first issue of this four-page, six-column weekly.

¹Senate Journal, Fifth Oklahoma Legislature, 1915, pp. 8-16; Oklahoma State Directory, 1953, pp. 95, 133, 143-45;

In the senatorial race Gore, the incumbent, received 111,443 votes; John H. Burford, Republican, 73,292; Nagle, Socialist, 52,229; and W. O. Cromwell, Progressive, 3,966. Governor-elect Williams gained 100,597 votes; Fields, 95,904; Fred Holt, Socialist, 52,703; John P. Hickam, Progressive, 4,189; and two Independents, 294. Using the governor's race as a base, the Democrats captured 39.65 per cent of the 253,687 votes cast; the Republicans, 37.80 per cent; the Socialists, 20.77 per cent; the Progressives 1.61 per cent; and the two Independents, 0.83 per cent. While the strength of Fields exceeded that of other Republican candidates by approximately twenty thousand votes, it was quite apparent that the Democrats had no clear-cut majority. In every state contest they won only by a plurality. In the Third and Seventh Districts the vote gained by the Socialist candidates exceeded that of their Republican rivals by significant margins; in the Fourth, the Socialist trailed by only 217. These three districts comprised, in large measure, the east central, southern, and western areas of the state, and the heart of Socialist strength. Progressive candidates fared badly. Their support ranged from 156 to 669 votes except

Sinclair, "The Real Democracy of the Socialist Party," Harlow's Weekly, V (April 25, 1914), p. 63; Congressional Directory, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., 1916, pp. 89-92, 461.

for 1,645 in the Eighth District.¹

A significant development in the state legislature was the election for the first time in Oklahoma history of Socialist legislators, five in the House and one in the Senate. All came from western counties where the percentage of Socialists was greatest. The first--and only--Socialist ever to serve in the Oklahoma Senate was George E. Wilson of Dewey County, representing the Dewey-Ellis-Roger Mills section of District Two. The five victorious Socialist representatives were Thomas H. McElmore, Beckham County; D. C. Kirkpatrick, Dewey; N. D. Pritchett, Kiowa; C. H. Ingham, Major; and S. W. Hill, Roger Mills. The Democratic majority in both houses suffered little change. There were thirty-eight Democrats, five Republicans, and one Socialist in the Senate, and seventy-six Democrats, seventeen Republicans, and five Socialists in the Lower House. In 1912 the membership had been 36-8-0 and 81-18-0, respectively.²

The significance of what proved to be Oklahoma's last non war-influenced election was not entirely evident in 1914, for almost no one dreamed that this was to be, in large part, their "wartime" government. Certain facts, however,

¹Ibid. Two significant Socialist congressional contests were in District III: R. L. Norman, Soc., 10,588; C. H. Elting, Rep., 6,479; C. C. Carter, Dem., 17,274; and District VII: H. H. Stallard, Soc., 9,121; W. S. Mills, Rep., 6,199; J. McClintic, Dem., 11,861.

²Ibid.

were clear. Never had an election brought forth so large a number of outstanding and colorful candidates in all the parties, and never had the results of a Sooner election been so much in doubt. The election proved a cruel blow to the expectations of the Republicans and the Progressives. Defeat continued the Republicans in the role of little more than a militant minority during the ensuing war years that was not to end until the election of 1920. The meager Progressive vote was the major surprise. Appearing on the Sooner ballot for the first time, they failed to gain support for a single state-level office of more than 4,991 votes, thus sounding their death knell.¹ Progressive Sooners there were, but they continued to identify themselves with the liberal elements of the established parties. In this election, too, the cause of the Prohibition Party truly went "dry."

John M. Hale, the state secretary of the Progressive organization, while decrying post-election charges of "all kinds of high crimes and misdemeanors" directed against his party, regarded all four of the gubernatorial candidates as able men:

[Each is] a good man from any point of view. . . .
The true test . . . is not based on the personality . . .
but more largely on the personnel of his advisors, his

¹Oklahoma State Directory, 1953, pp. 94-95.
Commenting on the election the staunchly Democratic Daily Oklahoman observed: "The failure of the progressives to develop more than nominal strength is one of the surprises of the result. They . . . will likely make no further attempt to maintain an organization." Ibid., Nov. 7, 1914, p. 6.

party platform and pledges and especially on the former record of his party. . . . [However,] the republicans . . . had no platform. . . . The only real . . . desire they had was to defeat the democrats. The democrats had a good platform . . . [but] in the light of its past record . . . it is hard to believe that the democratic party intends . . . to do aught but hold office.

The rabidly Democratic and bitterly anti-Fields Daily Oklahoman conceded with some grace that "John Fields made a splendid race considering the handicaps with which he worked," namely the reputation accruing from the Republican "gang" of the territorial period. The Democrats did no boasting, and indeed their plurality survival merited none. In fact, "Bob" Williams "felt keenly the fact that he was a minority candidate both in the primary and general election." The unique feature of this gubernatorial contest, according to Scales, was the fact that the usually conservative Oklahoma Republicans ran a progressive--Fields was a Roosevelt conservationist--and the usually progressive Democrats ran a conservative.¹

The major party of protest, the Socialists, were jubilant in their initial success in capturing state-level offices. Unaware that their rejoicing soon would revert to a wake as the party became a war casualty, they looked confidently to the future for even greater successes. The

¹John M. Hale, "The Progressive's Standpoint," Oklahoma Graphic, I (Feb., 1915), pp. 7-8; Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 6, 1914, p. 6; Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, pp. 225-26; Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma," p. 171. The two-to-one loss to Fields in Oklahoma City and the strong Socialist vote in his home county, Bryan, rankled Williams most.

election of 1914 was the highwater mark of Sooner Socialism and the entire American Socialist movement as well. Professor Charles C. Bush, in his careful study of the "Green Corn" episode, concludes that "Socialism reached the height of its actual political power in the elections of 1914," and James Ralph Scales provides an excellent summation of the nature and impact of the movement:

As elsewhere in the Trans-Mississippi states, the 1914 election proved to be the high tide of Socialism in Oklahoma. It was the last great effort of an agrarian movement of general strength, as the inheritors of the Populist tradition rallied for a last concerted assault on privilege before the World War intervened. It was a radical movement of native inspiration, with practically none of the foreign-born element that supplied the rank-and-file of other uprisings of discontent.¹

To both the victors and the vanquished, one fact above all others was evident. The Democrats were still in control, despite cries of vote-influencing, political favors, fraudulent election procedures, and chicanery in the ballot count. True, they had no clear-cut mandate. Indeed, Professor Scales believes that "except for the record Socialist vote, the Democratic ticket might well have been beaten," and Professors Edward E. Dale and James D. Morrison support this contention. Even the strongly partisan Daily Oklahoman in its summation of the election results, admitted that the Democrats had had a close call:

¹Bush, "Green Corn Rebellion," p. 8; Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma," p. 174.

The country is still standing with President Wilson, as evidenced by the return of democratic majorities in both branches of Congress. The fact that democratic representation in the house has been reduced is not so much an evidence of revulsion against the party in power as demonstration of the fact that Colonel Roosevelt is no longer a potential political influence. His following has strayed back to the republican fold from whence it came.¹

The knowledge that they had barely survived and that the balance of power responsible for survival may well have rested in the hands of their opposition had a sobering effect on the Democratic party. Thus the election proved to be a salubrious and much-needed catalyst for the achieving of a healthy political and administrative status quo in Oklahoma. The Democratic party that took up the reigns of office in 1915 was a wiser and more responsible organization and, by the same token, the Sooner body politic was more amenable to the prerequisites of responsible administration. Hence, under truculent but capable "Bob" Williams, the party machine was destined to gather new cohesion and strength, the state

¹Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma," p. 172; Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, p. 227; Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 6, 1914, p. 6. The primary election victories of Williams, Murray, and Hastings were unsuccessfully challenged. County contest irregularities were established in Choctaw, Oklahoma, Johnston, Comanche, and Pushmataha. Harlow concluded that "it is the general opinion of the newspapers that election frauds, when finally threshed out, will be very few." Harlow's Weekly, VI (Aug. 29, 1914), pp. 10-12. Charges that "the election machine beat Fields, not Bob Williams," and that Democratic precinct officials "registered . . . and voted all absentees" were never substantiated. Harrison, Me and My Big Mouth, p. 179, 183-84. Williams denied the "unfounded charges of fraud made by some of my opponents." Williams to Charles N. Haskell, Aug. 20, 1914, Haskell Papers.

government to grow more efficient, the "cruel economy" to bring a greater measure of prosperity, and the state at large to contribute worthily to the war effort of the nation.

CHAPTER III

EUROPE GOES TO WAR: SOONER REACTIONS

On August 4, 1914, as the Sooner electorate battled in the state primary, the nations of Europe commenced a far more sanguine struggle. On that day Germany declared war on Belgium and England initiated hostilities with the German Empire. On the preceding day Germany had gone to war with France. These and the prior declarations made by Austria against Serbia on July 28 and Germany against Russia on August 1 irrevocably committed Europe and eventually the world to war. However, the Oklahoma press had given rather casual treatment to the events leading up to the outbreak of the war. This disinterest stemmed largely from preoccupation with the election, the expanding economy and other domestic concerns, distance from the conflict, and the isolationist tradition. On the day following the Sarajevo assassination, the Sooner dailies carried initial reports of the incident. The press saw no evidences of grave diplomatic import. The "cockpit of Europe" had had many such tragic but localized outbursts of violence. The Oklahoman devoted almost three

columns to the episode but less than one-fourth of this made the front page. Actually, Carranza's activities in Mexico and a new proposal for political registration in Oklahoma received far more attention.¹

While the news report from Europe was headed, "Heir Apparent To Austria-Hungary Throne Is Slain," the sub-heading, "Tragedy Follows Tragedy," typified the story which featured a recital of seven assassination attempts on members of the Austrian royal family. A two-column picture of the murdered couple and their three children shared pictorial prominence with an equally large likeness of Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, international president of the Woman's Suffrage Association. Only a small, page two Paris-dated item expressed "apprehension lest the Sarajevo crime prove a dire blow to the stability of Europe." On the following day the European incident advanced to second billing, superceded again by

¹Walter Consuelo Langsam, The World Since 1914 (5th ed.; New York, 1947), p. 3. For causation, outbreak, initial American reactions to the war, and problems of neutrality and submarine policy see Langsam, pp. 3-39; Raymond James Sontag, European Diplomatic History, 1871-1932 (New York, 1933), pp. 209-51; Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (6th ed.; New York, 1958), pp. 563-95; Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 145-222. The basic documents on American neutrality and submarine policy appear in edited form in Ruhl J. Bartlett (ed.), The Record of American Diplomacy: Documents and Readings (3d ed., rev. & enl.; New York, 1954), pp. 431-41; and in their entirety in Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of United States, 1915, Supplement, pp. 313-661, 821-82; ibid., 1916, pp. 143-328. Daily Oklahoman, June 29, 1914, pp. 1, 2.

Carranza. No further mention occurred until the July 4 issue featured a two-column picture of the new heir-apparent to the Austrian throne and his wife, with the unflattering comment that Archduke Karl's father was "half mad" and his wife was the "twelfth of . . . twenty children . . . eighteen of whom are imbeciles." No further news items appeared until July 26 when Austria and Serbia severed relations, and at no time did the Oklahoman comment editorially.¹

Few other Sooner publications accorded the episode more than cursory mention and in no case was it reported as the lead story. The Muskogee Phoenix carried a quarter-column, page one report headed, "His Children Last Thought of Prince Slain By Student." Coverage on page two appeared under London and Sarajevo datelines. There was no mention of the occurrence as a major issue, while the Mexican problem monopolized the front page. No subsequent mention appeared until July 25. The Tulsa Democrat carried full-column front page accounts under foreign datelines on June 29 and 30 and then dropped the story until July 28. The Daily Transcript at Norman and the Blackwell Daily News first mentioned the controversy on July 27. On the following day the Transcript published an intelligent, locally-written review of preceding

¹Daily Oklahoman, June 29, 1914, pp. 1, 2; June 30, 1914, pp. 1, 4; July 4, 1914, p. 1.

developments under the heading, "Europe Sits on a Volcano" and the lead line, "War which threatens to be the most appalling in known human history. . . ." The News regarded a "general European War" as "likely," but the Mexican imbroglio and the hot pennant race of the local "Colts" commanded major attention. The News also provided intelligent editorial comment earlier than most of the Sooner press. Its first bona fide war editorial entitled, "Slaughter For a Dynasty," appeared on August 4 and placed the major blame for the war on authoritarian and decadent royal dynasties.¹

The weekly publications paid even less attention to the Sarajevo situation. The Durant Weekly News on July 3 reported, "Another Assassination," and appended a list of thirty-four dignitaries who had suffered the same fate since 1801. Only two other war comments occurred prior to 1915. The Stillwater Gazette printed a picture of the "deeply shocked" Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph on July 14, and on August 7 reported President Wilson's initial peace move. The editorial page conjectured on the prospects of advancing wheat prices due to the war. The Osage Journal announced the various declarations of war commencing with the July 30

¹Muskogee Phoenix, June 30, 1914, pp. 1-2; Tulsa Democrat, June 29, 1914, p. 1; June 30, 1914, pp. 1, 7; July 28, 1914, p. 1; The Daily Transcript (Norman), July 27, 1914, p. 1; July 28, 1914, p. 1; Blackwell Daily News, July 27, 1914, p. 1; July 31, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 3, 1914, p. 2; Aug. 4, 1914, pp. 1, 4.

issue, commenting that they "caused a big commotion in the commercial world." Succeeding issues carried similar trade-conscious items. Surprisingly, Luther Harrison, destined as one of Oklahoma's most ardent war leaders, ignored the European crisis until August 20. An editorial on that date opposed large armies and navies but expressed a fear that they might be needed. Political news and advertisements crowded the August and September issues of Harrison's Wewoka Democrat.¹

Despite the forewarnings of a formidable chain of European tensions climaxed by the Sarajevo tragedy, the declarations of war commencing on July 28 struck Oklahomans like a thunderbolt. The first development regarded seriously by the Sooner press was the break in diplomatic relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia on July 25. The following day the Oklahoman printed its first banner headline relating to the European situation. The caption, in red ink, declared: "Austrian Relations With Servia Broken; War Believed Certain." Four sub-headings appeared, followed by "Bulletins" from Vienna and Berlin and news stories from Vienna and London. The development monopolized the front page and spilled over

¹Durant Weekly News, July 3, 1914, p. 6; Aug. 7, 1914, p. 1, Aug. 21, 1914, p. 1; Stillwater Gazette, July 17, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 7, 1914, pp. 1, 2; Osage Journal, July 30, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 6, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 13, 1914, pp. 1, 4; Wewoka Democrat, Aug. 20, 1914, pp. 1, 4.

onto succeeding pages. Though the European crisis dominated the front page for an entire month, editorial comment remained meager. The Oklahoman, usually, forthright and voluble on all issues, maintained editorial silence for three days. The issue was too new, too big, and too foreign to the usual pattern of news to elicit a ready response. Initial comment on July 28, in a semi-serious vein, observed that "if hostilities now threatened in Europe actually break forth, think what an uphill job it will be for Messrs. Carranza, Villa, et al., to find their accustomed places on page one, with accounts of their dinky little revolution!"¹

On the following day the Oklahoman's second two-line, full-page red banner, "Austrian Empire Declares War To Enforce Demand Upon Serbia," broke the news of actual hostilities to Oklahomans still unwilling to accept the fact of war. A large twelve-inch picture of Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria-Hungary, King Peter of Serbia, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, and Czar Nicholas of Russia emblazoned page one. The only local comment of any sort was an editorial entitled, "Giving the King His Due," emanating from a criticism in the English Parliament that the British king was "a very useless fellow," lacking "even ordinary ability." Reflecting the attitude toward monarchy typical of most

¹Daily Oklahoman, July 25, 1914, p. 1; July 27, 1914, p. 1; July 28, 1914, pp. 1, 4.

Americans and particularly those closest to the frontier heritage, the Oklahoman declared:

The only really capable and fit one in the lot, probably is the German kaiser. A war that may embroil all the great powers of Europe is now brewing just because of the assassination of one of these--er, ahem, "parasites." Let Europe have its kings, queens, and all the remainder of the royal house of idols. If it can get any comfort out of worshipping them in times of peace and fighting savagely for them when war breaks out, it is surely none of our business in this prosperous, sun-smitten land.¹

On August 1, the Oklahoman printed its first major editorial relating directly and seriously to the war. Surprisingly tolerant of the German position and still clinging to admittedly dwindling hopes for peace, the editorial stated:

The situation now threatens a conflict that might rage for years, paralyze progress, bring on famine and end with desolation and ruin. . . . Hope for peace is sustained largely by the possibility that open clashes will not take place until cool deliberation can take its course. . . . It is surprising to find the German kaiser in such a militant mood, since for years he has been one of the strongest advocates of peace. . . . Yet he has been drawn into an offensive attitude, as an ally of Austria, and through this seemingly endless chain of alliances, hardly any . . . state of Europe can escape being involved. . . . Whether bluffing is being done . . . remains to be seen, but it appears that it would now require but little pressure to involve the powers in a general war. . . . European diplomats would profit by following the American example in the Mexican problem. While it required patience to pass the critical stages, a disastrous war was averted. . . . Europe would no doubt find a similar solution.

The Austro-Serbian war declaration and the general threat of expanding hostilities plunged the international market and

¹Ibid., July 29, 1914, pp. 1, 4.

stock exchanges into virtual chaos. By August 1 all of Europe's major exchanges had closed temporarily, forcing the New York office into similar action. Three cotton enterprises, plus another American firm, failed within four days. Panic seemed imminent; indeed, one alarmed member of the New York Exchange governing board feared that "the exchange may be closed all summer." In the face of this impending crisis, Oklahoma's senior senator, Robert L. Owen, and other prominent financial and governmental leaders, moved to ward off such a development. Owen, who had co-sponsored the Federal Reserve Act the previous year, urged substantial federal assistance to restore public confidence and a return to normal operations:

Europe is in a crisis. . . . Something should be done to prepare this country for any emergency that may arise. There is in the treasury \$1,500,000,000 in gold and silver, \$150,000,000 in the gold reserve and \$130,000,000 free gold in the general fund. These immense funds, with \$500,000,000 emergency currency, would enable this country to face any financial crisis.¹

Large two-column banner headlines in the Daily Oklahoman on August 2 announced, "Germany Declares War on Russia; France Mobilizes." The lead editorial, "Revival in Manufacturing," however, concerned itself with the local industrial status, insisting that the current "healthy tone" existed "independent of all outside influences," but that war might "stimulate even more" American manufacturing. A

¹Ibid., Aug. 1, 1914, pp. 1, 4.

similar red-lettered headline, on August 3, reported the "German Invaders Repulsed With Heavy Losses on French Border." Anticipating swelling circulation due to war and election interest the Oklahoman informed its agents via a page one box that "the latest edition possible will be printed prior to train-leaving time," and that "all requests for additional copies . . . will be given prompt and careful consideration." The feature editorial, "What the War Would Cost," reported the price already to be five billion dollars plus lives and "countless other ills" and then further pointed up the waste of war:

Between . . . July 24 and . . . July 28 . . . the threat of war . . . within four short days caused a loss in securities of more than \$51,000,000. . . . This is what should be occupying the attention of European diplomatists instead of the mobilization of troops and the exchange of ultimatums and threats.¹

Primary elections occupied Oklahomans on August 4 and took precedence over the German and British war declarations in press reports for the two subsequent issues. The lead banner and story on August 5 featured the R. L. Williams-J. B. A. Robertson Democratic gubernatorial contest. The second banner and story announced that "Great Britain Casts Lot with Russia and France" and carried the grim news of Germany's invasion of Belgium. This turn of events marked an abrupt change in the Oklahoman's attitude toward the

¹Ibid., Aug. 2, 1914, pp. 1, 4; Aug. 3, 1914, pp. 1, 4.

Kaiser and the German position, as it did for many Sooner citizens as well. While previous editorials had regarded Kaiser Wilhelm as a "strong peace advocate" and Europe's "only really capable monarch," these disenchantments vanished over night and absolutism in general, and the Kaiser in particular, received severe editorial censure.

The first editorial, "Emperor Bill's 'Peace' Plans," stated in part:

The German emperor for years has blandly spread the gospel of peace--and in the meantime prepared for war. . . . Germany is in a tight position. . . . None of the powers now involved can be declared wholly guiltless, but it can hardly be denied that Germany is showing the most aggressive attitude and is leading the movement that threatens to draw all Europe into a bloody conflict in the near future.

The second and even more strongly worded editorial carried the title, "An Indictment of Civilization." Its vitriolic name-calling suggested that any disillusionment as to a last hour averting of war had disappeared. The editorial classified Emperor Francis Joseph as a "doddering old man," the Czar as a "weak, well-meaning neurotic," and the Kaiser as a "brilliant, talented, ambitious manipulator of politics and the only one who has more than mediocre abilities. . . . Human progress is slow indeed when a whole continent is still ready to fight for anything except the right of life, liberty, and self government.¹

¹Ibid., Aug. 5, 1914, pp. 1, 6; Aug. 6, 1914, pp. 1, 6.

Sooner news and editorial comment in the interim of twelve days between these initial expressions of criticism of Germany, and President Wilson's plea to the American public on August 18 to be "impartial in thought as well as in action," found the Oklahoman thoroughly disillusioned with war in general and Germany in particular, highly disturbed over the loss of the cotton market, and almost boastful in its praise of America's neutrality, democracy, and prosperity. The August 7 editorial, "What's Wrong With the World?," applauded

. . . the unyielding determination of President Wilson to keep this country out of war. . . . Any attempt on the part of this country to insert its finger in the pie might lead to trouble. . . . The main concern . . . is to bring American tourists home, and not to try to advise Europe regarding what it should or should not do.

Sunday headlines on August 9 proclaimed that "Italy Declares Neutrality Again" and the feature editorial, "Bidding Famine Welcome," after discussing the grim spectre of famine in Europe, concluded:

Fortunately the United States will be unscathed . . . except that prices would be bound to soar. Even if the governments of Europe should be annihilated, . . . in scarcely any way are we dependent upon Europe, unless for women's fashions and a few of our luxuries. Therefore, if Europe is determined to bring down calamity upon her head, America can only remain neutral, regret that she is doing it, and rejoice that we are not obligated to share in her misery. (Italics mine.)¹

In the week prior to the President's initial neutrality

¹Ibid., Aug. 7, 1914, p. 6; Aug. 9, 1914, pp. 1, 6-C.

plea the Oklahoman carried ten major editorials relating to the war. Five expressed strong anti-war sentiments and severe criticism of the German emperor and his policies, two dealt with the impact of the war upon American agriculture, two discussed the role and policy of the press in reporting the war, and one presented forceful opposition to American loans to belligerents.¹ Continued unhappiness with the Kaiser and German aggression proved the central theme in this period, and the Oklahoman was quick to identify Germany with autocracy. In "A War That Is Madness," the editor declared:

Germany has run amuck. . . . Fortunate it is that Great Britain is compelled to cast her sword into the balance without further loss of time. The issue is now joined. Either German autocracy must be crushed, or European democracy will be obliterated. There is no middle ground. . . . The course of the German government during the last week [invasion of Belgium] cannot be reconciled with any theory of political sanity. Wantonly and deliberately the kaiser has plunged his sword deliberately into the heart of civilization. The whole world is paying the penalty of his madness, neutrals as well as belligerents. Upon the American people alone . . . is levied a tribute of millions of dollars a day in disorganized commerce, . . . industry, and . . . finance, and the final reckoning that must be paid for this maniacal onslaught of German autocracy defies calculation. The human imagination is staggered . . . at this supreme achievement of paranoia. It is still

¹Ibid., Anti-war and anti-German: Aug. 11, 1914, p. 4; Aug. 12, 1914, p. 4; Aug. 16, 1914, p. 6-B; Aug. 17, 1914, p. 4; Aug. 18, 1914, p. 4. Impact on U. S. Agriculture: Aug. 14, 1914, pp. 1, 4. Press Policy: Aug. 13, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 17, 1914, p. 4. Loan Opposition: Aug. 14, 1914, p. 6. The questions of trade and loans are discussed in Chapter IV and the role of the press as a pressure group and propaganda agency, opposition to war involving peace expressions and proposals, and the violation of Belgian neutrality and subsequent atrocity reports and Sooner expressions thereto in Chapters V and VI.

possible to sympathize with the German people in the great tragedy that has over-taken them . . . but . . . German autocracy has made itself the enemy of mankind. Its destruction will be the emancipation of the German people themselves as well as the salvation of European republicanism. (Italics mine.)¹

The second editorial, "The President and the Kaiser," evaluated the merits and impact of the two leaders. It regarded both as "vigorous, masterful" men but noted an essential difference"; "one is destructive, the other a builder." In defending press neutrality the Oklahoman reiterated these sentiments, referring to the kaiser as "aggressive and war-hungry" but professing "the warmest friendship for the German people in the rank and file of civic life." Reactions to the demand of Representative Fred A. Britten of Illinois that Congress urge Secretary of State Bryan to protest Japan's announced intention of seizing the German-leased Chinese territory of Kiao-chow further demonstrated determination for neutrality in all quarters. The Oklahoman, perhaps with intentions more admirable than logical, contended:

This country is under no obligation to preserve Chinese territory, nor has it any cause for becoming a third party in the wrangle between Germany and Japan. By protesting in the latter we invite ill feeling, if not actually taking the initiative toward a declaration of war. . . . Why would it not be just as sensible for the United States to protest to Germany for treading

¹Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 11, 1914, p. 4.

on German soil? . . . If Britten personally yearns for battle, let him resign his seat in congress and go to the front.¹

In the interim of tense international developments preceding the President's plea for complete neutrality on August 18, Oklahoma's congressmen made no official expression either on the outbreak of hostilities or policies relating thereto. Further, neither Senator Owen nor Senator Gore rose in support of Senate Resolution 435 offered by Porter McCumber of North Dakota on August 4. The proposal pointed out the neutral position and the genuine concern of the United States "in the interest of the peace, prosperity, and happiness, as well as the dictates of humanity" and called for presidential mediation in an "effort . . . to check and prevent the horrors and devastation of . . . war."²

A breakdown of the major editorials appearing in the Oklahoman for the months June, July, and August provides an enlightening cross section of the major areas in which the press and public opinion at large interested themselves. Significance may be attached to these facts: the European war sharply decreased the focus of attention on Mexican affairs, doubled interest in the total national economy, and tremendously increased concern on the international level.

¹Ibid., Aug. 12, 1914, p. 4; Aug. 17, 1914, p. 4.

²Ibid., Aug. 16, 1914, p. 1; Cong. Record, 63 Cong., 2 Sess., Aug. 4, 1914, p. 13210.

<u>Subject Matter</u>	<u>No. in June</u>	<u>No. in July</u>	<u>No. in August</u>
International Affairs (in general)	4	9	2
Sarajevo and the War	0	1	47
Mexican Problem	3	0	0
National Economy	7	18	14
Oklahoma Economy	14	12	7
National Politics	4	9	2
Oklahoma Politics	15	19	9
Oklahoma City Affairs	0	8	0
Social Issues	13	22	19
	<u>60</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>100</u>

In all of these matters concerning the outbreak of the war and continuing through the two-month period terminating with the President's plea for strict American neutrality the Oklahoman reflected the majority attitude both of the Sooner press and public opinion at large. In subsequent developments this was not always the case. A cursory examination of other of the significant daily publications supports this contention. The Muskogee Phoenix, Muskogee Times-Democrat, Tulsa World, Tulsa Democrat, Norman Daily Transcript, Enid News, Daily Ardmoreite, Lawton News, and Blackwell Daily News, next to the Daily Oklahoman, gave most extended coverage to the war. Most of these papers had energetic and intelligent editors who sensed the significance of the international debacle. Chief among these were Tams Bixby of the Muskogee Phoenix, Sidney Suggs of the Daily Ardmoreite, and Eugene Lorton of the Tulsa World.

The initial war-related editorial comments in the Phoenix on July 31 and August 2 questioned the commonly held view that Austria "will easily whip Servia," expressed shock

at the "blasphemy" of the Austrian emperor's prayer for the success of his arms, and advanced the unneutral hope that those arms would get "licked to a frazzle." On August 5 the paper's first major war editorial, "A Madness As Old As Man," held that the fact "most amazing of all . . . is the immense enthusiasm with which the announcements of the impending war were received everywhere by the common people." "It is the people who pay the price," observed the Phoenix, "and yet they are the first to hurrah for war. . . . No one can ever advance far . . . until he declares himself emancipated from the law of the jungle." The same issue recalled George Washington's advice on entangling alliances, terming it the "straight lip" and maintaining that "we don't have to fight anybody's battles but our own." The initial report of President Wilson's neutrality pleas received hearty commendation.¹

The Enid News provided the earliest extensive editorial comment, printing four thoughtful observations in the July 29-August 9 interim. The first predicted an "almost certain . . . rearrangement of the map of Europe and a revolution in the internal affairs of the greater European powers"; the second envisioned "the grandest carnival of bloodshed and destruction . . . in the annals of man" and regretted that "our adherence to the sublime philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth has not been

¹Muskogee Phoenix, July 31, 1914, p. 4; Aug. 2, 1914, pp. 1, 4; Aug. 5, 1914, p. 4; Aug. 19, 1914, p. 1.

sufficiently intelligent or sincere to eliminate primitive passions." The third in the series saw the dissolution of both the Austrian Empire and the Hapsburg dynasty and "the reorganization of interior and eastern Europe along the lines of nationalities rather than by arbitrary partition." The fourth commentary, entitled "The United States and the War," appeared after hostilities had ensued and observed:

With all the defects of our system of government we must see now its infinite superiority over the monarchies of Europe. . . . [Despite] our plutocrats . . . there has ever been a great reserve force of enlightened public opinion, sometimes slow to act perhaps, but always aroused in the face of emergency. . . . Europe is now fighting indirectly, at least, for what we have already secured. . . . This fact will count tremendously to our advantage.¹

The Tulsa Democrat also displayed more than a cursory interest in the threatening conflict, printing two pre-war editorials, "Storm Period," and "War Clouds." The first, connecting labor problems with ignorance and autocracy both in Mexico and Europe, concluded:

Perhaps the dark storm on the Danube may, after all, be the dawning of a brighter day. Half the troubles we have with labor in the United States can be traced to those people from the countries laved by the waters of the historic Danube river. . . . Following war comes thought--perhaps the nations of central and eastern Europe are but making this last war of aggrandizement for the social changes which must come.

The second observation, while admitting "temporary" but not "ultimate" benefits for America, envisioned only negative

¹Enid News, July 29, 1914, p. 2; July 30, 1914, p. 2; Aug. 4, 1914, p. 2; Aug. 9, 1914, p. 2.

results in the threatening "war clouds." "Not a single vital issue is at stake regarding the betterment of mankind," insisted the Democrat, "not a shot will be fired for the advancement of the human family." Both the threat and actual declaration of war greatly exercised the Tulsa paper, particularly in the matter of American prerogatives. On the other hand, the equally thoughtful and objective Norman Transcript, adopted an ultra-cautious attitude once war became an actuality.¹

While the established major reaction to the war varied little among major publications, interesting side views occurred. The Daily Ardmoreite severely castigated "pietistic kings" who "command their subjects to God" and then send them out to do "the devil's work," and termed the war "the last call of monarchy upon Divinity, . . . the twilight of the kings." The McAlester Daily termed the conflict "a war of machinery" and, like Don Quixote, observed that "the personal glory of war has departed. . . . All is heartless science, the pitiless precision of electricity and steam and steel and explosive gases." The Tulsa World, typifying the major Republican press, expressed similar views. Its initial comment, on July 25, opined that "Germany isn't making war preparations, just to worry the apostles of peace--

¹Tulsa Democrat, July 14, 1914, p. 4; July 20, 1914, p. 4; The Daily Transcript, July 27, 1914, p. 1; July 28, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 1, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 4, 1914, p. 1.

more likely it's to back some diplomatic play." A lengthy and historically sound editorial, published simultaneously with the Austro-Serbian war declaration, viewed the "crime of Sarajevo . . . as a pretext for an attack upon Serbia" designed "to cripple the pan-Slavonic movement." The World, regarding the war scare as much more than "the mouthings of hysterical alarmists," observed: "At last, unless all signs fail, we have the real thing." A month later the World counseled Americans: "Don't get war hypnotized. . . . Stay close to your work and maintain strict neutrality. Your business life is not affected."¹

A quite different situation existed among Sooner weekly publications. Some like the Poteau News, Antlers American, Osage Journal, Durant Weekly News, Enid Events, Stillwater Gazette, and Renfrew's Record maintained commendable news and editorial coverage on war developments. Others, such as the Wewoka Democrat, Wilburton News, Eufaula Indian Journal, Edmond Sun, Fairview Republican, and Cimarron News at Boise City disregarded the early stages of the war completely or at best included occasional brief mention. Political affiliation did not account for this difference. The Poteau, Antlers, Durant, and Osage papers were ardently

¹Daily Ardmoreite, Aug. 5, 1914, p. 4; McAlester News-Capital, Aug. 11, 1914, p. 4; Tulsa World, July 25, 1914, p. 4; July 28, 1914, p. 4; Aug. 26, 1914, p. 4.

Democratic; those at Enid and Stillwater strongly Republican; and Renfrew's Record, zealously Populist, yet all observed a similar pattern and degree of interest in reporting the onset of war. A similar division occurred among both those ignoring the European conflagration and those ranging between the two extremes. Nor was location a reliable index although the press in the more rural areas tended more to ignore hostilities or to accord them conservative and limited attention. Those providing extensive coverage expressed views similar to the daily publications. Only the Socialist press came out in strong and unqualified opposition.

The Poteau News began war coverage on August 6 and, half in jest, observed on August 13 that "After the European war is over we will have to call 'em the Crippled Entente and the Butchered Alliance. Our only hope is to see some conceit taken out of the Dutchmen." Yet Editor R. L. Kidd, Sr., held no bitter animosity for he subsequently reported the awarding of the Iron Cross to one of the four brothers of a Poteau housewife, commenting that "her many friends . . . will indeed be glad to learn that he is proving to be a hero." The Stillwater Gazette first mentioned the war on July 17, including a picture of the Austrian emperor. In addition to extensive front page coverage, the August 7 issue published its first editorial on the war, commenting that "the American farmer has some luck anyway. The war in Europe is likely to cause the price of wheat to go up sufficiently to allow him

to buy all the newspapers he wants to read about the war in Europe." The Enid Events initiated war reports on July 2 with the intriguing headline, "Why Slav Took Shot at Prince" and maintained major coverage thereafter. Extensive editorial comment commenced with the August 6 issue and included a full column consideration of "The Brutality of War" two weeks later. The editorial blamed no particular nation for the tragic situation.¹

Renfrew's Record maintained an early, extensive, and sustained interest in the war. Its most significant editorial, "A Terrible European War," assessed the causes of "the greatest world-shaker since the dawn of creation":

Austria's greed for the possessions of her little neighbor Servia . . . and Germany's aggressive and insolent . . . ultimatums . . . and invasions [are the principal causes]. . . . Blessed is our own land, far removed from the scene of this clash of arms and thrice blessed at having at the head of our government such a man as Woodrow Wilson. . . . It is to be hoped that better counsels may yet prevail and that Europe may be spared the horrors of such a war, but it looks now as though no power on earth can prevent it.

The Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman called "history's greatest war" a "family fight" involving "Russia's desire to preserve 'the balance of power'" and predicted the struggle would

¹Poteau News, Aug. 6, 1914, pp. 1, 2; Aug. 13, 1914, p. 4; Nov. 19, 1914, p. 1; Stillwater Gazette, July 17, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 7, 1914, p. 1; Enid Events, July 2, 1914, p. 1; July 23, 1914, p. 1; July 20, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 6, 1914, pp. 1, 2; Aug. 13, 1914, pp. 1, 2; Aug. 20, 1914, pp. 1, 2.

"set human progress and development back on that continent for perhaps hundreds of years."¹

The Socialists constituted the only major exception to this established pattern of reaction to the war. Both the Sooner Socialist press and party leaders since 1912 had joined actively in the national and international onslaught against war. Socialists vigorously attacked war on two fronts, theoretical and actual. To Socialists all war was wrong and concern in 1912 and 1914 centered upon European tensions. The Johnston County Socialist at Tishomingo and the Sentinel Sword of Truth spearheaded Sooner opposition in 1912. The former expressed early opposition in an article entitled, "Socialism or Hell," the latter in two lengthy accounts utilizing the Appeal to Reason approach. In "The War Upon War," the Sentinel paper presented the heart of the Socialist position and technique:

While capitalist sympathizers are either prostituting patriotism to the support of war, and timid fake moralists are using fake ineffective measures to stop the horror that the system supports, the International Socialist party is taking steps not only to prevent future wars [December, 1912, International Congress in Basle], but also to arrest the European war now in progress. This is to be done by promoting an international agreement with the workers of the world to not shoot at each other at the command of the masters. . . . The proletariat must resist every move of . . . war-mad policies. . . . It is time for the workers of the world to serve notice on the arrogant masters that they will no longer bleed and kill at the dictation of those who trample them into poverty in times of peace. Down with war! Long live the workers--live to become free!

¹Renfrew's Record (Alva), Aug. 7, 1914, p. 1;
Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman, XXVII (Aug. 10, 1914), p. 6.

The second article, "War is Legalized Murder," reported the opening session of some five hundred delegates at Basle and attacked American preparedness costs and the failure of the churches to oppose war. It concluded with the optimistic observation that "the prospects . . . were never brighter . . . that beloved children . . . will never be called upon to face each other in wholesale bloody combat."¹

The attack continued unabated in 1913. "War is hell," preached the Sword of Truth, "our Christian government offers boys \$17 a month to go to hell." A major two-column editorial appeared on August 19, 1914, following the initial eight declarations of war. Terming the impending conflict "the most horrible crime, the most awful murder in history," and envisioning "swarms of vultures" and "wiggling maggots" feeding on "rotting heaps . . . who were once our kin," the editorial decried the murder of European Socialists Jean Jaurez and Wilhelm Liebknecht for opposing the war and concluded on this note: "Let us pray that America be ever spared from drinking again the bitter cup of war. But if we are forced into an unrighteous war let us first kill the officers who command us to kill and the war will soon be over."²

¹Johnston County Socialist, Feb. 2, 1912, p. 1; Sword of Truth, Nov. 27, 1912, p. 1; Dec. 25, 1912, p. 1.

²Sword of Truth, Jan. 1, 1913, p. 1; Aug. 19, 1914, p. 2.

Subsequent issues varied the pattern but not the purpose of the attack. An August 26 article "The War of the Dollar," insisted that "Wall Street knew that war in Europe was coming almost a month before the German kaiser . . . shot the world to pieces." Enormous gold shipments to Europe were cited as proof. In September such suggestions as "starve the war by forbidding the shipment of any food products to Europe"; "cause of the world war: Greed of the master class"; and "take from congress the power to declare war: Let the people rule" appeared. In all of these diatribes the Socialist press saw the threat of war as a "smoldering volcano" even in America and insisted that "no power except Socialism can prevent it." The Sooner Socialist Party, like the press, aggressively opposed war. The 1914 state convention established an international committee to strengthen peace sentiment and passed a resolution which flatly asserted: "If war is declared by the United States the socialists of Oklahoma shall refuse to enlist; we further pledge ourselves to use our influence to the end that all toilers shall refuse to work for the master class during such a war." In addition, Oklahoma Socialists enthusiastically supported the party's national slogan, "starve the war and feed America," as well as the formation and anti-war activities of the "Committee on Immediate Action." These activities included a cable to the

¹Sword of Truth, Jan. 1, 1913, p. 1; Aug. 19, 1914, p. 2.

Socialists in ten European countries, urging them to petition their governments to accept the anticipated offer of American mediation of the bloody European conflict.¹

The opposition of Oklahoma Socialists to the war gained national attention through the activities of Oscar Ameringer. One of the four most prominent Sooner Socialist leaders and the best-known and most influential nationally, Ameringer had been one of the seven Americans selected as delegates to the International Socialist Congress scheduled to meet in Vienna on August 22, 1914. When the war crisis broke Ameringer was in New York enroute to the conference. Unlike the majority of his fellow delegates, he opposed continuing on to Vienna. Ameringer's reasoning was practical; he had not abandoned the cause:

The question was how to get there and what to do after we got there. . . . If the powerful labor unions and socialist parties of Europe, with their millions of members and votes, could not stop the war, it would be futile for our little group, which had neither millions of votes nor members to make the attempt.

The secretary of the international organization subsequently solved the problem by canceling the meeting.²

¹Ibid., Aug. 26, 1914, p. 1; Sept. 9, 1914, p. 2; Oct. 7, 1914, p. 1; Oct. 28, 1914, p. 1; Proceedings of the State Convention of the Socialist Party of Oklahoma (Okla. City, 1914), pp. 14-15; Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Dec. 6, 1915, p. 32; Holsinger, "Socialism in the United States," pp. 100, 274; James Oneal, "Changing Fortunes of American Socialism," Current History, XX (April, 1924), pp. 92-97.

²Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, pp. 300-301. Patrick S. Nagle, Fred Holt, H. M. Sinclair, and Ameringer constituted the "Big Four" of Oklahoma Socialism. The other

Ameringer's literate observations further typified the position of the Oklahoma Socialist party in its unceasing opposition to war:

Needless to say, as international socialists we were bitterly opposed to war. In common with our comrades of all countries we had agitated against militarism, preparedness, and nationalism in favor of peace and understanding. To us the war meant the mass slaughter of the innocent. . . . We knew from history that every war had been a rich man's war and a poor man's fight. . . . But now the thing we had predicted, feared, and that no one wanted was upon us. The heap of artificially stimulated mistrust, hatred, lies, diplomatic chicanery, powder, oil rags, and matches, exploded. A rat had bitten into the match head in an obscure Serbian village.

Ameringer labored tirelessly against war. The following month he savagely denounced the waste and the senselessness of war in his frequently-quoted poem, "Dum Dum Bullets." On another occasion he flatly declared, "I am violently opposed to civilized or Christian warfare." A further attack observed:

Take all your wars and all their "victories" from the day that Samson slew the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, and they are not worth a Shubert Lied, a Beethoven trio, . . . a single discovery of a Jenner, Pasteur, Koch or Walter Reed, slayers of pain and death itself. If there is one lesson in all the annals of history it is that war settles nothing. War is the source of wars.¹

Whatever other opposition to the European war existed remained largely unexpressed. Unstinting support of

delegates to the Vienna Congress were Victor Berger; Emil Seidel; Morris Hillquit; Charles E. Russell, noted muckraker; George Lunn, mayor of Schenectady, New York; and United States Congressman Meyer London from New York.

¹Ibid., pp. 300-301, 342-43, 462.

President Wilson's plea for strict neutrality, fear of majority public opinion, and lack of interest and understanding both of the war and its impact on America appear to have been major reasons for this silence. Sooner historians Thoburn and Wright, writing in 1929, provide this noteworthy explanation:

When the great war broke out in Europe in 1914, the people of Oklahoma immediately became interested. Cautioned to maintain a neutral attitude by national leaders, but few would express opinions. However, excepting only those who were of German birth or parentage and who, for sentimental reasons, sympathized with the Central Powers, the people of Oklahoma were almost unanimous in their sympathy with the Allies--probably because of the line of cleavage between Prussian absolutism and the more democratic governments of Great Britain and France.¹

The conscious attempt of most Oklahomans to maintain strict neutrality received its initial test at the hands of the Central Powers some three months after the inception of the Wilsonian policy. On November 20, 1914, Turkish land batteries fired upon the launch of the American cruiser Tennessee as it approached the port of Smyrna. The launch withdrew immediately with no damage or casualties. The Tennessee and the North Carolina had been detailed to protect American interests and citizens in Turkey. While most Oklahoma dailies merely reported the incident without editorial comment and the weekly publications, with the exception of a very few nationally-alert papers of which the Poteau News was the

¹Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma: A History, II, p. 663.

outstanding example, ignored it completely, the Oklahoman responded with an immediate editorial. This prompt response in itself was significant since heretofore the Oklahoman had delayed editorial comment on all war developments at least one day beyond the initial news report. Fear of "jingoism" in the form of increased sentiment for preparedness and eventual involvement in the war rather than indignation at violation of American honor and rights prompted both the immediacy and the tone of the editorial. Voicing both apprehension and indecision, the editorial, "What Shall We Do?," stated:

WHAT SHALL WE DO if Turkey admits and accepts responsibility for firing upon an American cruiser launch? If Turkey makes no excuse? If Turkey invites a conflict? Shall we go to war because of that shot? Or shall we continue to remain at home to till the soil and turn out products to feed and clothe and house the world? Jingoism we believe is on the wane. . . . Under President Wilson's leadership the people are seeing the wisdom of peace and keeping from meddling in other people's business. . . . And so we are convinced, the American people will turn a deaf ear to jingoism in connection with the Turkish incident. War with Turkey would mean war with other nations and that would mean sacrifice of lives by tens of thousands and loss of money by billions of dollars--all for a single shot, all for a question of so-called national honor.

Honor is a splendid thing and ought to be sustained, but honor can be defended without bloodshed. . . . Therefore if this Turkish affair can be passed by in any manner whatsoever without armed conflict it should be passed. If one of our ships went where the Turk active in war believed he should have absolute sway, no matter what the vessel's mission may have been or what international or naval law prescribe, rather than spend perhaps a million lives in forcing satisfactory accounting of that single shot, we say forget it. . . . We believe in resenting insult and in upholding honor; but also in preserving the peace and happiness of the people. President Wilson and his cabinet are capable of handling this

matter with honor and wisdom. Don't listen to the jingo. (Italics mine.)¹

On the following day the Oklahoman in a prominent front page spread entitled "United States Accepts Turkish Explanation" announced with evident relief that Turkey had "voluntarily explained" through United States Ambassador Morgenthau that the shots "were intended merely as the customary warning that the port of Smyrna was mined and closed to navigation" and that "all danger of serious complications . . . had been removed." A final news report appeared on November 23 and the Oklahoman concluded its interest in the incident on the next day with a stinging editorial entitled, "Political Insanity." This indictment was directed at Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, ranking Republican member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, who in a Boston speech criticized the administration for its hasty glossing-over of the Turkish incident. The Oklahoman termed the speech

. . . a disgrace to himself [Lodge], his host, the city in which it was uttered and the state he represents. The commonest political dolt in America would hesitate before making himself a public shame as the partisan mad senator from Massachusetts did at a critical time. . . . That Senator Lodge's sentiments are not those of the American people, who are sane, goes without argument.²

¹Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 21, 1914, pp. 1, 6.

²Ibid., Nov. 22, 1914, p. 1; Nov. 23, 1914, p. 1; Nov. 24, 1914, p. 6; Poteau News, Nov. 26, 1914, p. 1.

On January 26, 1915, the American wheat cargo vessel William P. Frye bound for Ireland "for orders" was sunk off the coast of South America. The event, however, was ignored by the Sooner press until its assailant, the German converted cruiser Prinz Eitel Friedrich, put into port at Newport News on March 10 and American demands for restitution ensued and internment resulted. No other problems in maritime relations involving the Central Powers occurred prior to March of 1915. On February 4 the German government announced that a submarine blockade of Great Britain would begin on February 18. To this the London government replied on March 11 with an order in council wiping out distinctions in contraband and ordering the seizure of all goods presumably destined for the enemy. Cotton was declared contraband on March 18, an order later modified and then reestablished in August of the same year.

The Oklahoma public and the press accepted these disturbing developments without public outcry. Whatever misgivings existed were never publicly expressed until Americans lives and ships were involved. Again the weekly papers ignored the development and the dailies reported it briefly and with no editorial comment. On February 18, the day the blockade was effected, the Oklahoman noted the development in a matter-of-fact news story entitled, "Waters of Great Britain Are Now Within War Zone" and reported further that "a majority of the neutral shipping lines will accept the risk and continue their sailings" with the name and registry of all ships to be

painted prominently on both sides of each vessel. Two days later the Oklahoman reported the sinking of two vessels, one French and one Norwegian, by German submarines, again briefly and without editorial comment. The same issue announced the transmittal of notes to England and Germany relative to the use of the flags of the United States and other neutrals by belligerent nations.¹

The Sooner press carried initial reports of the sinking of the American ships the Evelyn and the Carib, on February 22 and 24, 1915, respectively. Both were cotton cargo vessels and struck mines in the North Sea while enroute for Bremen. Further, both had disregarded German routing instructions over against English directives. No loss of life resulted, although both ships and their cargo were lost. Even the loss of American ships carrying Oklahoma cotton, however, failed to arouse more than a mere handful of the Oklahoma dailies such as the Daily Oklahoman and the Tulsa Democrat to so much as report the sinking. Only the Oklahoman carried an editorial and that evidenced no particular alarm or concern. The editorial, "The Evelyn's Loss," appeared synonymously with the report on the Carib's sinking. Strict neutrality was still the theme although a certain impatience was evident:

¹Daily Oklahoman, Feb. 18, 1915, p. 1; Feb. 20, 1915, p. 1.

That was Oklahoma cotton that went to the bottom . . . [on] the steamer Evelyn. . . . But even so we do not anticipate that international complications are likely to grow out of the incident. . . . No lives were lost. . . . So there is no occasion for us to allow ourselves to become excited over the incident. Both Germany and England are responsible governments and are able to recompense us for whatever losses we suffer at the hands of their methods of naval warfare. It is, of course, somewhat irritating to our exporters to await the tedious movements of governments in making good their losses at sea, but it is better to remain "c'lam and plackid" as the old lady puts it, than become embroiled in the conflagration which is just now consuming Europe.

The Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman in a subsequent editorial reviewing the impact of the war on America, included the losses of the Evelyn and Carib among the "small matters affecting the United States." The commentary emphasized the fact that vessels had been "sunk by submarine mines for which no responsibility had been fixed."¹

None of the early losses, of course, had been submarine inflicted and no American lives lost. Further, the sinking had occurred in the normal course of trade where, Oklahomans felt, the shipper must accept such loss as an expected hazard of wartime commercial enterprise. Certainly the profits justified the risk. Whatever resentments developed proved ephemeral and accrued against Germans and English alike for the latter also had infringed seriously upon the rights of American commerce. What Sooner reaction might have been had

¹Ibid., Feb. 22, 1915, p. 1; Feb. 23, 1915, p. 1; Feb. 24, 1915, pp. 1, 6; Tulsa Democrat, Feb. 22, 1915, p. 1; Enid Events, March 11, 1915, p. 1; Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman, XXVIII (May 10, 1915), p. 12.

the oil and cotton problems continued indefinitely remains an interesting point of speculation. In addition, the war produced other irritations that commanded the increasing attention of a Sooner audience still not seriously concerned with the far-removed European conflict.

Among these irritations was the ill-advised invasion of unoffending Belgium by the green-clad hosts of the German army. Germany's action, while militarily defensible, called forth the disapprobation of most of the civilized world.¹ The brutal nature of the assault, the fact that Germany had joined with the other powers in solemnly guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium by treaties dating back to 1839, and the incredible blunder of German diplomats in referring to the violated treaty as a mere "scrap of paper" could be termed nothing less than reprehensible conduct. Oklahomans, like most Americans, shared this opinion but no one considered the German action a cause for war. On July 31 Germany refused a British request that the neutrality of Belgium be respected and on August 3, simultaneously with the declaration of war on France, the actual invasion began. While news of the German onslaught did not receive the immediate attention and

¹Military necessity rather than sheer malice prompted the invasion of Belgium. German strategy was based upon the "Schlieffen Plan" which was drafted in 1905. This plan called for the massing of German forces on the French front, their passage through Belgium to avoid the heavy French installations along the border, and a large scale wheeling movement to encircle Paris.

concern of the Oklahoma public, deep sympathy for the heroic Belgians and resentment of German excesses against civilian people and property developed in the closing months of 1914.

The Sooner press received initial reports of the invasion of Belgium three days after the German drive got underway. The Muskogee Phoenix on August 6 ran two banner headlines. The first was an Oklahoma primary election report; the second announced: "Belgians Win Battle: 4,000 Germans Killed." The battle at Liege marked the first military engagement of the war and typified the heroic resistance of the Belgians against overwhelming odds. Forthcoming developments soon prompted a Sooner reaction to the brutal nature of the German onslaught. On August 11 the Oklahoman provided its first extensive coverage of the German invasion, publishing both a banner headline and a major editorial. The headline, "Belgians Execute 100 Spies," all Germans, evidently appeared a just retribution to the Oklahoman for the accompanying editorial severely condemned German tactics and objectives in Belgium. While there was no direct mention of the Belgian invasion, the tenor of the editorial and the fact that Germany had initiated no other major action on the western front, left no doubt as to the direction in which the denunciation pointed. The Oklahoman's indictment entitled, "A War That Is Madness," sternly rebuked the German government for its irresponsible and brutal actions:

Germany has run amuck. . . . All of Continental Europe that is not Russianized will be Prussianized. France will be reduced to the status of a third-rate power. Belgium, Holland and Denmark will fall successively into the maw of German imperialism. . . . Wantonly and deliberately the kaiser has plunged his sword deliberately into the heart of civilization. The whole world is paying the penalty of his madness, neutrals as well as belligerents. . . . The final reckoning that must be paid for this maniacal onslaught of German autocracy defies calculation. The human imagination is staggered as it faces . . . this supreme achievement of paranoia. It is still possible to sympathize with the German people in this great tragedy that has overtaken them . . . but . . . German autocracy has made itself the enemy of mankind. (Italics mine.)¹

Even Oklahoma Socialists, despite their implacable opposition to war, could understand when their Belgian colleagues joined in the desperate fight to repel the German invader. Oscar Ameringer stated: "Vandervelde, of Belgium, one of the most brilliant leaders of the internationalist socialist movement, joined the war party, for which we may forgive him, because his country was invaded." The weekly press in large part remained silent on the Belgian issue. The Enid Events reflected the attitude of the few who did comment. Its editorial, "The Battle of Liege," noted the sturdy Belgian opposition and deprecated violence and loss of life but refrained from direct and outspoken denunciation of the German invader.²

¹Muskogee Phoenix, Aug. 6, 1914, p. 1; Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 11, 1914, pp. 1, 4.

²Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, p. 302; Enid Events, Aug. 13, 1914, p. 2.

Subsequent developments heightened Oklahoma reaction to the Belgian tragedy as reports of excessive German cruelties and atrocities became increasingly prevalent and such terms as "poor little Belgium" and the "rape of Belgium" became common expressions. On August 29 the Oklahoman reported two grave allied reverses in a two-column, red-linked banner headline, a procedure reserved for developments of particularly significant interest and importance. These events, the German drive on Paris and the Belgian protest of the burning of the priceless library at Louvain, received major attention but no editorials accompanied the news reports. However, a Muskogee Phoenix editorial on September 2 commented:

The dropping of bombs from airships into Antwerp at midnight aroused so much horror and indignation as to distract attention from the coincident report that food and forage abandoned by the retreating Russians . . . had been poisoned. . . . The story is not without its significance in estimating the ferocity of racial hatreds, long existing and now to be turned loose in the madness of war.

Headlines the following day reported that "Tales of Cruelty Come in From Both Sides of War" and the Antwerp portion of the communique described a vicious German zeppelin raid:

Seven bombs were dropped . . . close to some houses which had been converted to hospitals and which were flying the Red Cross flag. These houses were damaged and ten or twelve persons slightly wounded. . . . An examination of the bombs showed that they had a thin double covering, the two being joined together with mushroom-shaped rivets which act the part of bullets and are liable to cause terrible injury when the covers are burst by the explosion.

The same issue featured numerous pictures of Belgian war dead,

emphasizing the theme of heroic defense against a ruthless invader. However, the Phoenix continued to maintain an apparently calm and objective position, for the same story told of Austrian destruction by bombs of a clearly marked Belgrade Red Cross maternity hospital with one hundred infant casualties.¹

On September 8 a second major report of alleged German atrocities in Belgium appeared in the Muskogee paper. "Hundreds of male inhabitants" of Dinant reportedly were executed together for firing on the German soldiers from the hills surrounding the town, including "M. Poncelot, son of a former senator" who "was killed in the presence of his wife and children." However, the Phoenix apparently did not swallow these Reuters dispatches whole for a subsequent issue observed that "the rumors of atrocities are rapidly lessening upon the reports of Americans who have had an opportunity to investigate the facts."²

The Oklahoman exhibited the same policy of careful reporting and reserved editorial comment. On September 10 a page one report announced the Kaiser's protest of alleged allied use of dum-dum bullets and the fanatic resistance of Belgian civilians to military conquest. In addition, a letter

¹Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 29, 1914, p. 1; Muskogee Phoenix, Sept. 2, 1914, p. 4; Sept. 3, 1914, pp. 1, 7, 8.

²Muskogee Phoenix, Sept. 8, 1914, p. 1; Sept. 15, 1914, p. 4.

written to Count von Bernstorff, the German ambassador, by his son, a cavalry officer serving in Belgium, told of civilian bombs, poisoned wells, and "atrocities on nurses, women and soldiers" by Belgian patriots. On the allied side the Oklahoman two days later, under the headlines "German Atrocities Recited By Belgium Envoy to United States," published "a partial list" of the offenses tendered President Wilson by the King of Belgium through Count Louis De Lichtervelde, secretary of the Belgian Commission. Highlighting the list was the report that "eleven men were driven at the point of a bayonet and when they were piled in [the trench] the German soldiers set upon and beat their brains out with the butt-ends of their rifles." While reporting the atrocity protests of both opponents, the Oklahoman did not appear overly impressed by the charges, for both were given inconspicuous page one locations and appeared without benefit of prominent headlines.¹

In the rural areas reports of atrocities, like other aspects of the Belgian episode, received scant attention. Apparently they shared the consensus of opinion reflected by the dailies or were basically disinterested. The Poteau News reflected this desire for continued peace and neutrality when it declared: "We're thankful that we live in Poteau;

¹Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 10, 1914, p. 1; Sept. 12, 1914, p. 1.

we're thankful that we are not German, French, Russian, Belgian, Austrian or Servian; we're glad Wilson is President and not Roosevelt."¹ Significant, perhaps, was the fact that Belgium and her allies received the benefit of banner headlines and editorial comment while the single media of news stories presented the cause of the central powers.

The accounts of atrocities in Belgium created a rising sentiment in Oklahoma for the outlawing of bombs and aeroplanes as weapons of warfare. On September 12 the Oklahoman demanded: "Why not raise a protest against the destructive power of bombs exceeding a certain limit?" A month later a Phoenix editorial, "Civilized Warfare," clamored even more insistently for an outright ban:

The term "civilized warfare" is self-contradictory; all war being necessarily a remnant of barbarism, and utterly outside of true civilization. But the expression covers certain conventions that remove from warfare the wild lust to kill by any means and at any cost [cites dum dum bullets and poisoned missiles, among others]. This very week German airships dropped bombs into Antwerp wantonly destroying property, the treasures of the ages, and taking lives of defenseless men, women, and children. It seems to us that the airship as a distributor of bombs or other deadly missiles ought to be added to the list of prohibited engines of war. For scouting purposes the airship has immense value. . . . But as an engine for actual hostilities it has no claim to the consideration of even semi-civilized races. It ought to go under the ban. It cannot deliver a stroke with an accuracy of aim. If it should sometime hit a battleship and destroy it from the clouds it could only be by accident.²

¹Poteau News, Sept. 3, 1914, p. 4.

²Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 12, 1914, p. 4; Muskogee Phoenix, Oct. 11, 1914, p. 4-B.

As the war dragged into the waning months of 1914 sympathy for stricken Belgium continued to find expression in Oklahoma but, significantly, these commiserations included neither consistently severe censure of the offending Germans nor commendation of fighting to the death in a losing cause. The Oklahoman typified these reactions in two October editorials. The first, while deploring "Belgium's Awful Plight," observed:

Consider the case of unfortunate Belgium. An innocent bystander. . . . Want and misery stalk everywhere. It is but fair to say that the German army has been guilty of little wanton destruction or vandalism. All the havoc has been occasioned by military necessities. A large part of the burden of responsibility does not even rest upon the invaders [citing Belgian self-destruction tactics]. (Italics mine.)

However, the disillusionment evidenced in the companion editorial, "What Is Honor Worth?," was not directed at the heroic Belgian defense but at the utter folly of war:

Antwerp is fallen. . . . Why? The answer comes-- defense of honor. Listen and answer this: Are imaginary honor and imaginary principle worth the price? . . . We do know that the honor and principle involved in this war, when sustained, will not be worth one-thousandth part of one percent of the lives sacrificed to satisfy them.¹

The Phoenix took a similar stand although it stated its disapproval of German actions in stronger terms and intimated--as was its frequent custom--that the English might be painting the German kettle a deeper black than the situation warranted. The Phoenix admitted:

¹Daily Oklahoman, Oct. 9, 1914, p. 6; Oct. 12, 1914, p. 4.

It is no more than natural that America and that the world at large should have turned against Germany. Her oppressive militarism is enough in itself to condemn her. And the heart of the world goes out to poor bleeding Belgium. It may be, however, when the true history of this great "most senseless war" has been truthfully written that Germany will not stand forth as black as she has been painted. London controls most of the news-gathering sources and agencies of Europe. . . . [Other sources may] tell a tale more favorable to the kaiser's arms.

The Enid Events, reflecting the sympathetic attitude of the not too communicative weekly press, echoed these sentiments. However, despite its genuine concern, the editorial, "Devastated Belgium," contained no pointed criticism of Germany for having caused such suffering and destruction and concluded with the observation that "such are the fruits of modern warfare between Christian nations all invoking the support and protection of the same God."¹ The war indeed was still a remote and idealistically viewed development to most Oklahomans.

One of the heartwarming by-products of the war for which the plight of Belgium provided a major impetus was the nationwide "Christmas Ship" campaign sponsored by two hundred prominent Americans and newspapers throughout the nation. The Oklahoma effort was spearheaded by the Daily Oklahoman and other influential newspapers. The Oklahoman kicked off the Sooner campaign on October 11 and 12 with editorialized

¹Muskogee Phoenix, Dec. 4, 1914, p. 4; Enid Events, Dec. 17, 1914, p. 2.

appeals entitled, "Will You Help Santa Claus?" and "Are You Santa Claus?" In addition to the Belgian unfortunates, the war needy in Serbia, Montenegro, Russia, France, England, and even Germany and Austria also were included. The appeal was persistent and effective. Seventeen of the twenty-eight issues of the Oklahoman extending through November 7 carried editorials, news stories, and boxed feature articles depicting the need. Oklahoma City's fund-raising efforts included a special dinner and a benefit dance. Publicity for the dinner dramatized Belgian suffering. A prominently featured editorial, "Starvation," stated in part: "Milk and bread were needed for the armies--so the armies stole from the women and children. . . . That is noble war! . . . May war's instigators be forced by an avenging Providence to drink their victims' bitter cup."¹ While reference to the German armies is implicit, no sweeping denunciation of everything German was either stated or implied. These developments were to come in 1915.

Typical of the support of other Sooner papers was the October 22 issue of the Phoenix which carried two boxed features entitled "An Appeal to the Children and the Grown-Ups, Too," and "To the Children of America." When the Jason--"the

¹Daily Oklahoman, Oct. 11, 1914, p. 6-6; Oct. 12, 1914, p. 4; Oct. 29, 1914, pp. 5-6; Oct. 31, 1914, p. 6; Nov. 7, 1914, p. 1. For a complete account of the campaign of the Daily Oklahoman see the following 1914 issues: Oct. 11-17, 24-25, 29, 31, and Nov. 2-7, 22.

first Santa Claus war ship to cross the seas"--sailed from Brooklyn on November 14, "a day late to avoid Friday the thirteenth," the Oklahoman proudly announced that "the Christmas Ship to whose cargo men, women, and children from all parts of the state made generous contributions, is on the high seas bound for the European war zone." Included in the 182-carload cargo were fourteen carloads of children's clothing and thirty-four of assorted presents and toys. While the "Christmas Ship" campaign did not terminate concern in Oklahoma for the plight of the suffering Belgians, many Oklahomans seemed to lose interest in the Belgian tragedy or to feel that the previous effort should have been sufficient. A Phoenix editorial reflecting this attitude appeared on December 9 and contained this remonstrance:

Some good people are disturbed over the effort of raising money for the starving Belgians for fear that our poor will be neglected. . . . God pity us, if this prosperous community of thirty thousand cannot take care of its own poor and at the same time spare a few dollars to feed and clothe the desperately helpless of Europe who can only look to America for succor.¹

While manifesting deep sympathy for the suffering Belgians and war victims everywhere, Oklahomans refused to accept a wholesale indictment of the Germans as bloodthirsty barbarians. Suspecting propagandic influences the Phoenix,

¹Muskogee Phoenix, Oct. 22, 1914, pp. 1, 4; Dec. 9, 1914, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 22, 1914, p. 7-C.

perhaps with undue optimism, declared:

It isn't wise to believe all the stories of wanton barbarity that come from the front. War is more hellish than ever, but only in the pitiless cruelty of the machinery that man has invented for destruction. . . . The Germans are not monsters; neither are their enemies. The fears of simple countrymen, the hatred of soldiers for the foe, the inflamed imagination of statesmen and journalists in London, Berlin and Paris are responsible for most of these stories. American newspapers are at the mercy of the foreign news sources. They cannot sift truth from falsehood as they want to. The reader must use discretion. And he will do well to suspend judgment when he reads of revolting and inhuman treatment of either soldiers or non-combatants. (Italics mine.)

However, Oklahoma concern, no matter how genuine, had not reached in 1914 the high pitch of sustained emotional involvement that subsequently developed. The Oklahoman reflected this fact when it observed that "the war is not near the newspaper story which it was a few months ago. At the present rate it bids fair to work its way off the first page by spring."¹

In 1915 the plight of ravaged Belgium became desperate as disease and starvation stalked the land and the American government moved to alleviate the crisis. The Commission for Relief in Belgium was activated and Herbert Hoover, since 1914 the chairman of the American Relief Commission in London, assumed leadership of the new agency. State governors were called upon to implement the movement and Oklahoma's chief executive responded with characteristic promptness and

¹Muskogee Phoenix, Dec. 31, 1914, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, Dec. 10, 1914, p. 6.

vigor. On February 13 Governor Robert L. Williams alerted the Sooner press by telephone and the next day the appeal reached the Oklahoma public. The Ardmoreite's response, a typical plea appearing under the headline "A Famishing People" and the subtitle "The Little People of Belgium Are Today Asking Alms at Your Door and You Cannot Turn Them Away Hungry," declared:

[Some] 1,400,000 Belgians are almost on starvation [and] . . . are depending almost entirely upon the people of the United States for their bread. . . . The governor . . . wants to see every city and hamlet and every farming community do something toward this work. The Ardmoreite would like to urge the women [and] . . . the bankers . . . to organize the work here and push it to a successful ending.

A general apathy marked the initial response and four days later the Ardmoreite, after reporting a single contribution of \$2.40 from a nearby oil field Sunday School, bleakly admonished:

The governor . . . should have better co-operation in Ardmore than this. . . . If you had an opportunity to feed at your table a starving Belgian child, you would not turn it hungry from your door for any consideration, and because the suffering is farther removed from your home, your responsibilities as a member of a great Christian nation are not lessened. This is really a serious situation that confronts the world and deserves serious thought and quick, decisive action.¹

Despite the continued efforts of the press the appeal continued to lag and on April 9 the governor threw the official weight of his office behind the movement. The

¹Daily Ardmoreite, Feb. 14, 1915, p. 3; Feb. 17, 1915, p. 4.

proclamation, widely publicized, was addressed to "the people of this great state":

A state of deep distress and misery now exists in war-ravaged Belgium. . . . Millions of women and children are starving . . . and . . . the great task of staying the hand of famine and suffering devolves upon the people of this country. . . . Our sacred duty to humanity demands that every assistance possible be given . . . so that through our generosity . . . the dreadful situation may be relieved. . . .

The Oklahoman in the same issue strongly supported the governor's appeal. The editorial, "A Mouthful of Bread," reminded Oklahomans of the "huge shipments" already collected in Iowa and Kansas and then commented:

Babes in Belgium are crying for food. In a country devastated by war . . . famine stalks and civilization is appealed to for the mouthful of bread to appease the hunger of the helpless Belgian infant. . . . Am I my brother's keeper? Assuredly, yes. And the people of Oklahoma will assemble their dollars and their thousands of dollars . . . not at some distant time but NOW, when it is needed to stop the pangs of hunger and to quiet the cries of little Belgian babes who are appealing for a mouthful of bread.¹

As the American effort for aid to distressed Belgium, in itself a genuine appeal devoid of any propagandic motive to engender a war spirit, moved into the early summer months of 1915 it became an unwitting but opportune agent for just such activity. Coupled with the loss of 128 Americans on the recently-torpedoed Lusitania and the publication five days later of the largely fabricated official British report under the signature of Lord Bryce on alleged German atrocities

¹Daily Oklahoman, April 11, 1915, pp. 1, 4.

in Belgium, the relief appeal accentuated German misdeeds and prompted even war-disinclined Oklahomans more readily to accept the whole cloth of British propaganda, particularly as it pertained to the Belgian tragedy. As the late Horace C. Peterson observed in his illuminating study on war propaganda, "above all was the work of the American relief organization in Belgium a vital bit of propaganda." One such example was the June 6 appearance in Oklahoma City of the Belgian nurse, Mlle. Marie Van Gaspel, at a benefit for the Belgian Relief fund. The Oklahoman published a moving account of her narration under the headline, "Volunteer Red Cross Nurse Thrills Audience With Story of the Trampling of Belgium":

Mlle Marie Van Gaspel leaned forward and told her story of "My Little Belgium" in broken English. Her voice was impassioned with hatred for foe and love for country. Her stately form was tense. Her eyes burned with anguish. . . . Her hands were clenched. . . . Her voice broke. . . . The audience was transfixed by the magnificence of her appeal. Silence forbade answer.

While the Gaspel recital "thrilled" Sooner audiences and may have been entirely genuine, its impact was not overwhelming, for the Oklahoman relegated its accounts of her appearance to page three.¹

In the face of mounting sympathy for suffering Belgium few Oklahomans ventured to justify Germany's actions. Oklahoma

¹Ibid., June 6, 1914, p. 3. Chapters VI and VII of this study further develop the role of the Belgian invasion in Oklahoma public opinion and American entry into the war. See also Peterson, Propaganda For War, p. 66.

Germans were neither numerous nor inclined to support the fatherland. Further, they had not congregated in heterogeneous settlements except for a half dozen western communities and these, with the exception of Okarche, had either pacifist or Socialist leanings and did not express their views in the public press. One such expression appeared in the Oklahoman in 1915. In a letter to the editor, R. A. Kleinschmidt, an Oklahoma City resident, accused the Oklahoman of "misstatements of fact" concerning Germany's treaty obligations to Belgium and protests of American loan policies as well as "almost daily . . . contemptuous and hostile references to Germany." Kleinschmidt contended that Germany never had sworn not to invade Belgium, that treaties are not sworn to and that, in addition, the German empire, formed in 1871, had not affirmed the old treaty of 1839, a Prussian agreement. Belgium, he maintained, had forfeited her right to neutral status by "secretly treating with England and France for the passage of their troops through Belgium to operate against Germany." The Oklahoman, replying editorially, pointed out that the German empire had recognized the treaty in question and strongly defended its own status as a neutral publication.¹

While the genuine merit of the relief appeal for

¹Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 28, 1915, p. 6. Kleinschmidt cited John W. Burgess, The European War of 1914, pp. 168-70, in support of his contention that while the German Confederation in 1866 confirmed the old 1839 Prussian treaty, the German Empire formed in 1871 had never given its formal approval.

Belgium and the added intensity of the propaganda-exploited Lusitania and Bryce developments accumulated Oklahoma dollars for unfortunate Belgians, these same occurrences also sowed the initial seeds for eventual acceptance of American intervention in the war. The process, of course, was gradual and did not represent a conscious development. In the initial stages of the conflict Oklahomans, like most midwesterners, lagged considerably behind the coastal and industrial regions in the development of preparedness and war sentiments. While Oklahoma citizens deplored the onset of war and resented the invasion of Belgium with its attendant suffering, the feelings engendered and the sentiments expressed reflected only concern for human distress. Although Sooners generally approved and supported efforts to relieve this suffering, the abundance of their compassion often exceeded the liberality of their contributions. Further, this approbation in no way suggested that Americans should intervene to punish or eradicate the forces that produced the suffering.

Oklahomans, with few exceptions, supported President Wilson in his determination to preserve neutrality and peace for the nation. These feelings transcended even political partisanship. The Tulsa Democrat maintained that "there is no occasion for this country to become involved in war with anyone" while its intracity rival, the Republican-inclined World, asserted that "it does not pay to be swept into the

whirlwind. . . . The thing to do is to stay close to your work and maintain strict neutrality."¹ However, despite the unquestioned staunchness and sincerity of Oklahoma opposition to involvement in the conflict, there was a subtle and imperceptible conditioning for war. Nonetheless, in 1914 and early 1915 the overwhelming sentiment in the Sooner state stood firm in its attachment to peace for the nation.

¹Tulsa Democrat, May 11, 1915, p. 4; Tulsa World, Aug. 26, 1914, p. 4.

CHAPTER IV

WAR AND THE OKLAHOMA ECONOMY, 1914-1916

The machine of war demanded a huge and unending supply of resources, and Oklahomans were among those willing, even eager, to help provide these needs. Indeed, to a young state, limited in financial assets and experiencing a tremendous expansion in population and economic growth, the war in Europe offered the prospect of greatly enlarged world markets. While manufacturing was inconsequential and offered very little for export, Oklahoma ranked high in production of agricultural products and oil. In the early twentieth century Oklahoma was the major producer in the nation's leading oil field, the Mid-Continent. In 1909 the state produced 45,671,724 barrels of oil, or 92.8 per cent of the Mid-Continent total and 28.6 per cent of national production, and was valued at \$16,283,865. Only California's total of 52,104,153 barrels exceeded the Oklahoma output.¹

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Mines and Quarries, XI, pp. 267, 279, Table 23. The United States produced 171,559,394 barrels of crude in 1914. See pp. 261-313 for detailed petroleum and natural gas statistics. For the historical development of the oil industry in Oklahoma see Parker, "Mid-Continent Oil Fields," Gilbert L. Robinson,

Despite the size and importance of the oil industry, agriculture was the main economic activity in Oklahoma. The state ranked high in the production of mules, corn, cotton, horses, cattle and wheat. While oats and hogs were produced in lesser amounts, they were still important items in the economy. In 1909 income from agricultural products totaled \$216,387,339. Of this amount \$98,055,109, or 45.3 per cent, came from food crops; \$35,399,356, or 16.2 per cent, from cotton; and \$82,932,874, or 38.5 per cent, from livestock and livestock products. Corn valued at \$48,080,550 led all other crops in 1909, constituting 22.2 per cent of the value of the agricultural output.¹

In the immediate pre-war period cotton was the problem child of the Oklahoma farmeconomy. While not foremost among the major cotton states, Oklahoma's production was nonetheless significant. In 1909 some 1,976,935 acres were devoted to cotton, producing 555,742 bales valued at \$35,399,356. These figures represented one-sixteenth of the national cotton

"History of the Healdton Oil Field" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1937); Carl Coke Rister, Oil! Titan of the Southwest (Norman, 1949); Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 421-6; and McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 402-404. For oil fields locations see maps in Dale and Wardell, p. 404; McReynolds, pp. 322, 404; Oklahoma Guide, p. 48.

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Agriculture, V, pp. 352, 372, 389, 486, 502-504, 514-15, 525, 545, 581, 590, 600, 681. See pp. 372-420, 567-674, for statistics on all livestock and crop production.

acreage and one-twentieth of the production. By 1912 the state produced over one million bales and ranked sixth among the states in output. While some cotton was grown in all but the upper one-fourth of Oklahoma, it was a major crop in the southern one-third of the state. This area of heavy cotton production comprised two sections, the five counties in the extreme southwest corner and the region commonly referred to as "Little Dixie." The latter area included the south central and the southeastern counties of the Red River valley.¹

The industry, of course, was a half century older in the eastern or "Indian Territory" portion of the state. Cotton production was quite prevalent among the Five Civilized Tribes, dating back to the 1830's. Wealthy slaveholding plantation owners such as the Rosses, McIntoshes, and Perrymans developed a plantation system and culture equaling that of the whites in the Deep South. The Civil War all but destroyed the Indian economy and recovery was slow. In 1902 the Indian agent reported a production of 60,000 bales. In 1891 "Old Oklahoma" to the west produced 30,686 acres of cotton, one-fourth of the area under cultivation that year. In 1896 Guthrie alone shipped out 12,000 bales of cotton.

¹Ibid., p. 681. See Oklahoma Guide, p. 68; Dale and Wardell, p. 377; Thirteenth Census. . . , ibid., p. 683, for maps indicating the Oklahoma cotton regions and comparative tables. Professor E. E. Dale classifies the term "Little Dixie" as a "localism . . . as difficult to define exactly as the expression 'The Southwest.'" Dale, personal letter, Oct. 17, 1960.

In 1899 the region produced 125,000 bales which was increased to 140,000 in 1900 and 381,064 in 1906. Growing conditions were favorable in the years immediately prior to 1914 and, while the business recession of 1913-1914 had sharply reduced prices and created formidable surpluses, Oklahomans were not unduly alarmed. This attitude, commonly shared by the entire American cotton industry, vanished abruptly as the exigencies of war all but wiped out the foreign market in the autumn of 1914.¹

Despite the importance of cotton as the major cash crop in the pre-war period, wheat growing, general farming, and livestock raising dominated Sooner agriculture. In the Central Plateau region comprising the western half of the state large-scale wheat growing and general farming were prevalent. Uncertain rainfall, strong winds, and accompanying erosion were recognized hazards and most farmers resorted to livestock grazing as a more assured concomitant activity. All but 435 of the state's 4,388 irrigated acres in 1909 were located in Harper and the three adjoining Panhandle counties. In the Arkansas Valley, located to the east of the Central Plateau, general farming and dairying were the major agricultural pursuits. Grazing dominated in the Osage Country to the north, the south central region, and, less profitably,

¹McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 171, 177, 182, 200, 204-205; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 140-42, 381-86.

in the hilly, thin-soiled sharecropping area encompassing the Ouachita Mountains. Only 8.8 to 17.5 per cent of this latter area was farmed and sold for little more than ten dollars per acre, one-third the state average. In the north central and southwest regions land prices reached seventy-five to one-hundred dollars per acre.¹

The Sooner contribution to the nation's agricultural economy in 1910 was remarkable when viewed in terms of comparative area and population statistics. Oklahoma's 44,424,960 acres comprised but 2.3 per cent of the national land area whereas its farms comprising 28,859,353 acres represented 3.2 per cent of the nation's agricultural acreage. Oklahoma farm land constituted 65 per cent of the state's total area over against a national figure of 46.2 per cent. Population statistics revealed a similar situation. While the 1,657,155 Sooners in 1910 represented but 1.7 per cent

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Agriculture, V, p. 45; VII, pp. 350-51, 390-93; Ladd Haystead and Gilbert C. Fite, Agricultural Regions of the United States (Norman, 1955), pp. 179-81, 204-207; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 375-79; A. E. Darlow, "Agriculture in Oklahoma," Oklahoma Guide, pp. 67-69. For excellent maps depicting the major physical divisions and subregions consult Harold Hoffsommer (ed.), The Social and Economic Significance of Land Tenure in the Southwestern States (Chapel Hill, 1950), p. 27; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, p. 396; for soil types: Haystead and Fite, pp. 180-81; Hoffsommer, p. 79; for the types of farming areas: Darlow, Oklahoma Guide, p. 68; Dale and Wardell, p. 377; Hoffsommer, p. 31; for land area in farms and acreage value: Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Agriculture, V, p. 45; VII, p. 350.

of the nation's 91,972,266 people, rural Oklahomans comprised 2.0 per cent of the nation's farm element. Some 80.7 per cent of Oklahoma's population was rural, whereas the national average was 53.7 per cent.¹

While Oklahoma produced a wide range of some seventy-eight crops including the cereal grains, hay and forage, potatoes, yams, melons, peanuts, numerous varieties of fruits and nuts, cotton, tobacco, and broom corn, by all odds the three leading staples were corn, cotton, and wheat in that order. In 1909 the total value of all Oklahoma farm crops was \$134 million, and she ranked twenty-second among the states. Corn and cotton constituted 35.98 and 26.03 per cent, respectively, of the state's total crop valuation, 3.3 and 5.0 per cent of the national production, and ranked tenth and eighth among the states. Wheat, destined to unparalleled wartime expansion, was considerably behind the other two leaders. The state produced 14,008,334 bushels in 1909, valued at \$13,854,322. This represented 10.5 per cent of the aggregate Sooner crop valuation, 2.1 per cent of the national wheat production, and thirteenth rank among the states. Oklahoma wheat production had increased 37.0 per cent in the previous decade whereas corn, cotton, oats, hay and forage, and potatoes had experienced phenomenal expansion:

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Agriculture, V, p. 28; VII, p. 352; Population, III, p. 461.

206.3, 403.8, 264.3, 139.6, and 131.8 per cent, respectively. These three staples comprised 72.51 per cent of the total crop valuation. In addition, Oklahoma had a flourishing livestock industry which included 2,026,540 cattle, 820,811 horses, 268,762 mules, 1,887,434 swine, and 4,916,598 fowls. The total value of agricultural products reached \$20,012,028 with dairy products and marketed animals, fowls, and eggs each above the million dollar figure.¹

While the \$216,387,339 of agricultural income far overshadowed all other aspects of the Oklahoma economy, manufacturing and mining were by no means negligible, contributing products valued at \$53,682,000 and \$25,637,892, respectively. Comparative statistics reveal the following:

	<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Manu- facturing</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Mining</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Establish- ments, No.	190,192	93.2	2,310	1.0	12,325	5.8
Capital	\$918,198,882	89.5	\$38,873,000	3.7	\$70,696,411	6.8
Value of Products	\$216,387,339	73.5	\$53,682,000	18.0	\$25,637,892	8.5
Persons in Occupation	1,337,000	96.7	18,034	1.8	15,842	1.5

¹Ibid., Agriculture, V, pp. 531-32, 581, 590, 600, 605, 629, 640, 653, 659, 665, 681, 709, 721; VII, pp. 270-72, 357, 380, 500, 525; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 382-86. The Indian Territory statistics are from the 1902 report of the United States Indian Agent at Union Agency, Muskogee; those for Oklahoma Territory from the report of the territorial governor in 1906.

Manufacturing was an infant industry in Oklahoma prior to World War I. Indeed, three of the eleven industries producing products valued at more than a million dollars annually appeared on the census reports for the first time in 1910. These were zinc smelters, petroleum refineries, and railroad car repair shops. Flour mill and gristmill products, valued at \$19,144,000, represented 33.8 per cent of the value of the entire manufactural output. Cottonseed oil and cake, lumber and timber products, printing and publishing, and zinc smelting each had between three and five million dollars in output. The valuation of slaughtering and meat packing and leather goods processing, two industries destined for unprecedented growth during the war, totaled only \$889,000 and \$375,000, respectively, in 1910. The lack of industrial development was reflected in the state's predominantly rural population. Only eight Sooner cities had over 10,000 people in 1910. These cities, with 10.2 per cent of the population and 52.7 per cent of the urban dwellers, produced 37.3 per cent of the total value of all Oklahoma manufactures. Oklahoma City, the most populous with 64,205 residents, comprised 3.9 per cent of the population and 14.7 per cent of the product valuation.¹

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population, III, p. 461; Agriculture, V, pp. 71, 78; Manufactures, IX, pp. 1001-1002, 1017; Mines and Quarries, XI, p. 137, "Establishments" are defined as farms, factories, and in the case of mining: wells, quarries, and mines. The figure for total persons engaged in agriculture is no doubt excessive

Three mineral products, two of them twentieth century developments, dominated the mining industry in Oklahoma in the pre-war period. Arthur H. Doerr, University of Oklahoma geographer, points out that the existence of coal had long been known and that stripping from exposed seams had occurred as early as 1829. Implemented by the coming of the railroad, bituminous coal had been produced commercially near McAlester as early as 1872. Prior to statehood coal production averaged 2,500,000 tons annually, reaching 3,113,149 tons in 1909 with a value of \$6,185,078. The coal belt extended from Nowata and Craig Counties on the northern boundary through Coal, Pittsburg, Latimer, and Le Flore to the southeast. The Cherokee and Choctaw fields, to the north and south of the South Canadian River, respectively, were the major producing areas. Coalgate, Lehigh, McAlester, Hartshorne, and Wilburton were important mining centers in the southern field; Henryetta, Tulsa, and Collingsville in the northern.¹

since the best figure available was the rural population. If each farm family averaged the equivalent of five full-time workers the figure would be 950,960. See pp. 1001-17 for a useful resume on all leading Oklahoma manufactures. See also Daily Oklahoman, July 19, 1915, p. 6. Muskogee had 25,278 residents, Tulsa, Enid, McAlester, Shawnee, Guthrie, and Chickasha between ten and twenty thousand each.

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Mines and Quarries, XI, pp. 135-37, 208-17; Arthur H. Doerr, "Industry and Labor," in Oklahoma Guide, p. 46; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 266-70, 403-405; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 404-409.

Lead and zinc, highly valuable mineral resources, were infant industries in 1910 which the war expanded into major enterprises. The first extensive deposits were located in Ottawa County in 1904, some fourteen years after the initial discovery. In 1914 Ottawa County surpassed the entire output of the remainder of the Tri-State mining area. It led the nation in zinc production with one-third of the national supply. Very limited quantities of the ore were located in northeastern McCurtain County and the Arbuckle Mountains region. In 1905 Oklahoma produced 2,670 tons of zinc valued at \$103,480; in 1914 some 10,700 tons worth \$1,660,000. Lead output reached a peak year in 1913 when 3,338 tons valued at \$460,644 were produced. In 1909 the gross value of Oklahoma's mining industry aggregated \$25,637,892. Oil and natural gas, the unparalleled twentieth century mineral bonanza, contributed 68.8 per cent of this total; coal, 24.2 per cent; and lead and zinc, some 2.5 per cent. Building stone, tripoli, and gypsum were lesser mineral resources.¹

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Mines and Quarries, XI, pp. 135-37, 279-80, 287; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 402-407; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 402-26; "Oklahoma Lead and Zinc Forging to the Front," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Aug. 14, 1915), p. 159. See Dale and Wardell, p. 404, for an excellent map locating all state mineral resources. Arrell M. Gibson, "A History of the Lead and Zinc Industry of the Tri-State District" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1954) is the definitive study in this area. See pp. 107, 120-23 of this study for further development of the mushrooming oil industry.

In Oklahoma, like all sections of the nation, the outbreak of war in 1914 caused economic as well as moral and diplomatic consternation. John Wilkinson, a leading Oklahoma farm editor, observed:

The breaking out of a great international war in Europe last August caused a great deal of uneasiness and much unnecessary curtailment of business. At that time everyone became alarmed and began to look around for places where he might cut down expenses. As a consequence many necessary purchases were not made and business declined.¹

However, Oklahomans soon recognized that war could produce prosperity and redefined their moral and diplomatic viewpoints accordingly. Reiterating an abhorrence of war, a deep concern for humanity, and the traditional American isolationist position of non-involvement, Sooners in most quarters were ready to consider any economic advantages which it might produce. As early as July 30, two days after Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and prior to the involvement of the other powers, the McAlester News-Capital came out with a page one article entitled "America Will Profit By War." Both naive and practical, the article declared:

War is costly. It is run largely on a cash basis. At the start there may be expected a falling of prices of stocks in American industries due to the desire of European holders to turn their assets into gold with which to fight. Later may come a reaction--when thrifty souls, tired of paying the expense of war, try to find investment of their capital in a peaceful country. Then the flow of gold may turn back for investment in America.

¹The Oklahoma Farmer, XXIV (Dec. 25, 1914), p. 4.

It is expected that there will be large inroads upon the ranks of European workingmen now in the United States, should a general war start. Patriotism and love of the homeland will draw many back [*italics mine*]. Many men still owe military service to some foreign power. . . . A larger market, higher prices, a reduced labor supply are the expected results of such a war--and these, say those who watch, spell more money and greater prosperity for this country.¹

Once a major war appeared inevitable the position taken by most Oklahomans was even more clearly stated in an editorial entitled, "What the War May Mean To Us":

Never has the natural position of the United States appeared more fortunate than at the present moment when there is danger of every European power being drawn into the whirlpool of war. We have no direct interest at stake, no question of honor involved, no perilous friendship or hatred to wreck our judgment, no alliance to pull us into participation. We stand alone, secure in our isolation, concerned for reasons of humanity and rather apprehensive of commercial disturbances, but confident of our ability to remain a neutral spectator and weather such world-wide storms as the conflict may engender. . . .

During the period of war paralysis we should gain a big lead over our rivals in industry, commerce, and finance, and might drive an entering wedge into the rich trade of Latin-America, now nearly monopolized by Britain and Germany. And after the war is over we might maintain much of that advantage. But war is destruction for which the whole world pays. . . . We therefore have sound business reasons, as well as humanitarian ones for desiring that the horrors of the threatening conflict may be averted, leaving our industrial and commercial development to proceed along natural lines.

The article, intelligently written and almost prophetic, envisioned "bumper crops," "record prices," "a wave of prosperity," "an unprecedented market for . . . particularly clothing, steel, arms, and ammunition at great profit," and a "rise of wages" during the war followed by "retrenchment

¹McAlester News-Capital, July 30, 1914, p. 1.

abroad," "collapse of the foreign markets," and a possible "period of depression" both "long and disastrous." These predictions proved correct, but Oklahomans like all Americans preferred to consider immediate prospects of prosperity rather than long range problems.¹

Agricultural and mineral products provided the majority of Oklahoma's overseas exports in the period prior to American entry into World War I. Wheat, cotton, horses, saddles and other leather equipment were the chief products derived from agriculture; oil, lead and zinc the latter.² With few exceptions, both prices and production advanced sharply. Problems involving transportation, contraband, and blockade plagued particularly the cotton and oil industries, but even these knotty problems eventually were solved and good profits realized by the end of 1915. The 1914 wheat

¹Ibid., Aug. 3, 1914, p. 4.

²While corn was Oklahoma's leading agricultural product and comprised two-thirds of the total cereal grain acreage and crop value in 1909 (corn, \$48,081,000; cotton, \$35,399,000; wheat, \$13,854,000), its consumption was almost entirely domestic. Actually, only 2.25 per cent of the Nation's total corn production was exported in 1909 and this percentage decreased to .44 in 1914, 1.93 in 1915, and 1.30 in 1916. Similarly, coal did not rank as a major export although it represented 24.1 per cent of the value of the State's entire mineral production in 1909. Only oil and natural gas had a greater product valuation, 65.01 per cent of the total. A mere 4.05 per cent of the national coal production was exported in 1909, increasing less than one per cent in the 1914-16 period. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Agriculture, VII, p. 361; Mines and Quarries, XI, p. 137; Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1922, pp. 193, 477-79, 486.

crop in Oklahoma was the largest in more than a decade and the effect of war was soon felt. On July 29 the Muskogee Phoenix carried two banner headlines. The first announced, "Austrian People Cheer Wildly as War is Declared," the second, "War Adds Million in Day to Price of Oklahoma Wheat." Said the Phoenix:

With the markets of the world panicky, with runs being made on European banks, and with the limitless demand for foodstuffs in the war-stricken countries, there is no estimate of the benefits Oklahoma will receive. It is only to be conjecture. Wheat rose from 8 1/4 to 9 1/4 cents per bushel yesterday in the Chicago markets. Local grain men declared last night that the price would jump three cents higher in Muskogee this morning. Thus with Oklahoma's 35,000,000-bushel crop of wheat for this year which has not been sold the added wealth of the first day's rise will mean the addition of \$1,050,000 profit to the state. It was Oklahoma's fortune that wheat should increase just when the largest crop since 1902 has been harvested. Wheat dealers will be considered in the same good-fortune boat as the oil men who have become rich over night.¹

Such exuberance in the face of calamity might seem callous, yet it is understandable. The war was far off while the bumper wheat crop was a matter of paramount local concern. In mid-July wheat sold for 84 1/2 cents, jumped to 97 cents at the war's onset, leveled off to 87 cents in August, and then rocketed to \$1.16 1/2 in October as Europe's short crop became evident and war needs became acute. Pre-harvest predictions in 1915 of a "monster" yield of 46,000,000 bushels and a two-dollar price were almost realized. An exuberant farmer declared that "Europe and Mexico may raise hell if

¹Muskogee Phoenix, July 29, 1914, p. 1.

they want to, but Oklahoma is going to raise wheat this year." The milling industry, its plants operating on a twenty-four hour, year-round basis, was "as full of optimism as Cushing is of oil." This high note of optimism was general throughout the state until the twin problems of drouth and price-fixing beset the wheat growers in 1917 and 1918.¹

The tremendous demand for horses by the European cavalry, artillery, and transport divisions created an American market so huge that already in late 1914 restrictive measures were considered in view of American military and domestic needs. Authorities estimated that combat mortality would necessitate replacement of the entire field quota of four million horses every four months. This total of twelve million, augmented by a fifty per cent disease and shipment attrition, called for a staggering annual replacement of twenty-four million. In the first half of 1914 American horse exports were valued at \$1,286,369; for the latter six months, \$15,439,604. August exports totalled 804 horses; those for September, 7,146; for October, 12,091; for November, 28,071; for December, 30,687. Italian purchases for one day in a single locality reached 25,000. Hence, with the

¹Enid Events, Feb. 11, 1915, p. 1; Dec. 17, 1914, p. 1; Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman, XXVII (Aug. 10, 1914), p. 3; Daily Ardmoreite, Nov. 3, 1914, p. 4; Jan. 28, 1915, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, Jan. 1, 1915, pp. 2, 13; Jan. 19, 1915, p. 6; Jan. 23, 1915, p. 6; May 8, 1915, p. 7; May 9, 1915, p. 16-A; June 14, 1915, p. 1; Oct. 8, 1915, p. 1; Tulsa Democrat, May 13, 1915, p. 4; Tulsa World, Jan. 14, 1916, p. 4; May 24, 1916, p. 4.

American horse population in 1914 estimated at twenty-five million the fears expressed were not entirely unfounded. Indeed, in 1915 and 1916, 45,000 horses per mile reportedly were killed or crippled on a single war front--the western--and 2,815,000 prime American cavalry horses were purchased by England and France. In the Enid area alone in late 1914 "something like \$25,000 a week" was distributed to breeders and "an active market" was reported.¹

In May, 1915, despite the feeling that the sinking of the Lusitania "put a decided crimp in the foreign demand for horses," the Farmer-Stockman reported that "several thousand head have been gathered at Oklahoma City and shipments of 20 cars each follow each other at frequent intervals." Top grade artillery horses commanded \$165; artillery mounts \$135; "with the average for both striking around \$130." In 1915 Congressman Scott Ferris proposed a government-sponsored breeding station for the Lawton-Fort Sill area with no service fee when option to buy the foals at the age of three at a \$150 price was arranged. At the same time Oklahoma farmers were assured that "there is not the slightest reason to fear any serious shortage of horses in this country." As the Daily Oklahoman observed, "horse breeders and dealers . . . are becoming rich as a direct result of the European war."

¹Enid Events, Dec. 17, 1914, p. 1; Daily Oklahoman, Dec. 28, 1914, p. 4; March 15, 1915, p. 4; World-Wide War (Pawhuska), Feb. 24, 1917, p. 1; Muskogee Phoenix, Dec. 13, 1914, p. 1.

Additional profits accrued, though in lesser degree, as Sooner mules, saddles, other leather products, and meat joined the swelling exports of livestock and livestock products. Oklahoma meat orders during the first week of November in 1914 totaled \$1,500,000 and a single Oklahoma City saddlery received a \$160,000 contract for harness and saddles.¹

Oil, like cotton, was a sick industry in the 1912-1914 period but the strong medicine of war brought a remarkable recovery. The Oklahoma oil industry mushroomed rapidly in the twentieth century. While the Chickasaw Indian agent reported "oil springs" in 1853 and Lewis Ross is said to have struck oil while drilling a salt brine well in 1859, the first oil well was not brought in until 1889 by Nathan Byrd near Chelsea. By 1891 there were eleven wells and thirty barrels of crude oil were marketed. Within nine years production had increased to 6,472 barrels and by 1910 the total had reached 50,000,000. In this decade the Red Fork-Tulsa, Nowata, Pawnee, Glenn Pool, Wheeler Pool, Okmulgee, and Osage fields were developed. Between 1909 and 1914 the great Cushing, Healdton, and Slick Pool fields were

¹Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman, XXVIII (May 25, 1915), p. 16; Daily Oklahoman, March 10, 1915, p. 6; March 15, 1915, p. 4; July 26, 1915, p. 4; "War Demand Touches Oklahoma," Harlow's Weekly, VII (Nov. 7, 1914), p. 118; Muskogee Phoenix, Dec. 13, 1914, p. 1; The Oklahoma Farmer, XXIV (Dec. 25, 1914), p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, July 15, 1915, p. 1; Sept. 17, 1915, p. 1; Elk City News-Democrat, July 1, 1915, p. 4.

discovered and the industry had reached its pre-war status as a major oil producing state.¹

The major discoveries between 1911 and 1914, lack of practical production controls, insufficient pipeline facilities from field to refinery, and a sharp reduction in foreign oil imports in the initial stages of the war made oil a glut on the market in 1914. Drilling operations were halted, prices declined seriously, and the state's economy was adversely affected. Senator Gore submitted a resolution authorizing the Secretaries of the Navy and Interior "to investigate and report as to the feasibility, expense, and desirability" of government construction and operation of a pipeline from the Oklahoma fields to the Gulf of Mexico as well as purchase or lease of oil lands "from the Indians and other owners," and production for naval use. However, no action was taken on these suggestions. Scarcity of tankers due to the common practice of Standard Oil and other companies to operate under German registry precipitated the export crisis although ships "carrying the British and other flags" operated "without much trouble." Within a year, however, wartime demands, reorganization of shipping facilities, and improved production controls brought a new and almost unlimited measure of

¹Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1915 (Washington, D.C., 1916), p. 224; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 421-26; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 402-24.

prosperity both to the industry and the state.¹

Conditions began improving by midyear in 1915. Within one week in December two ten-cent increases boosted the already advancing price to \$1.20 per barrel, "the highest price that has ever prevailed in Oklahoma since oil was discovered in real commercial quantities." Optimism ran high. A price of \$1.50 was predicted "before mid-summer," "prospecting almost without parallel" occurred, and "wild catting was never so active." Only Healdton crude failed to prosper, selling at forty cents a barrel on August 16, 1916. However, the price began advancing in December and by mid-1917 reached one dollar a barrel. Concerning the tardy Healdton increase, Gilbert L. Robertson observed: "By this time the World War had become a strong reason for the advance in crude prices." By 1916 Tulsa's Chamber of Commerce proclaimed that city the "Oil Metropolis" and the facts bore eloquent testimony to the statement:

<u>Year</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Bank Deposits</u>	<u>No. of Oil Businesses</u>	<u>No. of Autos</u>
1900	1,000	\$ 40,000	0	0
1916	54,000	30,170,000	500	3,420 ²

¹Cong. Record, 63 Cong., 2 Sess., Jan. 13, 1914, p. 1561 (S. Res. 244); Tulsa Democrat, Sept. 1, 1914, p. 4; Tulsa Daily World, July 1, 1914, p. 1.

²"Petroleum at Highest Price Ever," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Dec. 18, 1915), p. 446; Robinson, "Healdton Oil Field," p. 56.

In 1914 the Mid-Continent field produced 97,995,000 barrels of crude; in 1915, 123,294,317; and in 1916, 136,934,437 barrels. The 1915 figure represented 43.8 per cent, and that for 1916, 45.1 per cent of the entire national production. Oklahoma production totals climbed spectacularly: in 1911, 56,069,637 barrels; in 1912, 51,427,071; in 1913, 63,579,384; in 1914, 73,631,724; in 1915, 97,915,243; in 1916, 107,071,715. In 1890 Oklahoma reported no oil production; in 1917 only California outproduced her; in 1915 the Sooner state ranked first. Indeed, in 1915 Oklahoma produced 34.8 per cent of the nation's crude. War demands wrought so miraculous a cure to the industry that the Daily Oklahoman observed in a July, 1915, editorial, "The Oil Outlook and Uplook":

In the Oklahoman of Thursday were three separate articles from three different oil localities in Oklahoma. All of them told of the changed industrial aspect and all were optimistic in the extreme. The good days are already here, but they indicate that there is a better day coming. The average Oklahoman knows of his state's leading position in the oil industry, but he does not often pause to contemplate how truly a commanding position it is. If cotton and wheat are kings, oil is a queen. Oklahoma has two kings and a queen. All hail the royal family.¹

Lead and zinc proved a worthy crown prince to the queenship of oil in the mineral empire. Europe's foremost lead and zinc mines in Belgium were in German hands leaving the

¹Parker, "Mid-Continent Oil Fields," p. 81 citing the U. S. Geological Survey, Non Metals, 1914-21; Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1915, p. 224; 1918, p. 255; Daily Oklahoman, July 31, 1915, p. 6.

United States virtually the sole source of Entente supply. Prices and production soared, new mines and mills were opened, and low producers reworked. Zinc ore production rose to 14,314 tons valued at \$3,549,872 in 1915, an increase of 25.9 per cent in tonnage and a 45.7 per cent rise in valuation over 1914. Lead output, climbing more slowly, reached 12,115 tons by 1916, an increase of 27.3 per cent over 1913. In the Miami district, which assumed national leadership in 1915, the value of production for the week ending September 18 amounted to \$76,226; for the week following, \$96,614. The former figure represented \$56,350 for zinc ore and \$16,876 for lead. Zinc prices rose from \$45 to \$70 and even \$100 a ton; lead reached \$60 to \$90. By October, 1915, five new crusher mills had commenced operations at Cardin, a 300-ton lead mill at Picher, and a smelter was being planned at Ardmore to process the limited ores of the Arbuckle Mountain area. This prosperity was basically war-induced, since ninety per cent of Miami lead and zinc went into war munitions manufacture. A 1915 report reflected the industry's optimism:

Zinc and lead men expect prices to be high for some time to come, perhaps for ten years. . . . There is little chance that the war will end for at least a year and after the war American manufacturers are expected to supplant to a large extent those of Germany and France.

Despite a sharp decline of \$25 for zinc in March of 1916 due to heavy submarine depredation and a temporary closing of the London Market and talk of mine shutdowns, the industry still

reported that "increase in prosperity and development . . . is unabated."¹

Even the coal industry, with its domestic fuel consumption considerably reduced by gas and oil competition, benefited from the foreign war. The production of 3,113,149 tons in 1909 had increased to 3,732,545 tons for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1914, and then decreased by 410,750 tons in the next twelve-month period. Four months later however, sizable domestic contracts materialized as export coal demands monopolized the major producing areas of Colorado, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. New mines opened at Henryetta, the Coalgate district flourished, and the McAlester output exceeded 10,000 tons daily with an October first payroll of \$125,000. Production levels reached an all-time high for the industry unequalled even by World War II demands. Accurate indeed was the October, 1915, observation that "the coal industry is apparently entering upon a season of greater prosperity."²

¹"Activity Continues in Zinc Country," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Oct. 9, 1915), p. 284; "Current Events and Comment," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Oct. 9, 1915), p. 269; "Oklahoma Lead and Zinc Forging to the Front," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Aug. 14, 1915), pp. 159-60; Harlow's Weekly, IX (Nov. 27, 1915), p. 402; "Oklahoma Lead and Zinc Situation," Harlow's Weekly, X (March 18, 1916), p. 5.

²"Coal Mining Industry Improving," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Oct. 9, 1915), p. 284; "About Politics and Politicians," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Nov. 27, 1915), p. 399.

Cotton and contraband became synonymous terms for distressed Oklahomans as the British order in Council of August 20, 1914, arbitrarily redefined contraband and intercepted all ships carrying forbidden exports to the enemy. Aimed at the economic strangulation of Germany, the declaration seemed to be setting up a similar fate for the seriously glutted cotton market. However, Britain, fearful that the South might force its government to take strong measures, temporarily lifted the embargo two months later and did not declare cotton absolute contraband until August of 1915. Nonetheless, blockade, detention, and search policies, coupled with German's announcement of submarine warfare in February, 1915, accomplished the same purpose and disaster threatened.¹ Facing economic ruin, prominent Oklahoma officials and other cotton-states leaders pressed the national government for

¹Viscount Grey, British Foreign Minister, candidly discussed the problem of contraband in general and cotton in particular in his memoirs. In discussing the expanded contraband list and the paramount necessity of American agreement thereto Grey stated: "The three most important novel additions would be copper, rubber, and cotton. It was felt that to include cotton would certainly provoke a challenge from the United States. . . . We decided to concentrate on getting copper and rubber included, and we secured this most important point." Grey of Fallondon, Twenty-Five Years: 1892-1916 (2 vols; New York, 1925), II, pp. 108-109. See also pp. 105-17. Bailey, A Diplomatic History, pp. 567-73; Langsam, World Since 1914, pp. 26-31; Sontag, European Diplomatic History, pp. 227-30, among others, provide a cursory survey of British blockade, embargo, and contraband policies and American reactions thereto. Bartlett, American Diplomacy: Documents, pp. 442-48 supplies the basic documents from Papers Relating to Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915, Supplement, pp. 578-89.

both diplomatic and domestic relief. In both instances Washington temporized. Governor Lee Cruse joined Governor Oscar B. Colquitt of Texas in a telegram to congressional leaders stating in part: "Imperative that the government prepare to advance farmers \$50 a bale on ten million bales of cotton covered by warehouse receipts and insurance." Representative Joseph B. Thompson made the strongest Sooner plea for federal assistance:

I wish to call the attention of the House and the high officials of the Nation to a condition confronting the cotton growers of the country, which, if not remedied, and that speedily, will result in financial disaster and bankruptcy not alone to the farmers but . . . to those . . . engaged in all other kinds of business. . . . A war involving the nations of Europe, which, have heretofore used 58 per cent of our cotton crop, has resulted in a stagnation of business and paralysis of market that threatens the prosperity and happiness not alone of the 30,000,000 people who reside in the cotton-growing section but . . . the entire citizenship of our country. . . . The result of this will be . . . an irreparable setback, and the cotton-growing industry will dwindle to such amounts as will be insufficient to meet our home demands. The situation then is most serious. Its gravity can not be overestimated. . . .

The loss of the European market is but temporary . . . what is needed is . . . some means whereby the cotton planters may secure relief from their creditors and . . . store their crop and reap the benefits that the close of the war will bring. Private efforts have proven unavailing. It is then imperative that the Federal Government extend aid. . . . The destruction is no less harmful because the scene of hostilities is overseas. The need for national aid and defense is no less real because the war is confined to foreign soil. . . .

I have received letters and petitions from more than 2,000 citizens of my district setting forth the terrible suffering that is sure to follow. . . . [They] illustrate the widespread and well nigh universal demand for governmental assistance. . . . Much pressure is being brought to bear for an early adjournment of this Congress, but I can never consent to it unless some relief is extended to our stricken cotton growers. It would be

better that we remain here and by proper legislation give this relief and all go down to defeat, than that we go home and be reelected amid the suffering and distress which are sure to follow if we fail to do our plain duty. . . . The very highest impulse of patriotism and administrative public policy dictate such action.¹

Thomas P. Gore, chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, also demanded federal assistance. On October 20 he submitted two cotton relief measures. Senate Resolution 478 authorized a committee of seven senators

. . . to inquire into the effects of the European war upon domestic agriculture and other industries and upon domestic and foreign exchange, commerce and other navigation, and to report to the Senate . . . as to the best means . . . for reopening the customary channels of trade and meeting the existing emergency in the cotton and other markets of the country.

The Senator also entered the fight to stabilize and "valorize" the price of cotton. One would allow state banks to issue emergency currency based on the normal stabilized value of cotton stored in licensed warehouses. In this instance Gore submitted Senate Bill 6685, an emergency "Cotton Guaranty Plan." Unlike other plans, Gore's proposal called for issuing of credit certificates by approved local banks based on the bank's own credit guaranteed in turn by the faith and credit of the national government. Gore maintained that his plan

. . . would afford relief to every producer of cotton, however limited his assets or resources. . . . It would enable the poorest to hold his cotton until the market price became satisfactory. It would prevent monopoly

¹Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 8, 1914, p. 8 [This telegram was a part of a boxed feature article entitled "No Market for Cotton"]; Cong. Record, 63 Cong., 2 Sess., Appendix, Oct. 14, 1914, pp. 1211-14.

by requiring the sale of cotton when the price remained at 10 cents for more than a fixed period.¹

Despite its merits, this measure, like all other major cotton relief legislation, died in committee and little was done to alleviate the plight of the cotton-producers even though a filibuster was attempted. Some \$256,170,000 in emergency currency was issued and a \$150,000,000 national pool established by private bankers under Federal Reserve auspices designed to stabilize cotton at six cents a pound rather than the desired ten cent figure and at terms so onerous that only seven loans totalling \$28,000 were ever made.² Subscriptions to the loan fund were completed by November 18, 1914. New York banks subscribed half of the \$100,000,000 assigned to the non-cotton producing states. Oklahoma participated in this fund through the Dallas Cotton Syndicate with local details processed by district and county cotton loan committees. At the same time that he advanced his Cotton Guaranty Bill, Senator Gore wrote to Governor Cruse suggesting state legislation and voluntary cotton-credit associations "in default of Federal legislation to relieve the stringency of the cotton situation." His basic plan was

¹Cong. Record, 63 Cong., 2 Sess., Oct. 20, 1914, pp. 16812, 16814-16 (includes S. 6685). Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 124-25.

²Ibid.; Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 149-50; Alexander de Conde, "The South and Isolationism," Journal of Southern History, XXIV (Aug., 1958), pp. 337-39.

to issue clearing house certificates on warehoused cotton in the form of a bond bearing a specified interest rate and terminal date.¹

Local and state-level attempts were immediately forthcoming and afforded a measure of relief. Governor-elect Robert L. Williams on October of 1914 informed Clayton Hyde, a prominent Alva farm leader, that his first official message to the legislature would recommend extension of tax and school land lease payment dates without penalty. As early as September, 1914, the Georgia-initiated "Buy a Bale" plan received enthusiastic support from the Sooner press and cotton industry leaders. Designed to remove 4,000,000 bales from the glutted market, this plan proposed that local citizens pledge themselves to buy one or more bales of cotton at a \$50 quotation, all purchases to be warehoused for at least six months and preferably a year. Muskogee proponents solicited cotton jobbers and wholesalers through a form letter and the Phoenix, a leading advocate of the plan, editorialized: "As soon as the war is over cotton will advance in price and then a few chronic knockers who didn't 'buy-a-bale' will begin to talk about the other fellow's luck."²

¹Muskogee Phoenix, Oct. 7, 1914, p. 1; Oct. 20, 1914, p. 1; Oct. 25, 1914, p. 1; Nov. 18, 1914, p. 1; Dec. 13, 1914, p. 1; Cong. Record, 63 Cong., 2 Sess., Oct. 20, 1914, pp. 16815-16.

²R. L. Williams to Clayton Hyde, Oct. 31, 1914. Hyde Papers, Professional Correspondence, 1888-1946, Folder, Z-W; Gilbert C. Fite, "Volunteer Attempts to Reduce Cotton Acreage in the South, 1914-1933," Journal of Southern History, XIV

The Daily Oklahoman strongly supported the movement as a patriotic cause in a prominently displayed five inch, two-column boxed feature headed "Join the Buy-a-Bale-Club." In the same issue a second story, entitled "Names of Cotton Patriots Wanted," announced that the "Oklahoman will publish a list of persons or firms taking a bale or more. . . . at the patriotic cash price of ten cents a pound," and included a coupon to facilitate the purpose. The plan, however, failed to elicit wide-scale support and accomplished little. Disappointed, the Oklahoman made a final attempt to rouse the public. Combining reproof with a strong plea, the editorial, "All Hands Ahold," declared:

The "buy-a-bale" movement is displaying evidences of an attack of ennui. . . . This should not be; must not be. Surely there is sufficient public spirit . . . particularly in Oklahoma, to prevent so distinct a calamity. . . . The money used . . . is as safe as a gold bond. The price cannot long remain at its present level. . . . Warring nations wear clothes the same as peaceful nations.¹

Local banks, cotton ginneries, and traders initiated the earliest efforts to relieve the crisis. One of the most comprehensive of these was the cooperative program set up by the Bryan County banks and the Inland Compress Company at Durant. The latter built a warehouse of five-thousand

(Nov., 1948), pp. 483-84; Muskogee Phoenix, Sept. 10, 1914, p. 4; Sept. 12, 1914, p. 4; Sept. 24, 1914, p. 8.

¹Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 30, 1914, p. 4; Oct. 1, 1914, p. 6-C.

bale capacity while the banks advanced cash on the basis of warehouse receipts for ginned cotton. The advance was to provide living expenses and a small portion of the cost for picking. Upon eventual sale, seed, ginning, and picking expenses had priority over general indebtedness, either to banks or landlords. In other communities cotton traders strove to assist customers out of their own resources. The Wewoka Trading Company guaranteed its clients "an advance of \$30.00 per 500 lb. bale, or advanced merchandise to that amount upon receipt of cotton." At Eufaula a modified form of the Durant plan had been utilized in 1913. Local papers made strong pleas to "farmers, merchants, business men, or professional men to practice the most rigid economy," and assured them that the press would "do everything possible" to help.¹

Local and state attempts were insufficient to meet such a major crisis, however, and cotton prices dropped to as low as four cents a pound. Indeed, half the value of the 1914 crop was lost, a half billion dollar loss to the cotton-producing area. Lacking sufficient financial resources, farmers were forced to sell despite excessively low prices. At Caddo and Calera in Bryan County, Ardmore in Carter County, and ranging northward to Sapulpa in Creek County "night riders" became active, posting crude cardboard signs threatening to burn out owners and tenants who sold below the

¹The Indian Journal, Sept. 11, 1913, p. 4; Durant Weekly News, Sept. 4, 1914, p. 1; Wewoka Democrat, Sept. 10, 1914, p. 1.

ten cent figure. At Sapulpa a cotton grower's barn was destroyed. These notices announced further that "Texas and Oklahoma will form a union inside of a month and you will have to shoulder your musket." At the same time a prominent farm loan agent in Caddo was warned that "we will give you thirty lashes upon your back with a buggy yoke" if he foreclosed "a single mortgage" while cotton sold at subnormal prices. This threat may not have emanated from the "night riders."¹

Public opinion in Oklahoma concerning the cotton crisis in the 1914-1916 period evidenced grave concern over the problem of adjusting the state's economy to meet the problem. There was relatively little indignation over arbitrary British maritime activities in 1914. True, there were scattered criticisms that "England, proud war-lord of the seas, is crying like a little child that has been sharply spanked" over American protests but Sooner complaints were mild when compared to the wrathful expressions of their neighbors. Texas Governor Colquitt demanded "that 'American ironclads' be sent 'to England's door' to enforce the nation's rights," and others echoed this sentiment. Indeed, the importance of cotton in a state's economy was closely related to the vigor of its demand for reprisals against the British. Oklahomans

¹Durant Weekly News, Sept. 30, 1914, p. 1; Sept. 16, 1914, p. 1; Muskogee Phoenix, Oct. 13, 1914, p. 1; Oct. 24, 1914, p. 1; Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 150.

viewed the situation more calmly than some other Southern states. When the British temporarily lifted the embargo in October, 1914, and American officials predicted a price increase of "at least ten cents within the next ten or fifteen days" the Tulsa Democrat observed: "This argument looks sound and cotton farmers ought not to offer their cotton during the next two weeks." At the same time the Daily Oklahoman surveyed the cotton problem in an editorial entitled "The War's Lesson" and concluded:

We may as well face the situation before us calmly. A part of the general distress entailed by the war is our lot. But we may be able to find a profitable lesson in our present predicament and learn how to avert a similar disaster in the future. We must produce what the world wants. If it does not want cotton we must give it something else. The south has long followed the custom of placing all its eggs in one basket, and now awakens to the folly of the same.¹

In other words, cotton's main problems were of domestic rather than foreign origin.

Oklahomans showed greater firmness over American trade rights as the problem extended into 1915, but few expressed extremist views. A typical editorial appeared in the Daily Oklahoman on January 2, 1915, following the State Department's note of protest over trade policies which to "certain Englishmen" seemed "something like an ultimatum":

¹Muskogee Phoenix, Dec. 18, 1914, p. 4; Bailey, A Diplomatic History, p. 568; Daily Oklahoman, Oct. 20, 1914, p. 4; Tulsa Democrat, Oct. 30, 1914, p. 4.

General satisfaction is apparent over the American note demanding full privileges for all neutral shipping emanating from these shores. There was nothing of submissiveness or spinelessness in the protest, and we are rather proud that its tone was so bold as to make John Bull sit up with riveted attention. . . . There is no telling to what lengths harassed nations with futures endangered may go. The United States cannot afford to permit detention of its vessels for any cause. The firmness of our protest therefore is particularly commendable at this time. And the government should back it up vigorously until all its terms have been acceded to by the British authorities. Our neutrality should not be construed as weakness nor powers permitted to believe we can be buffeted at will. This commerce incident afforded us an opportunity to call a bluff. We should insist on a showdown.

England's reply, a more stringent order in council, elicited mixed emotions of deep concern, conciliation, and growing impatience among Oklahomans. Commending the American stand as "a reassertion of neutral rights long established" the Oklahoman declared:

England and France have no right to establish a blockade. . . . which will interfere with our commerce with Germany, and their diplomats know it as well as anybody. They have simply been "called" on trying to "put one over." . . . England would be the first to suffer if we should deviate for a moment from our policy of strict neutrality. We are the innocent bystander in this ruckus. . . . England looks no better than Germany to us and vice versa. It follows therefore that our trade with each should not be hampered in the least so long as the same is confined to non-contraband. But it will likely take something more than the velvety sword of the diplomatist to bring England to a realizing sense of the inherent justice of our position. (*Italics mine.*)¹

Despite Britain's April announcement reaffirming the prior declaration that cotton would not be considered absolute

¹Daily Oklahoman, Jan. 2, 1915, pp. 1, 6; April 7, 1915, p. 6. See also March 24, 1915, p. 6.

contraband, the cotton market remained nervous throughout 1915. It fluctuated with every turn of Lusitanian diplomacy, an unfounded rumor of the assassination of President Wilson, and particularly the declaring of cotton as absolute contraband in August. Most Oklahomans viewed the declaration with surprising equanimity, apparently conditioned to its inevitability by preceding developments. The Muskogee Phoenix editorialized:

A formal British declaration . . . does not materially alter the situation, so far as southern cotton growers are concerned. It will probably close no markets that are not already closed to the southern staple, but will make fixed and definite what hitherto has been an unsettled subject of controversy. . . . There will be sharp protest against the making of cotton contraband, for while it is not disputed that large quantities are now employed in the manufacture of explosives, the proportion so used is small compared with that which is consumed in non-military uses.

Viewing British purchase of intercepted shipments as only "temporary amelioration," the Phoenix urged the South to "count confidently" on federal assistance and a "material reduction" in acreage.¹ The solutions to the cotton problem were to be found at home.

The denial of trade with neutral nations rankled far more than the loss of the German market. Once German assurances of more considerate action in submarine warfare had been received following the Lusitania and Arabic sinkings,

¹Muskogee Phoenix, Aug. 22, 1915, p. 6; Daily Oklahoman, April 15, 1915, p. 1; June 1, 1915, p. 11; Tulsa Democrat, May 11, 1915, p. 4.

the Sooner press renewed the demand for British concessions.

A Phoenix editorial expressed a typical reaction:

It is now high time that the United States dealt with England. President Wilson promised that as soon as the controversy with Germany had been settled a note would be dispatched to Great Britain calling her to account for her restrictions of American commerce. As yet the note has not gone forth. . . . Almost without exception [previous] replies have been insolent and arrogant. England has yielded nothing and . . . does not intend to do so. Britain has trespassed on American rights with equally as heavy a foot as did Germany. Her methods may have been more humane, but they have been no less arbitrary. She has set herself up as mistress of the seas. . . . She has a right to demand that we do not trade with Germany, but she has gone further and declared that we must not sell our products to neutral nations. . . . England has said we shall not--and we have not. It is time we spoke to England as we spoke to Germany, in terms of friendliness that cannot be mistaken any more than can our determination that right must prevail.

Practical grounds, of course, existed for the British position. American war exports in April, 1915, showed an alarming increase in such German neutral neighbors as Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, ranking fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth, respectively. Denmark had ranked fifteenth in 1914. The re-export to Germany was evident, even though the latter dropped from second to eighth position. On the other hand, the British absorbed half of all American exports, a five per cent increase over pre-war figures. France ranked second and Italy third.¹ Inconvenienced Sooners, with international law on their side, preferred not to recognize British arguments.

¹Daily Oklahoman, April 24, 1915, p. 6; Muskogee Phoenix, Oct. 21, 1915, p. 4.

Despite the tensions and trade hindrances in 1915, cotton exports reached a record figure of \$836,679,820 despite the fact that 2,265,094 less bales were exported than in 1912, the peak year in volume of exports. Fearing acreage increases in 1916, and recalling the unrealized thirty-seven per cent reduction announced for 1915, the Sooner press initiated an early, vigorous, but largely unavailing campaign to discourage heavier plantings. Citing decreased transportation facilities, reduced buying power, and continuing war as reasons to cut acreage, The Indian Journal at Eufaula in the spring of 1916 declared:

It seems almost idle to point out that marked increase over last year is going to result in great disaster to southern cotton producers . . . merchants and bankers. It is strange, too, in the face of all these indications that landlords still advise their tenants to plant cotton, which seems to be looked upon as the only sure source of rental.

Indeed, a Daily Oklahoman writer as early as October, 1914, had insisted that "buy-a-bale" withholding would be "manifestly futile unless some means are found for curtailing next year's crop." These fears proved illusory as Britain, alarmed by continuing Southern agitation, negotiated a secret agreement to purchase sufficient cotton to stabilize the ten cent price. This alleviated the crisis although on occasion Oklahomans still called upon the British "to do some apologizing and explaining . . . of . . . high-handed proceedings" and observed caustically that "perhaps thanks are due Great Britain for not having promulgated an order-in-council

regulating our cotton acreage." By the fall of 1916 farm prices for cotton in Oklahoma had reached nineteen cents a pound; seven cents above the pre-war figure and thirteen cents higher than the price at the height of the "cotton panic" late in 1914. However, reduced plantings and less favorable growing seasons stimulated these price increases even more than wartime demand from abroad. In 1914 Oklahoma had produced 1,262,000 bales; in 1915, only 640,000; in 1916, 823,000. Actually, exports in 1916 and 1917 were below the previous years. By 1916, of course, the whole American economy was picking up, a development the cotton and cotton goods business reflected.¹

Except for cotton the problem of contraband did not greatly perturb Oklahomans. A cargo of copper seized in Copenhagen under a false bill of lading elicited this reaction:

The protest of President Wilson to England over seized cargoes is not serious or urgent. We know that unprincipled shippers in the United States are wholly to blame [*italics mine*] and that when we put this greedy, trouble-making gent in handcuffs there will be no need of protests. . . . The government ought to do it at once as an example and as a notice . . . that we are not backing the tricksters and smugglers; that we are

¹United States Department of Agriculture, Yearbook of Agriculture, 1915 (Washington, D.C., 1916), p. 13; 1921 pp. 611-12, 751; The Indian Journal, Feb. 25, 1916, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, July 5, 1914, p. 1; Sept. 29, 1914, p. 6; April 11, 1915, p. 6-C; June 28, 1915, p. 1; July 21, 1915, p. 6; Tulsa World, May 26, 1916, p. 4. See also Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 169-72; de Conde, "The South and Isolationism," Journal of Southern History, XXIV (Aug., 1958), pp. 337-39.

protesting in the interest of traders who are shipping in good faith and not with false bills of lading and concealed contraband.¹

The unqualified statement that "unprincipled shippers" were "wholly to blame" in the case of all detained cargoes, and that the President's protest was not "serious or urgent" reflected a significant point of view.

Oklahomans followed the fluctuations of foreign trade closely. Early in 1917 the Daily Oklahoman in reprinting trade statistics released by the United States Department of Commerce, observed:

Nobody on the outside knows how things are with the central powers except for occasional stories of distress that manage to seep through and . . . a glimpse . . . furnished by figures . . . on our foreign trade with the countries at war. . . .

Imports from countries at war:

	1915		1916
Austria-Hungary. . . \$	5,035,096	\$	603,271
Germany.	43,292,675		5,681,203
France	67,935,357		98,404,909
Russia	2,037,101		4,395,142
United Kingdom . . .	231,192,517		279,727,143

Exports to countries at war:

	1915		1916
Austria-Hungary. . . \$	104,525	\$	61,771
Germany.	11,777,358		1,118,281
Russia	102,758,629		286,732,626
France	452,578,134		802,132,401
United Kingdom . . .	1,072,887,384		1,702,906,305

. . . It [the Commerce report] is also pointed out that our shipments to Sweden and the Netherlands, formerly relaying stations for Germany, have also shrunk by millions. "Clearly, the blockade is doing its work," says

¹Muskogee Times-Democrat, Jan. 18, 1915, p. 4.

the [Chicago] Journal, from which conclusions there can be no dissent. And it is equally clear that, for all their activity, the submarines do not even retard the steady flow of supplies to the entente. . . . The impression persists . . . that Germany and her allies are yearning for peace--for peace and food.¹

Except for cotton and oil, where national losses of \$560 and \$200 million, respectively, were claimed, a similar trend had existed in 1914 when in the first full month of the war American exports increased as follows over a year earlier:

<u>Product</u>	<u>August, 1914, Export Total</u>	<u>% of Increase over Sept., 1913</u>
Wheat	26,000,000 bu.	200%
Oats	10,750,000 bu.	3,000%
Refined Sugar	52,250,000 lbs.	1,300%
Fresh Beef	7,000,000 lbs.	1,100%
Canned Beef	3,000,000 lbs.	800%

However, for the same months total cotton exports decreased from 257,172 to 21,210 bales. But despite the August reversals, cotton exports for the entire fiscal year of 1914 set a new record of 9,165,000 bales with England taking 37.3 per cent, Germany, 29.7, and France, 11.1. Even the most casual reader could easily see the importance of the European war to the American economy. Oklahoma City clearing house receipts for 1914 reached \$111,115,123, a 26.6 per cent increase over 1913, and bank deposits totaled \$14,604,897, "greater than for any period in the city's history." Congressman Joseph B. Thompson

¹Daily Oklahoman, Jan. 18, 1917, p. 6.

and Charles D. Carter announced to the House of Representatives that the "great and good" state of Oklahoma needed "20,000 laborers . . . to do the work brought on by Democratic prosperity."¹

While there were isolated and temporary reverses, foreign trade boomed as the war progressed, despite German submarine and British contraband and blockade restrictions. Experts predicted that war trade would add \$500,000,000 to American foreign commerce. Oklahomans protested against German and British trade restrictions in basically the same fashion and to the same degree as did other American citizens. Protests were loudest and longest when major state exports were restricted, such as cotton, oil, and cereal grains, but this was true for all states and sections. As demonstrated by the Daily Oklahoman on April 7 and other occasions, Sooners early in 1915 heatedly insisted that "England and France have no right to establish a blockade . . . which will interfere with our commerce with Germany." Six months later as the offending powers absorbed all the trade in question and even more, Oklahomans concurred with the Muskogee Phoenix conceding that Britain "has a right to demand that we do not trade with Germany, but she has gone further and declared that

¹Ibid., July 20, 1914, p. 4; Sept. 29, 1914, p. 6; Nov. 4, 1914, p. 6; Jan. 1, 1915, p. 11-A; April 2, 1915, p. 6-A; Cong. Record, 63 Cong., 2 Sess., May 20, 1914, p. 8920.

we must not sell our products to neutral nations."¹

Subsequent editorials, employing such titles as "And Now We'll Chat With England," "British Arrogance," "Baiting Uncle Sam," "An Indefensible Excuse," and "Unsaid But Not Unthought," castigated "unwarranted interference," "uppishness," "roughshod methods," "voluntary overlordship of the high seas," and "John Bull naval policy." However, such severe criticisms were relatively few and scattered and resentment of British trade restriction practices seemed almost mild when compared to German submarine warfare which was renewed in 1916. Entente war needs progressively increased and realization dawned that this trade had transformed America from a debtor to a creditor nation. At this point Sooner protests to British blockade practices, even when extended to trade with neutrals, subsided to occasional mild demands that "it is the British turn to do some apologizing and explaining . . . of . . . this high-handed proceeding" and interest increased in adjusting production to Entente demands.²

Lack of both financial reserves and numerous large-scale industrial and banking enterprises typical of a young,

¹Daily Oklahoman, Dec. 10, 1914, p. 6; March 24, 1915, p. 6; April 7, 1915, p. 6; Muskogee Phoenix, Aug. 22, 1915, p. 6.

²Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 31, 1915, p. 6; Oct. 13, 1915, p. 6; Nov. 3, 1915, p. 6; Nov. 9, 1915, p. 6; Nov. 10, 1915, p. 6; Nov. 20, 1915, p. 6; Nov. 29, 1915, p. 6; Muskogee Phoenix, Aug. 22, 1915, p. 6; Oct. 29, 1915, p. 6.

rural state limited Sooner participation and interest in loans to the belligerent powers. Oklahoma reactions, while few, were unreservedly opposed to such loans. This opposition emanated in large measure from resentment of England's arbitrary blockade and contraband strictures that had so disastrously affected the cotton trade. Even the early oil losses were laid at England's door although she neither desired nor engineered the transport and ship registry problems that had plagued the industry in 1914. It was fortunate indeed for the British that the cotton crisis had largely passed and that American exports were at a high level when Britain's financial situation became desperate.

Late in 1914 Britain and France had sought large commercial loans from New York bankers only to find that Secretary of State Bryan had committed the Administration to a policy which opposed loans to belligerents. President Wilson supported Bryan in rejecting the request from Morgan and his Associates to reverse this policy. Reports of these proceedings, even though unsuccessful, greatly agitated the cotton-sensitive Sooners. Under a major headline stating "Wilson Opposes European Loans," the Oklahoman reported rejection of the loan "of several hundred million dollars" for the French government. On the day following another headline proclaimed, "Loans Declared Unneutral Acts" and informed its readers that both Wilson and Bryan opposed loans "for the benefit of any belligerent European powers." This same issue

carried a strongly worded lead editorial entitled "Loaning Money to Warriors":

If militant nations can continue to get loans, the horrors of war will be continued, women and babies will starve and countries will be devastated. On the other hand, if bankers refuse to lend money for war purposes, the conflict is likely to be terminated speedily. If the bankers of New York are so anxious to loan money, they should be reminded that charity begins at home, where the planters of the south are anxious to offer cotton worth \$800,000,000 as security for loans to be used for development purposes and not destructive purposes.

The Muskogee Phoenix expressed similar sentiments although milder in tone. Two comments, in particular, typified the Phoenix attitude and demonstrated the influence of local problems in international affairs:

President Wilson is very properly insisting that our big bankers refuse to finance the war. It would also be highly pleasing to many fellow citizens if the president will induce the big bankers to issue a declaration of moratorium in this country, or, failing in that, himself issue a proclamation to that effect.

Morgan and other American bankers are planning to aid in prolonging the war by loaning money to the belligerents. We hope that the president will be successful in his efforts to head them off.¹

Early in 1915 Britain, her financial reserves almost exhausted, again sought commercial loans and the financial magnates this time secured Secretary Bryan's approval of commercial credits on March 31. Both the Entente and Central Powers arranged loans, the latter only in limited amounts. Again the Oklahoma press disapproved. An editorial, "War Loans

¹Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 14, 1914, p. 5; Aug. 15, 1914, pp. 1, 6; Muskogee Phoenix, Aug. 15, 1914, p. 1. See Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 172-73, for an excellent brief account of the loan situation.

and Losses," reported: "Another \$50,000,000 loan is being prepared by J. P. Morgan for the French. An \$100,000,000 loan is about ready to be taken by England. A German note asking for \$10,000,000 has been about taken up." Strong criticism of Morgan and his ilk for not supporting domestic needs such as the cotton pool followed, including the claim that the United States sold \$100 million in war munitions while "Oklahoma and the south . . . alone were suffering a billion-dollar loss" including \$560 million on cotton, \$200 million each on crude oil and naval supplies, \$100 million on tobacco, and \$100 million in war tax. Five days later another editorial, "Our Neutral Rights," attacking Entente blockade practices terminated in the same vein:

But it will likely take something more than the velvety word of the diplomatist to bring England to a realizing sense of the inherent justice of our opinion. We can stop loaning her money with which to make war. That will serve to shake her up. (*Italics mine.*)¹

Despite the commercial credits, Britain's purchases by mid-year exceeded her ability to pay by more than \$50 million monthly and direct loans were sought. Specific reversal of the Bryan doctrine followed and on September 10, 1915, an Anglo-French commission began negotiations for a \$500 million public-subscribed loan. The wrath of the Hearst press and German- and Irish-Americans was no less than that of Oklahomans. The Daily Oklahoman in a bitter editorial

¹Daily Oklahoman, April 2, 1915, p. 6-A; April 7, 1915, p. 6.

headed "Speaking of Inconsistencies," indignantly asserted:

Laying aside all argument as to what part is played for or against international law and neutrality by our big loan to the belligerent allies, there is one feature of the transaction which causes us a gasp or two. It is the enlightening spectacle of England saying to the United States, out of the corner of its mouth, "No, sirree, you can't sell any cotton abroad till we give the word, sorry you have to suffer, but we'll just be hornswiggled if we are going to let a single pound of your cotton be sold except as we dictate" and then saying to the same United States, out of the other corner of the same mouth, "Say, old fellow, for God's sake lend us a few hundred million dollars in a hurry, can't you? We're broke and in an awful fix!"

The Republican press echoed these sentiments. Said the Tulsa World:

The United States government--as a government--is doing wrong in financing a . . . loan to Great Britain . . . Indirectly it is responsible for the loan. It will be hard enough to keep this nation out of the war as matters now stand, but it will be a great deal harder to keep out of it if we have several millions of dollars "invested" in any particular country engaged in the disastrous conflict. . . . The United States, with its Mexican trouble . . . and its paramount duty to feed and clothe the world, has about all it cares to tackle at this time, thank you--especially with a Democratic administration in charge . . . 'T'would be well we'd watch our step a bit!¹

The Oklahoman, however, was not consistent in its attitude toward loans to the allies. While its previous editorial had expressed indignation at the thought of a loan to England in the face of cavalier treatment in the cotton and other maritime controversies, the Oklahoman insisted that the transaction was legitimate. This rather curious turn

¹Ibid., Sept. 23, 1915, p. 6; Tulsa World, Aug. 22, 1915, p. 4.

of events developed when the paper received an obviously pro-German letter of protest from R. A. Kleinschmidt of Oklahoma City objecting to the Oklahoman's "almost daily . . . contemptuous and hostile references to Germany." Kleinschmidt cited, in particular, the loan and Belgian situations. In its reply the Oklahoman defended both the loan and its own neutral policy, stressing the fact that the loans were private negotiations:

It [the loan] is purely a transaction between the allies on one side and certain American citizens on the other, the latter acting in their legitimate capacity as private individuals. With such a transaction the government at Washington has no . . . legal or moral right to interfere. . . . The Oklahoman is neutral. . . . This . . . does not mean that it has surrendered the right to criticise freely and at all times any of the belligerent powers [including England]. . . . So far as our memory serves us, this office has received no protest from Mr. Kleinschmidt against the advisability, logic or morals of having loaned Germany money in the past for sinews of war, nor . . . now.¹

The Oklahoman, it appears, was not entirely immune from the expression of privately held views. During the next eighteen months Britain, France, and Canada borrowed a total of almost two billion dollars with no ensuing protests from the Oklahoma press except for the Socialists. Perhaps the fact that the later loans were not publicly subscribed, or the soothing balm of almost unlimited war prosperity, vitiated Sooner disapproval. Possibly they grew weary in a losing cause. Oklahoma's sturdy opposition to war loans was neither

¹Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 28, 1915, p. 6.

unusual nor out of pattern. It was shared by the cotton-producing south, the more youthful rural and agricultural areas, and the isolationist Midwest.

On the national scene, Senator Gore provided Oklahoma's major publicity on the issues of war contraband and loans. On January 10, 1916, the forthright Senator introduced two joint resolutions designed to protect American trade rights. The first authorized and directed the President

. . . to interdict the exportation of contraband of war to the signatory powers of the Declaration of London, when such power shall be ascertained to be interfering with the neutral commerce of the United States in articles designated as noncontraband in such declaration. . . . The collector of customs of the several ports of the United States shall withhold clearance from any vessel receiving as a part of its cargo any articles, contraband of war, designed for the use or destined for any port or place under the jurisdiction or control of any of the powers, or their allies, ascertained and declared in the President's proclamation to be obstructing, hindering, or interfering with the neutral commerce of the United States in noncontraband goods.

The second, closely related, authorized and directed

. . . the President to prohibit any national banking association to make any loan to, or to act as agent for, any of the signatory powers of the Declaration of London which shall be ascertained to be obstructing the neutral commerce of the United States in noncontraband articles as defined in such declaration. . . . That whenever, after the issuance of said proclamation, the President shall receive satisfactory assurances and guarantees from any such offending power that such obstruction, hindrance, or interference with the neutral commerce of the United States in noncontraband goods will be discontinued for the future, he is authorized to suspend the operation of this act during such time as said assurances and guarantees shall be observed in good faith.¹

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Jan. 10, 1916, pp. 753-54. Both S. J. Res. 73 and S. J. Res. 74 are printed verbatim.

The Senator submitted a lengthy statement with the resolutions explaining the purpose and operation of the acts which concluded:

Every American citizen has the right under international law to engage in innocent commerce with neutral nations and no belligerent Government has authority to abrogate this right. It is quite as important to protect this right of American citizens to ship innocent goods to neutral countries as it is to protect their right to run the risk of involving this country in a carnival of slaughter. It will be interesting to see whether those who insist so vehemently that every American citizen should have the right to travel on a belligerent rather than a neutral ship at the peril of engulfing the country in a sea of blood will be equally insistent that American citizens should be protected in their immemorial and sacred right to ship noncontraband goods on neutral vessels. I trust these joint resolutions . . . [will be considered] without reference to the interest or the fortunes of any belligerent.

The resolutions were referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations but received no further action. Indeed, it is not likely that Gore expected any. Even if approval had been obtained, the resolutions would have had little practical value. The Declaration of London had never been accepted by England and the Central Powers had given assent only after the British blockade had destroyed their sea trade. Even the United States in November, 1914, had officially discarded the ineffectual declaration, a move the *Sooners* press strongly approved. The Daily Oklahoman observed: "Uncle Sam . . . spoke emphatically . . . We're glad he did."¹ Gore certainly recognized the impotency of the Declaration of London but

¹Ibid.; Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 28, 1914, p. 6.

apparently wished to ascertain public opinion through their introduction. At least the resolutions served as an effective prelude to his even more controversial proposal introduced the following month restricting American citizens from travel on armed belligerent vessels.

The tremendous impact of war trade and foreign loans upon the American economy constituted a major turning point in American economic history. Even landlocked and basically rural Oklahoma recognized this fact. As early as March, 1915, the Oklahoman declared that "history fails to record a parallel for the rapidity with which this nation has changed her position from that of a debtor to a creditor nation." An excess of exports over imports of some \$437 million since December 1, 1914, prompted this observation. Despite German submarines, British blockades, and transitory cotton and oil problems, trade and profits had rapidly increased following the paralysis created by the first month of war. Sooner headlines in late 1914 sensed "this incomparable conquest of world trade" and urged Sooners to "bend every sinew to the task of producing what Europe wants." Headlines in April, 1915, proclaimed American economic prospects as the "Silver Lining Of Europe's War Cloud" and a December editorial enthused: "Prosperity envelops us, . . . undeniable prosperity . . . hangs like a blessed cloud. . . . Every section is

jubilant . . . It is here, set solidly on a domain which is its natural habitat."¹

By 1916 most Sooners were too busy and too used to this avalanche of prosperity to editorialize, limiting press comments to reports of economic and financial well-being. Only the Socialists continued to raise their voices in consistent public protest as they had since 1912. In expressing their opposition to war and war-derived prosperity the Socialists voiced the fear that this commercial enterprise would draw the United States into the war. While no other significant Sooner group expressed this concern, the moral and war-predisposing factors implied in this heavy trade and loan involvement troubled some Oklahomans. A month after the war began the New York District Attorney issued a statement declaring that an American embargo on foodstuffs could end hostilities. Evaluating this statement based on the food cost index since the war's outbreak, the Oklahoman observed:

This would be an extreme measure [considering civilian suffering in Europe] . . . but nevertheless such a plan is worthy of consideration. . . . Whenever the United States starts any great movement of provisions across the water, the keenest, most invulnerable diplomatic tactics to be devised, will be required to keep us out of trouble. . . . It might not be a bad idea for us to shut ourselves out from communication with the battling nations . . . at least until the end is in sight. This country is self-sustaining and could better afford to have its ports closed for a period than to pay the heavy

¹Daily Oklahoman, March 16, 1915, p. 1.

costs of war. America has peace now and does not want that peace disturbed.¹

Thus while there was no consistent public outcry, there were indications that Sooners, like all Americans, recognized and were weighing the consequences of continued trade and possible involvement in the European conflict over against the privations and austerities that might result from an embargo. The resulting emotional and policy conflicts were reflected in an editorial published by the Elk City News-Democrat on July 1, 1915:

The cry of peace is going out from every American city, every pulpit, every humane and benevolent society . . . while our factories are running night and day making munitions of war and transporting them to warring nations that they may continue to slaughter one another. This country has furnished . . . thousands of horses and mules, untold quantities of clothing, foodstuffs and all the equipage to carry on . . . this unholy war and at the same time we are crying peace! peace! Are we a nation of hypocrites? Do we place the dollar above the thousands of human lives and at the same time put on a sanctimonious look? . . . This country can put an end to the European war inside of sixty days and could have done so at any time after the third month of the war, simply by placing an embargo on the very things we are furnishing them today, which enables them to continue. . . . There can be no peace as long as we furnish supplies to carry on the war, and we don't expect it. We are trying to fool others

¹Ibid., Aug. 29, 1914, p. 6-B; Dec. 10, 1914, p. 6; April 10, 1915, p. 6; Dec. 2, 1915, p. 6; The Osage Journal (Pawhuska), May 20, 1916, p. 4. For typical Socialist opposition see Sword of Truth, Nov. 27, 1912, p. 1; Aug. 19, 1914, p. 2; Sept. 9, 1914, p. 2; Oct. 7, 1914, p. 1; Oct. 26, 1914, p. 1; Oct. 28, 1914, p. 1; World-Wide War, Sept. 16, 1915, p. 1; Sept. 30, 1915, p. 4; Nov. 18, 1915, pp. 1-2; Muskogee Times-Democrat, May 14, 1915, p. 4; Latimer County News-Democrat, March 10, 1916, p. 1.

by the cry of peace, while we are gathering in the shekels of war necessities from all the warring nations.¹

Beckham County, located in the "Wheat Belt" region in the western part of the state, had Socialist and German communities but the News-Democrat was ardently pro-administration.

At the same time the east-side press, viewing the more practical aspects of the problem, vigorously defended the sale of munitions to belligerent nations. From Muskogee came this dissertation:

Another campaign has been started to induce the United States to put an embargo on munitions of war. There are a good many reasons why this campaign should fail. It ought to fail principally because . . . it is legal to sell munitions of war to such belligerent nations as can and will buy from us. . . . The Declaration of Paris formally approved this law and this practice and Germany and Austria were parties to that declaration. . . . It is good business because the United States, which was shut off from her markets by a barbarous war for which we had not the slightest responsibility, is justified in selling anything and everything everywhere, in order to keep her workers employed and from starvation. A thousand times we would rather sell Europe articles of peace. But . . . if Europe prefers war and only wants to buy articles of war, these United States would be unjust to her own people to refuse such trade. . . . It is moral. If "one European nation for years has been subsidizing cannon factories, and stocking up with arms and ammunition preparatory to war, should we refuse other nations, who had meantime been devoting themselves to the arts of peace, the right to buy arms for their own defense?" It is neutral for the same reason that it is moral. It is highly patriotic. The United States does not carefully prepare for war. . . . When the day comes when we must defend ourselves--and it will come--we shall be compelled to go out into the world and buy munitions

¹Elk City News-Democrat, July 1, 1915, p. 4.

from neutral countries. It is of the utmost importance, then--it is vital--that we not destroy the perfectly legal and moral right of neutral nations to sell such munitions to neutral countries. . . . If there is any nation which finds itself in a position that it cannot buy from us, it is not our fault. It is the fault of that country in not providing itself with the biggest navy. (*Italics mine.*)¹

Muskogee, of course, was more conscious of the urban-industrial point of view and had a more heterogeneous population. The view espoused, while seemingly somewhat callous, legalistic, and dollar-conscious, represented the attitude to which the majority of Oklahomans reluctantly but firmly committed themselves in the two-year period prior to American entry into the war. There is no question but that trade and loan policies advanced Oklahomans, like all Americans, on the road to war. Further, these policies reinforced sympathies and inclinations predisposing Oklahomans toward the Entente point of view. Economic factors did not dictate the declaration of war in April, 1917, but they were a major contributory force and Oklahoma attitudes reflected the status of the Sooner economy.

¹Muskogee Times-Democrat, May 10, 1915, p. 4.

CHAPTER V

OKLAHOMA AND THE SUBMARINE DILEMMA IN 1915

Sooner--and American--attachments for neutrality and peace remained basically undisturbed until the unleashing of the submarine in 1915. A novel and radically different weapon of war, the submarine commanded the attention and sentiment of the United States as had no previous development in the European conflict. In addition to its ominous potential as a destroyer of American commerce, the underseas weapon contravened moral and legal principles commonly accepted by civilized nations. The inability of the submarine to provide for the safety of the passengers and crews of its victims and the enlarged loss of human life that inevitably accrued, seriously disturbed an American citizenry already disquieted by the onset of war and the invasion of Belgium.

Although by no means as agitated as the majority of eastern Americans, Oklahomans, in common with most midwesterners, shared this national concern. The prospect of the submarine as an instrument of destruction had incurred the displeasure of the Sooner press from the very onset of the war. The Daily Oklahoman, as early as September 29, 1914, typified

this negative reaction:

The so-called "laws of war" may excuse the use of submarines but such justification is repulsive to the moral sense. . . . Where is the fairness of the stealthy approach of a submarine assassin to deal a foul blow from the unseen depths? . . . If submarines are to remain a factor in civilized warfare, then naval battles hereafter should be fought under the water's surface so that all should have an equal chance. International edict certainly should prohibit the use of the submarine in all countries.¹

Germany's submarine blockade, announced on February 4, 1915, and initiated two weeks thereafter, received no more than passing attention from the Oklahoma press. Reports including that of the Oklahoman's page one story on February 25 headed "Eleven Steamers Lost First Week German Blockade" evidenced a similar disconcern. Not even the sinking of the British steamer Falaba, the first passenger ship to be torpedoed, in the North Sea on March 18 with the loss of an American national, or the Gulflight, an American tanker, with three casualties excited more than a ripple of interest in the Sooner press. Not even the large dailies commented editorially, although the national press, particularly on the East Coast, expressed considerable resentment. Two days after the Falaba went down, the Tulsa World carried a modest page one news item reporting the incident. Four days after the sinking the Oklahoman carried the story. Apparently the attitude of the Oklahoma public and press was that expressed

¹Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 29, 1914, p. 6.

by Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan to President Wilson that nationals who traveled on a belligerent ship in a war zone did so at their own risk and with no obligation on the part of the American government to protect them.¹

The torpedoing of the Gulflight on May 2 elicited more extensive interest but at least half of the Sooner dailies and almost all of the lesser publications ignored the incident completely. The Tulsa Democrat provided the fullest coverage under a front page May 3 banner headline entitled, "American Oil Steamer Gulflight Torpedoed." In the Muskogee Times-Democrat the incident appeared as the lead story under a three-column headline while the Daily Ardmoreite rated the development as its number two news item under a two-column head. The Oklahoman reported the sinking on May 4, but provided neither the space nor the prominence accorded the earlier Tennessee, Evelyn, and Carib incidents. Unlike East Coast reactions, there was no particular expression of anger or resentment, or a feeling that the nation's prestige had been challenged or its honor sullied. The Sooner reaction

¹Ibid., March 11, 1915, p. 1; April 1, 1915, p. 1; Tulsa World, March 30, 1915, p. 1. Brief but reliable survey accounts of submarine warfare, particularly as it related to the United States, appear in Bailey, A Diplomatic History, pp. 575-81; Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 162-69, 206-15; and Harvey Wish, Contemporary America: The National Scene Since 1900 (rev. ed.; New York, 1955), pp. 197-200, 206. For two highly useful listings of submarine losses and casualties in the 1915-17 period see Cong. Record, 65 Cong., 1 Sess., April 5, 1917, pp. 366, 395.

was rather one of caution and the fear that inclinations toward preparedness and war involvement might be engendered. The Ardmoreite's headline, "Will Act With Caution on Sinking of Gulflight," typified majority feelings in Oklahoma.

The closest the Sooner press came to editorial expression on the various pre-Lusitania submarine sinkings was a May 10 editorial appearing in the Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman that reviewed the entire European War to that date. In relating maritime incidents affecting the United States the editorial stated:

Small matters affecting the United States accumulate. A German submarine, probably by mistake, sank an American oil tank steamer [Gulflight] the other day and the captain and two others were lost. The William P. Frye . . . was sunk by a German raider some weeks ago. Two other United States vessels [Evelyn and Carib] have been sunk by submarine mines for which no responsibility has been fixed. One American was drowned . . . [on the] Falaba. German feeling against the United States on account of continued exportation of arms to allied nations is apparently increasing. . . . German sentiment apparently believes that English control of the sea, thus preventing shipments to Germany, should be taken as a direct affront in the United States. The administration's attitude is merely that "our markets are open to the world. If you want our goods, come and get them." The German sentiment is natural in the heat of circumstance, but there are few Americans who will agree that it is good reasoning. (*Italics mine.*)¹

In no instance did the seaplane attack on the American steamer Cushing on April 28 receive attention in the press. Perhaps

¹Tulsa Democrat, May 3, 1915, p. 1; Muskogee Times-Democrat, May 3, 1915, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, May 3, 1915, p. 1; Daily Oklahoman, May 4, 1915, p. 1; Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman, XXVIII (May 10, 1915), p. 12.

the fact that the Germans promptly disavowed these acts as "mistakes" and offered "full recompense" palliated the crisis somewhat but the basic fact remains that the Sooner press and the great majority of Oklahomans were no more aroused prior to the official disavowal than after.

Sooner equanimity concerning submarine depredations suffered a severe jolt on May 7, 1915, when the Cunard liner Lusitania was torpedoed without warning off the Irish coast and sank in eighteen minutes with the loss of 1198 persons, 128 of them Americans. Oklahomans joined in the immediate nationwide expressions of shock, anger, and concern, but as in the entire Middle and Far West, there was almost no talk of war. The Oklahoman set the pace for widespread coverage of the incident by the state's daily press. The day following the disaster it printed its most sensational banner headline since the declaration of statehood. The red, block-type, two-line banner proclaimed, "More Than Thousand Lives Lost When Torpedoed Lusitania Sinks." All but one column of the entire front page dealt with the sinking, including a three-column cut almost five inches in length. These reports spilled over into subsequent pages and made much of the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Lewis and their young daughter of Oklahoma City were among the passengers as well as R. J. Timmis and R. T. Moody of Gainsville, Texas, "two of the largest cotton buyers in Texas and Oklahoma." Lewis also represented a

cotton firm. On the following day another two-line red banner reported the casualty totals.¹

For the first time in the war the Oklahoman provided almost continuous coverage of a single incident over a lengthy period, reports appearing regularly for almost three months. Coverage in the August-December period remained frequent and sporadic mention continued throughout 1916 and up to American entry into the war on April 6, 1917. Thus, while the sinking in itself did not precipitate immediate widescale demand either for war or a highly accelerated preparedness movement, it did trigger a chain of circumstances that eventually led the nation into the conflict and prompted majority opinion in Oklahoma and elsewhere to support the action.

While the Oklahoman copiously reported the reactions of prominent national and state officials and organizations relative to the incident, it delayed its own editorial comment for five days. The sole instance of Oklahoma opinion published prior to this editorial were the May 8 resolutions of the Oklahoma Bar Association to President Wilson expressing

. . . unbounded faith, regardless of party affiliation, in his ability to deal with the present international situation and that his wisdom will find a way to uphold the national dignity without unnecessarily bringing

¹Daily Oklahoman, May 8, 1915, pp. 1, 2, 3, 4; May 9, 1915, pp. 1-A, 2-A; May 10, 1915, p. 1; May 11, 1915, pp. 1, 6.

our country into the conflict. (Italics mine.)¹

The Oklahoman's initial editorial, "The Lusitania Disaster," embodied a unique admixture of caution, anger, dismay, but above all the determination to avoid involvement. As guarded in comment as in title, the editorial stated:

The civilized world is appalled beyond expression by the sinking of the Lusitania and the needless sacrifice of approximately 1,500 lives, over one hundred of whom were American citizens. The very least that can be said for the deed is that it was a piece of brutal savagery. But we are not so sure that Germany can be held to an accountability for the disaster. We have known for practically three months that the waters surrounding the British Isles are within Germany's declared "war zone" and that German submarines have been periodically active therein. The Lusitania passengers were also given ample warning. They took their lives in their own hands, therefore, when they went aboard the liner.

Of course, no one believed that Germany would do so dastardly a thing as drown innocent non-combatants or subjects of a neutral nation . . . since professing to be civilized. . . . The neutral nations of the world recognize the fact that Germany was well within her rights as a belligerent in sinking the Lusitania but they will never concede her warrant for not permitting the passengers and crew to save themselves with the best means at hand. A decent respect for the opinions of mankind forbid such things. No one as yet has the least inclination as to what sort of representations the Washington government will make to Berlin as a result of the drowning of American subjects but it may be doubted if we shall be disposed to treat the matter lightly. War by assassination cannot possibly receive the approval of this people. (Italics mine.)

Scattered brief observations on the same page perhaps revealed more of the Oklahoman's true state of mind than the lead editorial. There were seven such comments, three of them in particular indicating the confusion and indecision that prevailed:

¹Ibid.

Oklahoma has been reasonably neutral throughout. The only war which she looks upon with favor is one having to do with the Hessian and other flies.

This nation has not lost any war, but the chances are it will have to perk up a bit just to let them know that we cannot be used as a doormat.

Just what does "strict accountability" mean? If we had a line on what the president had in mind when he employed the term, perhaps we would know something about what his course is going to be.¹

Numerous prominent Oklahomans and organizations issued public statements concerning the Lusitania affair supporting President Wilson. The state convention of the Knights of Columbus, like the Bar Association, telegraphed resolutions to the President pledging "in this trying time our loyalty and support of whatever policy in your wisdom you see fit to adopt." The same group cabled Pope Benedict expressing "loyalty to your holiness and hearty united support of your peace efforts." Senator Robert L. Owen from his Muskogee residence branded the act as "illegal, inhuman, and barbarous" and "a gigantic tragedy." Owen urged "sympathy and support" for the President whom, he said, "had doubtless prayed to the Great Father of Men for guidance in the Lusitania matter." The first Oklahoma leader to express himself on the incident, Senator Owen, never given to impetuosity, counseled caution:

I have refrained from discussing the Lusitania tragedy because of the intense feeling . . . and more especially because I have felt that the responsibility of leading the United States in this critical case rested upon

¹Ibid., May 11, 1915, p. 6.

President Wilson and his cabinet. . . . If I were called upon for advice . . . I should advocate extreme care in considering this matter from every standpoint; I should counsel firmness and resolution once the right policy had been ascertained. . . . I would expect the president to demand a disavowal on the part of the German government of any purpose to kill in violation of international law these innocent neutrals. . . . While I should not care to indicate the next step, in the event Germany's reply was not altogether satisfactory, I would say this: that in my opinion the ability of the United States to serve the human race during this gigantic international war would be better served by supreme self-control than by permitting the influence of passion to sweep us into sudden war. . . . The American republic . . . should use its great power and its great dignity to establish international justice and peace having clearly and strongly in mind the welfare of the human race, including not only the citizens of the allies and of neutral nations but the citizens of the German empire.¹

Governor Robert L. Williams issued a similar plea in two speeches evidencing admirable restraint for the usually forthright and aggressive Alabama-born executive. Before the state convention of the Bankers' Association he called for "a peaceful solution of the great problems which now confront this government." At the annual encampment of Grand Army and Spanish War veterans he urged increased patriotism and national unity. While an ardent southerner, he hailed the Union victory in 1865 as a boon for the nation, strengthening it for all subsequent crises. While the fifth session of the Oklahoma Legislature could not offer resolutions on the issue since it had adjourned, the Oklahoman carried the expressions

¹Ibid., May 12, 1915, p. 9; May 13, 1915, p. 1.

of the California, Texas, Illinois, and Florida legislative bodies.¹

Numerous groups passed resolutions expressing confidence in President Wilson and urging the avoidance of war. The one thousand members of the Oklahoma Bankers Association, assembled for their annual convention, "without a dissenting vote" "declared themselves against war with any nation," called for the use of "every means to avert war," and commended Wilson for "his course so far." The G.A.R. and Spanish War veterans adopted similar resolutions. The Southern Baptist Convention, representing 2,500,000 Baptists and the major church body in Oklahoma, convened its 1915 assembly with a prayer "for divine guidance of the President." Subsequent resolutions commended the President for

. . . the firm stand he has taken for the ideals of peace and at the time in his vigorous assertion of the principles of justice and the requirements of international law. We rejoice in the restraint, the discrimination, the judicial fairness, and the courage with which he is steering the ship of state at a time of extraordinary difficulty and danger. We desire to express our unwavering confidence in him . . . in the solution of the arduous tasks in which he is now engaged.

The College of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, representing one-fourth of all church-affiliated Oklahomans, likewise telegraphed resolutions assuring the President of "its sympathies and prayers in his efforts to

¹Ibid., May 9, 1914, p. 2-A; May 12, 1915, p. 2; May 14, 1915, pp. 1, 4; May 15, 1915, p. 3. The Governor's comments reflecting his pride in his Confederate forebears appear on page 8 of this study.

preserve the peace of our beloved country, and protect the rights and honor of our citizens."¹

The point of view of the Oklahoman changed little in the four-day period between the appearance of its initial editorial and the issuance of the first "Lusitania note" to Germany on May 12. While demanding that the German government must act responsibly and give satisfactory restitution, the Oklahoman, on May 13, maintained:

Practically a unanimous feeling is expressed . . . that we should keep out of war if possible. The European conflagration affords the finest opportunity for the development of our nation we have ever witnessed and everybody is anxious to take advantage of it. . . . Some way will be found by the president for impressing Germany with our rights upon the seas and at the same time saving us from the besom of destruction which inevitably accompanies war.

A second May 13 editorial counseled "leave it to Washington" to find "a sane and dignified course for this nation to pursue," although admitting this was "not an easy matter to figure out." A third editorial, however, indicated that the incident had had a telling effect on public opinion, observing that "this country is not quite so neutral as it was. It is going to be difficult to forget the Lusitania." In addition to its own editorials the Oklahoman carried a cross section of typical comments from the various sections of the country. With the exception of the German-American press and a few of

¹Ibid., May 14, 1915, pp. 1-3. The resolutions of the Knights of Columbus and the Bar Association were previously discussed.

the more radical eastern papers, these comments indicated that Oklahoma reactions varied little from those throughout the nation.¹

While none of the Oklahoma dailies treated the sinking of the Lusitania as extensively or continuously as did the Daily Oklahoman, the state's largest and most influential newspaper, all but a very few accorded the disaster major and ample coverage. The Daily Transcript at Norman was one of the few exceptions. Aside from a single brief report under a Washington, D. C., dateline entitled, "No Break With Germany," there were no reports on submarine sinkings. Once the possibility of American involvement threatened, the Transcript appeared to adopt a policy of extreme caution, printing very little news and no editorials relating to the war. The Daily Ardmoreite consistently reported the incident but never as its lead story or under a banner headline. Its treatment at all times reflected a conservative and neutral tone including its first and only major editorial that appeared four days after the sinking. Entitled, "Stern Duty Lies Ahead," the significant commentary was as much an indictment of

¹Ibid., May 13, 1915, p. 6; May 15, 1915, p. 6; May 16, 1915, p. 6. Numerous papers were sampled in various sections. Far West: Sacramento Bee, Los Angeles Times; Southwest: Houston Chronicle, St. Louis Republic; Midwest: St. Paul Pioneer Press (included also Wahpeton, North Dakota, comment); Deep South: Louisville (Kentucky) Post, Richmond News-Leader; Central States: Chicago Tribune, Cincinnati Commercial-Tribune; East Coast: New York Tribune, Portland Press; German-American Press: Cincinnati Volksblatt, Louisville Anzeiger.

irresponsible Americans who traveled on belligerent ships, English authorities who permitted such unwise procedure, and unneutral newspapers that disregarded the President's plea for restraint as it was of Germany's actions:

When the Lusitania went down to its death the newspapers of America broke away from the advice of Woodrow Wilson and have become bitter in their comments upon Germany. The press should have held its head better. The sinking of the ship does not seem to be more murderous than the dropping of bombs from airships upon women and children, and France, England, and Germany have done this since the war began. The press, if it continues to use bitter language, will cause many people of this country to draw lines, friendships that have lasted for years will be broken and after all, the people are the government and if the people become excited, we will become a belligerent nation and will sacrifice many thousands of lives. . . . It is just as important to ourselves [in Ardmore] that we keep cool as it is for the Metropolitan papers to do so. Every man ought to guard his conversation. It is a duty he owes himself and owes his country. The tendency naturally in this country is to think ill of Germany because it was Germany that sank the Lusitania.

But we must not permit a bitterness to arise in our hearts. It reflects against ourselves, . . . our community, . . . our nation. About the best way for Americans to cool the passions is to look at the catastrophe from the German viewpoint. It is seldom that when men fight, only one is to be blamed. . . . Human weakness must be remembered. . . . [Despite] our sorrow . . . it is our plain duty to take both sides into consideration. . . . Loss of American lives . . . is regrettable, as are all tragic deaths, but the blame . . . rests upon their own heads and upon England for permitting them to take passage. . . . Let Americans take heed and exercise their reason instead of committing suicide. (Italics mine.)¹

Few Oklahoma dailies took as strongly conservative a stand as the Ardmoreite but the Sooner press was unquestionably

¹The Daily Transcript (Norman), May 6, 1915, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, May 7, 1915, p. 1; May 9, 1915, p. 1; May 10, 1915, p. 1; May 11, 1915, pp. 1, 4.

opposed to actions that might lead to war. The Muskogee Phoenix, while supplying extensive coverage under the banner headlines, "Liner Lusitania Torpedoed!" and "Lusitania Dead Number 1,198," immediately editorialized: "War Never Inevitable." However, subsequent editorials entitled, "Cultured Barbarians," and "War On The United States," marked a partial change in this ultra-pacifist attitude. Except for the Oklahoman, the Tulsa World, the leading Republican paper, provided the most extensive coverage among the major dailies. For the entire week commencing May 8 banner headlines and almost exclusive front page coverage proclaimed the major Lusitania developments. The May 8 issue marked the initial major war news spread in the World and its first banner headline concerning the conflict. The attitude of the World was reflected in the May 9 front page banner entitled, "Be Calm, Says Wilson," and the first of its few editorials which appeared on May 13 under the title, "Don't Take Sides in the War." The same issue carried Colonel Roy Hoffman's declaration to the G.A.R. assembly that the nation was "close to war." By May 19 both the front and editorial pages of the World had returned substantially to their normal format.¹

¹Muskogee Phoenix, May 8, 1915, pp. 1, 4, 10; May 9, 1915, p. 1; May 11, 1915, pp. 1, 4; May 12, 1915, p. 4; Tulsa World, May 8, 1915, p. 1; May 9, 1915, p. 1; May 11, 1915, p. 1; May 12, 1915, p. 1; May 13, 1915, pp. 1, 4; May 19, 1915, pp. 1, 4.

The Tulsa Democrat carried approximately half the Lusitania coverage provided by its intra-city rival the World, including three consecutive banner headlines. While equally sparse in editorial comment, its May 10 banner, "May Break Off Relations With Germany," printed in red, and the accompanying editorial, "Germany Against The World," reflected its more outspoken and aggressive reaction. Coverage similar in amount and format but decidedly more extreme in point of view appeared in the Muskogee Times-Democrat. Two themes characterized its reactions, reliance on the President and outrage that might call for war. Even the remote possibility of American involvement in the war was abhorrent to the Oklahoma press and the public at this stage, and the Times-Democrat, while by no means clamoring for a fight, stood almost alone in forthright expression of such a contingency. On May 11, under the heading, "A World Crisis," the paper published a composite of nationwide editorial excerpts, commenting that "in a general way they doubtless express the thought of their sections of the country." Such titles as "Stand By the President," "The President's Poise," "Crime Against Civilization," "Assassins of the Sea," "Have We No Rights," and "Is It An Act of War?" appeared.¹ Whether intended or not, all reflected the Times-Democrat point of view.

¹Tulsa Democrat, May 7, 1915, p. 1; May 8, 1915, p. 1; May 10, 1915, pp. 1, 4; Muskogee Times-Democrat, May 7, 1915, p. 1; May 8, 1915, p. 1; May 10, 1915, p. 1; May 11, 1915, pp. 1, 4.

On May 14 the paper printed a strongly-worded statement issued by Eugene V. Debs, the eminent Socialist leader, that made it difficult for his supporters in Oklahoma and elsewhere to shrug off the incident. Although he called for peace, Debs declared:

Prussian militarism has gone stark mad. . . . The kaiser and his military aristocracy hate the United States scarcely less than they hate Great Britain. What a pity they cannot overrun this country and set off their asphyxiating bombs, poison the wells, rape the women, mutilate the infirm and murder the children as they did in Belgium and France. . . . It is the deadliest menace that confronts the modern world. . . . And yet I would not have the United States declare war on the kaiser. . . . Moral self restraint at this crucial hour requires greater courage and is more potent for righteousness and peace than a declaration of war.

No doubt Debs' statement reflected his resentment of the murder and persecution suffered by Wilhelm Liebknecht and other German Socialist leaders. The possibility of war involvement inferred in the composite commentaries stood out clearly in the Times-Democrat's own editorial appearing on May 12:

Horror, indignation, dismay are the emotions which stir the great American public as the details of the Lusitania catastrophe sink in, soul-sickening. We can't help it. We are not hardened yet on this side. . . . Not yet can we read indifferently of women struggling in ocean's vast embrace merely for a little political advantage. Nor can we yet look callously on heaps of babies' bodies in the war god's morgue. Europe has taken on this callous. Europe . . . perfectly crazy--has no sensibilities left. In this crisis this country has a president fit . . . to make the decision. He is the one to speak for America. If, in his final opinion, human patience has been exhausted, the people will accept

that decision and give their all. But if peace can be maintained with honor, President Wilson will do it. . . . The time may come when honor may demand something fraught with such circumstances that nothing like it has occurred in the history of this nation. At present the duty of all is clear--to await with patience, self-restraint and dignity . . . [Wilson's] decision . . . and to approve his course of action with loyal support. (*Italics mine.*)¹

The Lawton News, probably the most outstanding of the dailies in western Oklahoma, published observations typical of majority reaction in that section. In two May 12 editorials entitled, "The President," and "Stand Firm," the News resolutely declared:

The country expects the government to stand firm and will stand firm with the government, for the United States, first, last and all the time. Some of the papers are exceeding the neutrality limit just a little. They are willing to be impartial as between the warring powers, but when it comes to blowing up and drowning American women and children without warning that is a different thing. . . . It looks as if the firmer the President stands the closer the people will stand behind him. . . . It is not necessary for the United States to declare war in order to protect American neutrality rights and preserve American lives on the high seas. The United States can hold the offending governments to a "strict accountability" . . . without going to war. (*Italics mine.*)²

Among the weekly publications, reaction to the Lusitania sinking varied even more widely than in the case of the daily press. The dissimilarities, moreover, were of an entirely different nature. Almost without exception the

¹Muskogee Times-Democrat, May 12, 1915, pp. 1, 4; May 14, 1915, p. 4.

²Lawton News, May 12, 1915, p. 2.

dailies were aware of the incident, sensed its import, reported its developments, and in varying degrees expressed editorial opinions. The weekly press, on the other hand, divided into four distinct categories. There were a very few that followed, reported, and expressed editorial comment on the Lusitania situation--and other pre-1917 war developments--consistently and intelligently. The great bulk of the weeklies, however, divided almost equally among the three remaining groups. There were those that reported the initial development and then either dropped the incident or provided occasional and brief coverage, all reports and comments being locally written or edited. A third group followed the same procedure but utilized entirely or to a major degree "boilerplate" materials that in no way reflected their own opinions. Those in the final category ignored international--and frequently most national--developments completely, concentrating almost exclusively on the local scene with some attention to state issues.

Three weeklies, the Enid Events, The Indian Journal at Eufaula, and the Poteau News provided particularly commendable coverage. The Events, situated in a city of 13,799 inhabitants, fourth largest of all Oklahoma cities, and competing with the Enid News, a daily publication, hardly could be termed a typical rural paper and represented the most enlightened and alert of the weekly press. Of Republican persuasion, its editor, Everett Purcell, was also the Enid

postmaster. The lengthiest and most lucid editorial on the Lusitania disaster among the weeklies appeared in this paper on May 12. In the opinion of Editor Purcell the situation called for

. . . all the self-restraint and self-possession that our people can command. . . . Nobody believed that the Germans could or would carry out their threat. People thought better of them than they thought of themselves. And why they should have carried out the threat, abetted by the complaisant indifference of the British, is still a mystery. . . . Wars are not won by drowning neutrals or non-combatants. We venture to say that no single act of this conflict has so outraged American opinion or so riddled German prestige in this country. . . . The whole German submarine policy . . . is a revival of piracy-- piracy organized, systematized and nationalized. It is piracy against neutrals as well as against enemies. . . . Modern history affords no other such example of a great nation running amuck and calling it military necessity. During the last century the United States has had more years of war than Germany. The life of this nation has hung in the balance too. But we never found it necessary . . . to ignore or flout all the established rules of civilized warfare, . . . to outrage the moral sentiment of mankind or to defy the public opinion of civilization. In short, Germany has established a new code of procedure in war. The circumstances will be far-flung. (*Italics mine.*)¹

The Eufaula and Poteau papers, most outstanding among the small town weeklies in pre-1917 war-coverage, were both east-side and Democratic publications and maintained consistently extensive and aggressive editorial comment. Much of the international news in R. J. Mullins' Indian Journal was "boilerplate" but the editorials were local. One week after the torpedoing, the Journal, in its first major war editorial, observed:

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population, III, p. 481; Enid Events, May 13, 1915, pp. 1, 2, 10.

After all has been said about what we would do and what should be done in regard to the Lusitania disaster, the most radical of us are willing to trust all to the opinion of the mighty man of the White House. . . . Only cool headedness of our men higher up has kept us out of the struggle so far and the prayer is going up all over the Nation that they may still guide our ship of state safely through the stormy waters and bring America out as the remaining example of an advanced civilization and yet maintain the respect and good will of them all.¹

The Poteau News, edited by R. L. Kidd an ardent Democrat who strongly supported President Wilson and Governor Williams, had reported and commented on the war since its beginning. Yet, despite its interest in the war its view remained basically provincial. On May 13 its first comment on submarine depredations appeared--although the earlier Tennessee incident had been fully reported--in the form of a front page banner headline, an unusual procedure for a weekly publication. The banner advised its readers to "Let Wilson And Bryan Worry Over the European Trouble--Let's Boost Poteau." The first of two editorials published in the same issue expressed amazement at German rejoicing over the sinking when "the entire world was shocked at the deed." The second castigated Republican criticism of Secretary of State Bryan for the American casualties on the Lusitania. Editor Kidd caustically observed: "They don't know why he was the cause. . . . It's not criminal ignorance in those fellows--it's

¹The Indian Journal (Eufaula), May 14, 1915, pp. 3, 4.

just the old fashioned republican there is in them--the devil and hot tan bark is the only cure for them."¹

Typical of the weeklies providing partial coverage that was locally written or edited were the Stillwater Gazette, the Durant Weekly News, the Antlers American, and the Osage Journal of Pawhuska. All were east-side publications and all except the Gazette supported the Democratic party. Included among the occasional brief and not overly profound editorials in this category was this May 14 Gazette comment: "Germany, through press and public utterance, seems to think, as the children used to say, that she has 'done something smart,' when the rest of the world looks on with unspeakable horror."² The Wilburton News, its successor the Latimer County News-Democrat, the Edmond Sun, and the Wewoka Democrat typified the portion of the weekly press providing occasional war news and comment that was basically "boilerplate." The Democrat's editor, Luther Harrison, had not become as yet an

¹Poteau News, Nov. 26, 1914, p. 1; May 13, 1915, pp. 1-2.

²Stillwater Gazette, May 14, 1915, p. 2; June 4, 1915, p. 1; Durant Weekly News, July 3, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 7, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 21, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 28, 1914, pp. 1, 4; May 14, 1915, pp. 1, 4; May 28, 1915, p. 1; June 4, 1915, p. 1; Antlers American, Aug. 6, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 27, 1914, p. 2; May 13, 1915, p. 1; Osage Journal (Pawhuska), July 30, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 6, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 13, 1914, p. 1; Aug. 27, 1914, p. 4; Jan. 28, 1915, p. 7; May 13, 1915, p. 4; May 20, 1915, pp. 1-2; June 3, 1915, pp. 1-2; June 3, 1915, p. 4.

ardent advocate of American intervention although he did initiate a locally-written page six column entitled, "War Brevities," on January 7, 1915, as well as a single brief editorial relating to the submarine controversy. Strongly isolationist in tone, the editorial warned:

Let Germany alone. She has troubles enough nowadays, and we need no trouble with any nation. Let Americans travel the war zone at their own peril. True enough we have the right to go where we please. We also have the right to examine buzz saws, look into gun muzzles, rock boats, swim over Niagara Falls, and test gasoline with lighted matches, but if we have any sense at all we won't do it. Let Uncle Sam warn his inquisitive sons to stay out of submarine range. Then if they will butt in, it is their own funeral. (Italics mine.)¹

As in the previous category, these were Democratic east-side papers.

The majority of the weekly publications that ignored the submarine situation and other pre-1917 war developments were those from the smaller rural communities, more often located in the western portion of the state. A number of factors accounted for this, the more prominent being a single-occupation economy--agriculture, a greater degree of isolation, greater homogeneity of population, and Socialist inclinations. Typical of this category were the Elk City News-Democrat, the

¹Wilburton News, Oct. 30, 1914, p. 1; Latimer County News-Democrat, May 14, 1915, pp. 1-2; May 21, 1915, p. 4; Edmond Sun, Sept. 10, 1914, p. 8; May 13, 1915, p. 1; Wewoka Democrat, Aug. 20, 1914, pp. 1, 4; Sept. 10, 1914, p. 1; Sept. 17, 1914, p. 1; Nov. 5, 1914, p. 4; Jan. 7, 1915, p. 6; Jan. 28, 1915, p. 6; May 13, 1915, p. 6; June 3, 1915, p. 4; July 15, 1915, p. 4.

Cimmarron News in Boise City, the Frederick Semi-Weekly Star, and the Medford Patriot Star. None of these papers mentioned the submarine problem except for the News-Democrat which carried a June 3 item on the Lusitania negotiations. The first three ignored the war completely through 1915 while the latter carried four brief news items and no editorials prior to October. Except for the Patriot-Star these publications supported the Democratic party and were located on the western periphery.¹

Because of the humanitarian factor the Socialist press made almost no direct mention of submarine warfare but it united behind Eugene Debs in opposing war on all fronts, including retaliation over submarine casualties. World-Wide War in its first issue on September 16, 1915, observed that "if war is Hell, His Satanic Majesty is doing an immense business in 1915." Two weeks later it featured the Debs' article, "When I Shall Fight." Thus World-Wide War joined the Sword of Truth which earlier had fulminated even more strongly against war fervently exclaiming, "Oh, Almighty God forbid!" and calling for "a war against war."²

¹Elk City News-Democrat, June 3, 1915, p. 1; July 1, 1915, p. 1; Aug. 19, 1915, p. 4; Medford Patriot Star, Dec. 30, 1915, p. 1.

²World-Wide War (Pawhuska), Sept. 16, 1915, p. 1; Sept. 30, 1915, p. 4; Nov. 18, 1915, pp. 1, 2; Sword of Truth, Aug. 19, 1914, p. 2; Sept. 9, 1914, p. 2; Oct. 7, 1914, p. 1; Oct. 26, 1914, p. 1; Oct. 28, 1914, p. 1. For Debs' anti-war arguments see Muskogee Times-Democrat, May 14, 1915, p. 4; Latimer County News-Democrat, March 10, 1916, p. 1.

The first "Lusitania Note" to Germany, dated May 13, 1915, demanding disavowal of the sinking, reparations, and recognition of the "indisputable" right of Americans to maritime travel, received the hearty endorsement of most Sooner officials as well as the press and the general public. Governor Williams declared that "foreign nations must respect American lives." Senator Owen, whose earlier support of the President had been noted, approved both the tone and logic of the note the following day. "The president very wisely appeals to the German government to recognize the principles of justice and humanity," asserted Owen, "I have no doubt that the German government will have the wisdom and the humanity to accept the sound and temperate doctrine." Senator Gore, who had remained silent thus far on the submarine issue despite his inclination to ready response, issued a more guarded and cryptic statement at the solicitation of the editor of the New York Times. Gore's telegraphed response stated: "The United States should look with equal disfavor upon all those who disregard the rights and interests of neutral nations." The following day he amended his statement to read:

The United States should view with impartial disfavor the offenses of all offenders against the law of nations and the rights of neutrals. . . . In my haste the language employed [in the previous telegraph] . . . did not quite express my meaning. . . . I did not mean to imply that all offenses of all offenders should be regarded with equal disfavor without reference to the gravity or circumstances of the particular offense. I do not request publication of this note but merely write

it in order to make a record of my views in case the interview should by chance be drawn into question in the Senate.¹

Press opinion closely followed the pattern of reaction established in prior Lusitania developments. The Oklahoman's initial reaction to the note approved its tone and optimistically predicted a ready settlement:

There is no bluff or bluster in the American note . . . but there is an earnestness and firmness expressed in dignified words, and predicated upon the existence of friendly relations. . . . We assume Germany to be a friendly nation and anxious to promote rather than retard international comity. We indulge the hope that there shall be no break in friendly relations. But clearly Germany cannot hope to retain our friendship if she persists in jeopardizing American life and interests at sea. . . . It is well worth noting that we have a man at the helm who is keenly alive to American honor and interests and will brook no logic-chopping in the irritating matters of which we complain.

The Muskogee papers expressed similar sentiments. The Phoenix declared that the note "sounds the right key" and should be "read and reread," while the Times-Democrat termed the document

. . . undoubtedly . . . one of the best state papers ever turned out in America. The . . . language . . . can in no wise be called offensive. . . . The message is conciliatory in tone. . . . It is now up to Germany to decide whether she will terminate her present policy, and make all amends possible . . . or put herself in an attitude which will force America to regard her as an enemy. . . . Governor . . . Williams of this state was one of the first governors to give his approval to the message.

¹Daily Oklahoman, May 14, 1915, p. 4; May 15, 1915, p. 2; Gore to Editor, the New York Times, May 17, 1915, Gore Papers, Subject File, 1890-1948; Folder, War Policy, 1915-17.

The Lusitania note prompted the first "letter to the editor" reaction to a war-related issue. Apparently the press reflected majority opinion. It is possible that the public was apathetic or disinterested or that the press had been ignoring previous letters but these are less likely alternatives. On May 15 the Oklahoman printed the commendatory May 13 letter of Frank Dale, a prominent Guthrie attorney, former Chief Justice of the Oklahoma Territorial Supreme Court, and a leader in the statehood movement:

I congratulate you on your conservative position. It is not a legitimate function of our government to give protection to its citizens who deliberately take passage upon the vessel of a warring nation bound for the war zone, neither have the merchant vessels loaded with contraband for the port of a warring nation the right to demand that this government follow such vessels with its protection, as that would be the equivalent to giving direct aid to one of the belligerent. From press reports of the attitude of the president it would seem as if the level headed should get busy, as we do not want to be put in a position which may be difficult to maintain without involving the country in serious difficulties.¹

The German reply was slow in coming and the Sooner press, like its national counterpart, expressed a growing impatience and, intimating a negative response, declared:

The sinking of the Lusitania develops the fact that there is a war spirit in this country. If the newspapers

¹Daily Oklahoman, May 15, 1915, p. 6; Muskogee Phoenix, May 15, 1915, p. 4; Muskogee Times-Democrat, May 15, 1915, p. 4. Judge Frank Dale's prominent role in Oklahoma affairs is developed in Muriel H. Wright, "The Wedding of Oklahoma and Miss Indian Territory," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXV (Autumn, 1957), p. 258.

are to be accepted as reflecting the sentiment of the people, it would require but a small blaze to soon cover the country in a flame of war. . . . The note of the president . . . did not reflect the same man. . . . The reply to that note is slow in coming. . . . But when that note comes America must not be surprised if Germany refuses to carry out the requests unless England agrees to allow food being shipped in for the use of German civilians. . . . While a nation's women starve the world need not be surprised at the hazardous things undertaken by its men. . . . Our people will be disappointed if they expect too much docility at the hands of the German people. (Italics mine.)

The Oklahoman indicated a similar uneasiness, running a two-line banner headline on May 17 announcing, "American Note Will Not Alter Germany's Plans: Universal War Frank Prediction of South American Press." Subsequent editorials complained of "conflicting statements," "irreconcilable pretense," and "irresponsible antics," yet admitted Germany's "perplexing problem" and saw "good reasons" for a "satisfactory" reply. Additional comments indicated a continued willingness to view both sides of the question.

This nation holds no brief for the allies in their war upon Germany, and is not concerned in the least, save upon humanitarian grounds.

We are not an enemy of the German people as yet and pray God that we may never be. It pays to wait for the facts, even if they sometimes come by slow freight . . . and possibly we do not know the full facts . . . as yet, since all the news must necessarily come over British cables and pass the British censor.

We prefer to believe that the commander of the submarine . . . acted outside of his orders and . . . the German government was in no wise responsible.¹

¹Daily Ardmoreite, May 30, 1915, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, May 16, 1915, pp. 1-A, 4-A, 4-C; May 17, 1915, pp. 1, 2, 4; May 18, 1915, pp. 1, 3, 6; May 19, 1915, pp. 1, 2, 4, 5; May 20, 1915, pp. 1, 3, 4; May 21, 1915, p. 1.

The German reply on May 28 regretting loss of American lives but asserting that the Lusitania's destruction was an act of "just self-defense" since the liner was not just "an ordinary unarmed merchant vessel," justified the forebodings of the Sooner press. Three consecutive double-line banner headlines monopolized the front page of the Oklahoman beginning May 30, the first war development to receive such attention. The first, in red ink, announced, "German Reply Arouses Pessimism! Vital Diplomatic Issues Are Untouched." The second gravely stated, "Profoundly Disappointing Is Germany's Answer: German-American Relations At Breaking Point," while the third of the series, again in red, declared, "America will Decline To Quibble over Irrelevant Facts: Whether Germany Recognizes Law Of Nations Considered Big Issue." The Oklahoman withheld editorial comment until June 1 although it did print the comments of the New York papers which, while highly condemning Germany's note, stressed that "nobody need take it for granted that this will mean war." Editorials on June 1 and 3 clarified the Oklahoman's position which was supported by the great bulk of the Sooner press:

The German note . . . is extremely disappointing. It embodies no assurance of neutral immunity from submarine attack at sea, disavows none of the responsibility for the sinking of the Lusitania and leaves us as much in the dark . . . as we were before. . . . The note puts it up to President Wilson to reiterate the principles of law and humanity which were so forcefully stated in the previous note and insist upon the assurances asked therein.

The president is entitled to better treatment than this. . . . There is little left for him to do . . . but . . . respectfully insist on a candid answer. The attempt to shift the discussion to questions on which there is no issue is unworthy of a nation which claims to be fighting for its "place in the sun."¹

The Muskogee Times-Democrat adopted a stronger tone:

The note . . . will be received with general regret. The course of the American government has been so frank and so patient that the people of America had a right to expect Germany's reply to be given in the same spirit. The reply . . . is evasive and indefinite . . . and wholly unsatisfactory. . . . America will earnestly pray for peace but she will not shirk war if necessity arises.

The weekly press made no significant comment on the diplomatic exchange. The Elk City News-Democrat printed its first war-related headline, "German Note Disappointing." Two weeklies published their initial editorial comments on the war on June 3 but neither took a definite stand. The Wewoka Democrat, reviewing submarine sinkings to date, observed with no trace of anger that the losses were slight when compared to those in the War of 1812 and the Civil War. The Osage Journal's editorial, "Germany Against the World," made no mention of the implications and impact of that development on the United States. Champ Clark, speaker of the national House of Representatives, added his influence to Oklahoma's "don't rock the boat" efforts. Speaking at a luncheon given in his honor at the Skirvin Hotel in Oklahoma City by the Young Men's Democratic Club, Speaker Clark declared:

¹Daily Oklahoman, May 30, 1915, pp. 1-2; May 31, 1915, pp. 1-2; June 1, 1915, pp. 1-2, 6.

It is an ugly and aggravating situation . . . [requiring the] use of diplomacy and good sense. . . . I must sincerely hope that our trouble . . . will be amicably settled and I believe it will be. I am willing to trust him [Wilson] to do the proper and patriotic thing. . . . [But] if there is any country laboring under the hallucination that this country won't fight they had better get rid of that idea right now. . . . If war were declared I could raise a whole brigade, right here in Oklahoma County before the sun goes down tomorrow.¹

President Wilson's much more strongly-worded second Lusitania note issued on June 9 brought continuing support from Oklahoma officials and the press although the resulting resignation of Secretary of State Bryan in protest to the reply received far greater attention. On the same day Governor Robert L. Williams reiterated his strong support of the President. In a terse reply to a telegraphed query from the New York press the governor asserted that "all loyal democrats and patriotic American citizens should firmly support the president." His telegram to the President declared:

You have our confidence, and loyal and firm support in meeting the foreign problems and maintaining the honor of the nation and protecting the rights of American citizens. Whilst we are for peace, we are also for the maintenance of the honor of our country.

From his home in Lawton Senator Gore issued his first statement on the Lusitania crisis, indeed, his initial public reaction to the President's war policy. Surprisingly enough, Gore's observations contained no intimation of his subsequent

¹Muskogee Times-Democrat, May 31, 1915, p. 4; Elk City News-Democrat, June 3, 1915, p. 1; Wewoka Democrat, June 3, 1915, p. 4; Osage Journal, June 3, 1915, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, June 2, 1915, p. 1.

sturdy opposition, embodying instead unqualified approbation:

Our true policy should be to pray for peace, but prepare for war. Personally I am for peace, but this does not mean peace at any cost. If our country's rights are being unmercifully trampled upon, I do not believe in laying down and taking all insults cast at us. Germany's answer to President Wilson's note was no answer at all, as it failed to meet the issues. We must obtain the security of every citizen. I think President Wilson's policy toward Germany is the right one to adopt. (*Italics mine.*)

This unanimity of opinion, of course, soon disappeared.¹

The Daily Oklahoman withheld editorial comment until June 12, when it declared the President's reply to be

. . . perhaps the best conceived and . . . executed of all his official utterances. . . . At any and all times thorough . . . [and] urbanely courteous . . . he speaks in language which is incapable of misapprehension on the part of Berlin. . . . There has now entered into them a degree of firmness which the emperor and his statesmen will do well to respect. . . . It is inconceivable that the German nation already sorely besieged on almost every hand, and with its very existence seemingly at stake, will be so foolhardy as to persist in a course which has drawn folly upon its head, the protest of the people of the earth.

Subsequent editorials reiterated this line of thought. The Republican Tulsa World still termed the war an "internecine" conflict. Firmness and peace, both earnestly sought after, proved increasingly and frustratingly incompatible, although

¹Daily Oklahoman, June 10, 1915, p. 1; June 12, 1915, p. 2. See Chapter VI, "Cross Currents For War and Peace: The Preparedness-Pacifist Controversy In Oklahoma, 1914-1915," for a discussion of Oklahoma reaction to the resignation of Secretary Bryan. The press, anticipating Wilson's Lusitania reply, made little comment from June 4 through June 9. See Daily Oklahoman, June 4, 1915, p. 1; June 5, 1915, pp. 1-2; June 6, 1915, p. 1; June 7, 1915, p. 1; June 8, 1915, p. 1.

the Oklahoman insisted that "firmness, even to the extent of an ultimatum, doesn't necessarily predicate war. It did not when Mr. Cleveland told England a few unmistakable things about Venezuela." The Muskogee Phoenix, among others, concurred in this point of view, insisting that in the interests of "our national honor" Germany must be made to state a definite policy.¹

While Oklahomans and other Americans impatiently awaited the tardy German reply to Wilson's second note, two additional American and four British vessels were torpedoed. The American ships suffered no casualties but twenty-eight Americans died as three of the British vessels met destruction. Surprisingly these depredations raised almost no comment from the Oklahoma press. The death of twenty-three American muleteers, crewmen of the British freight liner Armenian carrying mules from Newport News, Virginia, to England, created some front page excitement for two days but no editorial comment resulted. The fact that the Americans were legitimate crew members and that the Armenian tried to escape when ordered to stop ameliorated protest although "the news created a sensation in official quarters as it was the first case of loss of American lives since the sinking of the Lusitania."

¹Daily Oklahoman, June 10, 1915, p. 1; June 12, 1915, p. 6; June 15, 1915, p. 6; Tulsa World, June 11, 1915, p. 4; Muskogee Phoenix, July 20, 1915, p. 4.

The attack on the New York-bound Cunard liner, Orduna, although unsuccessful, precipitated strong and impatient comment:

Something is radically wrong with the method pursued by Germany in her submarine policy. Either she is guilty of a wanton disregard or else she is possessed of a few commanders of deep sea boats who need some definite instructions. Just at a time when conservative citizens of the United States--and, it is to be hoped, of Germany also--were hoping that diplomacy would prevail and the Lusitania tragedy would be so handled as to insure peace between the two countries. . . . The Orduna was attacked without the slightest warning. . . . On board were twenty-one Americans who had a perfect right to be there. . . . Is Germany deliberately endeavoring to strain relations to the breaking point? If so the most conservative are beginning to believe that she will not have much further to go. The American people realize that much is being asked of their patience.¹

The official text of Germany's long awaited reply to Wilson's second note reached the Oklahoma public on July 10. Much of the Sooner press failed to report the development or gave it passing mention. Only the Oklahoman supplied detailed coverage. While its July 11 issue reported that "official Washington takes a grave view of the situation" and excerpts from sixty-nine major American papers expressed views ranging

¹The American ships and date of attack: Nebraskan, May 25; Leelanaw, July 25. British ships, with dates of attack and American casualties: Armenian, June 28, 23; Anglo-Californian, July 4, 2; Orduna, July 17, 0; Iberian, July 21, 3. See Cong. Record, 65 Cong., 1 Sess., April 5, 1917, p. 395; Daily Ardmoreite, May 28, 1915, p. 1; Tulsa World, May 30, 1915, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, July 1, 1915, p. 1; July 2, 1915, p. 2; July 18, 1915, p. 1; July 20, 1915, p. 6; Durant Weekly News, July 2, 1915, p. 1.

from "unsatisfactory" to "insolent" and "defiant," the Oklahoman's initial editorial on July 12 was surprisingly mild and optimistic:

The Oklahoman can readily understand how it [German note] may prove unsatisfactory to Mr. Wilson and his cabinet. . . . And yet the Oklahoman, after a thoughtful study of the German document, is unable to find ground for either pessimism or invective on our part. Germany evidently is disposed to play the game fairly, as she sees it--and it must be allowed that there are two sides to every argument; that Germany, as a nation, is not without brains and conscience. She finds herself, whether she be right or wrong according to the American viewpoint, literally backed up against the wall, fighting with the energy of desperation for her national existence. . . . Dispassionate introspection admits a declaration like that to contain no small element of fairness. . . . The German reply is inconclusive, but we are unable to see in it that element of insolence and defiance which others claim to discover; and we are of the opinion that there are enough sensible, cautious statesmen in Washington and Berlin to satisfactorily adjust existing differences without the alternative of hostilities.

Despite this view, the headline on the following day reported "German-American Relations Least Cordial In Years."¹

The Oklahoman published the entire text of the third and final American "Lusitania Note" three days after its dispatch on July 21 under a two-column red banner declaring, "Germany Notified U. S. Contends for Freedom Of Sea at any Cost And Without Compromise." While both conciliatory and peremptory, it concluded with a warning that further ruthless sinking would lead to a break in diplomatic relations and even war. Again much of the Oklahoma press remained silent.

¹Daily Oklahoman, July 7, 1915, p. 1; July 10, 1915, p. 1; July 11, 1915, pp. 1-2; July 12, 1915, pp. 1-2, 4; July 13, 1915, p. 1.

In a semi-belligerent editorial curiously inconsistent with its previous observation, the Oklahoman two days later applauded the President's firm insistence but at the same time counseled peace:

There will be no necessity for another diplomatic note to Germany . . . in regard to the Lusitania incident and Germany's submarine policy. The one which now has been delivered . . . has removed that necessity. It is as plainspoken and direct as are Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lansing. . . . Germany is drunken with power . . . but Germany is not so deeply steeped in nonchalant defiance as to have lost all sense of realization and of caution. Nor will she longer cling to the hallucination that the United States is willing to assume the role of co-principal in an international correspondence school. The United States says what it means and means what it says. . . . The fact that we are not a warlike nation constitutes no reason why we are not ready and convincingly able to stand upon our inalienably just and logical rights. . . . There is small likelihood of war. It is not essential that we fight. There are other methods. [However, America] has allowed normal inroads into its patience--a patience but human after all, and whose limits have been ultimately reached. "Without compromise and at any cost," says the note. The English is not ambiguous.

A comparison of the point of view of the Oklahoman with a cross section of the nationwide press reprinted on the previous day revealed a similar point of view, although the eastern papers utilized much stronger terminology.¹

In the midst of the American diplomatic development news of the official finding of the English Court of Inquiry investigating the Lusitania sinking reached Oklahoma. Although largely obscured by the American note, the Oklahoman noted the English development. Both the news reports and the

¹Ibid., July 24, 1915, pp. 1-2; July 26, 1915, p. 4.

subsequent editorial reflected the strong local and nationwide disapproval. Implying a "whitewash" in regard to the finding that "'there was no incompetence or neglect,'" the July 18 page one item stated: "The report was a distinct disappointment to the American survivors, who expressed indignation and surprise at the portion which exonerated Captain Turner and the Cunard line from all blame and commended the discipline of the crew." Eight days later, in derisive tones, the Oklahoman editorialized:

The English board of investigation, after several weeks of industrious labor, has discovered that the Lusitania was sunk by a torpedo. Three cheers, long and loud, for the b. of i. The mere fact that everybody else in the world knew the day after the sinking what caused the tragedy, and that Germany long ago admitted the work of the torpedo, does not in the slightest detract from the radiating brilliance of the circumstance that the board was capable of doing what it did.¹

The fact that no major loss of life had occurred since the Lusitania sinking was, of course, no chance development. Sensing the grave consequences that might ensue from further American provocation, the German government on June 6, 1915, had forbidden further destruction of passenger liners. Since the order was secret to avoid public admission of weakness, the press in Oklahoma and elsewhere, although encouraged by the partial cessation in submarine depredations, was unaware of the development. The three-month moratorium ended abruptly on August 19 when a German submarine captain

¹Ibid., July 18, 1915, p. 1; July 26, 1915, p. 4.

disregard the secret order and sank the British White Star liner, Arabic, with two Americans among the casualties.

Reaction among prominent officials was prompt and decisive. Governor Robert L. Williams joined in supporting the August 24 resolution adopted at the annual conference of governors then in session in Boston. Assuring President Wilson of "their confidence and support in this hour of deep international concern," the assembled executives pledged ". . . their readiness to follow your leadership in all matters which you may deem best to promote the honor and maintain the peace and welfare of the nation and the whole people." The sinking, apparently without warning, aroused Oklahomans more than any incident since the Lusitania. However, the outcry was far from being either universal or sustained. Only the Oklahoman maintained full coverage, although all the major dailies reported the sinking. Many of the small dailies and most of the weeklies made little or nothing of the incident. Reporting was perfunctory, and there were few banner headlines. The Tulsa World surpassed all other Sooner papers in initial coverage, including two consecutive full-page red banner headlines. The Oklahoman, surprisingly, published only a three-column red headline. The Ardmoreite reported the incident as its lead or second story for three and four days, respectively. The Muskogee Phoenix, less impressed, printed an initial lead story under the almost

non-committal sub-heading, "Another Unfriendly Act."¹

Editorial comment, even more sparse, revealed a reluctance to further discuss the difficult, never-ending and frustrating problem of the submarine. The usually vocal Oklahoman had little to say. Seven days after the sinking it castigated Theodore Roosevelt for his "efforts to inflame popular feeling with regard to the sinking of the Arabic" and then lapsed into silence. The World provided the major editorial, expressing greater concern over possible English attempts to arouse a war spirit in America than the German misdeed. Said the World:

There is a strange paucity of information from British sources that has led some to believe there is an object in view in suppressing a knowledge of the exact details. It would be easy, in the present aggravated state of the American mind, to work up a bitter feeling of resentment against Germany, and some think the English would like to color the news to bring this about. . . . Whenever the administration is satisfied that it is in possession of the actual facts, it will be prepared to act without resort to unnecessary argument or superfluous explanation. It is unbelievable that Germany desires to array the United States among its enemies. (Italics mine.)²

American outcry over the Arabic so alarmed Count von

¹Tulsa World, Aug. 20, 1915, pp. 1, 4; Aug. 21, 1915, p. 1; Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 20, 1915, pp. 1-3; Aug. 21, 1915, pp. 1, 2; Aug. 22, 1915, pp. 1-3; Aug. 23, 1915, p. 1; Aug. 24, 1915, pp. 1-2; Aug. 25, 1915, pp. 1, 3, 6; Aug. 26, 1915, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, Aug. 19, 1915, p. 1; Aug. 20, 1915, p. 1; Aug. 21, 1915, p. 1; Aug. 22, 1915, p. 1; Aug. 23, 1915, p. 1; Aug. 24, 1915, p. 1; Aug. 25, 1915, p. 1; Muskogee Phoenix, Aug. 20, 1915, p. 1.

²Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 25, 1915, p. 6; Tulsa World, Aug. 25, 1915, p. 4.

Bernstorff, German ambassador to the United States, that he initiated immediate efforts to resolve the situation. Within nine days Sooner headlines announced that "Germany Now Expected To Cease Submarine Warfare," and on September 2 published the ambassador's communication to Secretary of State Robert Lansing promising that "liners will not be sunk by our submarines without warning and without safety of the lives of non-combatants provided the liners do not try to escape or offer resistance." While the assurance was unauthorized and brought von Bernstorff a sharp reprimand from Berlin, it did calm American public opinion. Two days later the Oklahoman published its first editorial directly related to the Arabic. Entitled, "Mr. Wilson's Notable Victory," the Oklahoman jubilantly declared:

We have secured every assurance we wanted so far as the sinking Arabic is concerned, and we are safely on our way toward a thorough and an amicable understanding with Germany . . . [concerning] the regrettable Lusitania incident. . . . It is a distinct victory scored by President Wilson--a victory gained without war's wild alarums. Had we entered an armed conflict we might have gained the points contended for and again we might not; but one way or the other, it would have inevitably meant the sacrifice of thousands of American lives . . . and an amount of money that might have gone into the billions. . . . With Germany pursuing a course which augured ill for a peaceful solution of the complex difficulties, and with jingoes yelling belligerent advice into his weary ears, Mr. Wilson sat steadily in the boat. . . . He won and the United States won with him. Honorably and gracefully the kaiser and his advisors have surrendered ground which was diplomatically untenable from the beginning. The traditional friendship which has existed between Washington and Berlin is stronger today than it has been, perhaps, since the European war raised its fearful head.

A subsequent editorial, including the phrase "now that we have settled the Arabic case . . . and secured the things we asked for," indicated the finality with which the Oklahoman viewed Bernstorff's unauthorized assurance.¹

On September 4 the British liner Hesperian was torpedoed with one American among the numerous casualties. At the same time Berlin informed the United States government that the Arabic's destruction had been "an act of self-defense" and offered to refer the problem to the Hague tribunal "for adjustment." Notwithstanding German protestations of "deep regret," the two developments rudely shattered the illusions of the Oklahoma public and the press that the submarine problem had been resolved. The sinking of the Hesperian, reported to the Oklahoma public on September 7, elicited a prompt reaction entitled, "Let's Wait A Day Or Two." The editorial, with considerable logic and still striving to calm troubled waters, further observed:

It will serve no good purpose to declaim frantically. . . . The tension between Washington and Berlin has been so great that on this side of the water we have been prone to express conviction and anger before being fully advised--we of the laity, not official Washington. Let's wait a day or two. Let's see what really happened and just how it took place. . . . We must remember that war is war and not a society function, and . . . there will be many recurrent incidents which are revolting. We asked Germany not to torpedo any vessel carrying Americans without warning. Germany assented to the request

¹Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 27, 1915, p. 1; Aug. 28, 1915, p. 1; Aug. 29, 1915, p. 1; Sept. 1, 1915, p. 1; Sept. 2, 1915, p. 1; Sept. 3, 1915, pp. 1, 6; Sept. 6, 1915, p. 4.

[unauthorized Bernstorff note], if this was done in the case of Hesperian we may have cause for disgust and nausea at the things which war entails, but nothing more. At any rate, we can afford to wait until we know just where we are. If Germany has broken its solemn pledge there will be plenty of time to take definite action. (*Italics mine.*)

On the following day headlines proclaiming, "Arabic Destroyed in Self-Defense," revealed Berlin's official Arabic reply and Oklahoma reactions took on a new note of gravity, impatience, and disillusionment as to Germany's sincerity. The desire for a peaceful solution still remained but without the previous tone of optimism. Immediate comment termed the reply "disappointing and unsatisfactory," and subsequent editorials evidenced a continuing negative major reaction. On September 12 the Oklahoman declared:

We shall have to ask a chart and diagram from Germany, pointing out definitely what she means. . . . Obviously we must have something more satisfying than vague and meaningless words. . . . This thing of submarine commanders pleading military necessity every time a liner hoves into a sight and turning a torpedo loose at it is a joke. But neither the president nor the American people, as a matter of fact, are joking in the least about it.¹

Unlike most ship losses, Sooner resentment over the loss of the Arabic and German reaction thereto refused to subside quickly. The Oklahoman reflected the prevailing attitude in a September 18 editorial, "Testing Germany's Sincerity." With unusual forthrightness and candor it stated bluntly:

¹Ibid., Sept. 7, 1915, p. 1; Sept. 8, 1915, p. 6; Sept. 9, 1915, p. 1; Sept. 10, 1915, p. 1; Sept. 11, 1915, pp. 1, 6; Sept. 13, 1915, p. 6.

Germany wants us to arbitrate the Arabic case. Arbitrate outlawry? Whoever heard of such a thing. The principle is not arbitrable. Two American citizens lost their lives when the Arabic went down. How could a great nation look the world through the eye if it consented to arbitrate a matter of this nature? Germany must first disavow the act of the submarine commander. . . . But arbitration is not a remedy for a continuing offense. When Germany puts an end to the lawlessness of her submarine will be time enough to ask for an adjustment of the damages. . . . So if Germany is sincere in her professions of friendliness, it is her move. Disavowal first, arbitration of damages caused afterwards. (*Italics mine.*)

The press reflected the general atmosphere of tension and war-consciousness that prevailed during the subsequent seventeen-day period and resultant German concessions. Even the Oklahoman, which heretofore had carefully avoided extreme expression, pessimism, and jingoism, reassessed its policies and beginning on September 23, regularly carried in bold face type in the editorial masthead two significant quotations:

Our Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be right; but our country, right or wrong. ---Stephen Decatur

America asks nothing for herself but what she has a right to ask for humanity itself. ---Woodrow Wilson

On the following day the texts of Germany's "Frye Note" guaranteeing safe passage for ships carrying conditional contraband appeared under a red-inked headline, "America Wins Diplomatic Victory; Germany Agrees to Proposal on Commerce."¹

On October 4 Oklahomans received initial intimations of a major concession in German submarine policy. Headed,

¹Ibid., Sept. 18, 1915, p. 6; Sept. 23, 1915, p. 6; Sept. 24, 1915, p. 1.

"German Note on Arabic Fails to Satisfy America," the second rank story reported that Berlin had disavowed the act but refused to admit liability for it. The next day Germany finally yielded to continuing American pressure and tendered the "Arabic Pledge." The Oklahoman, under a two-column red-inked headline declaring, "Germany Disavows Sinking of Arabic and Guarantees Indemnity for Lives Lost," published the full text of the document. The feeling of relief that pervaded Oklahoma and the entire United States contained more of the elements of a solemn reprieve from disaster than those of joyous or boastful revelry. The Oklahoman, reflecting this feeling of relief, observed in a semi-serious vein:

Men who are only mildly interested in the European war, the Balkan situation and the latest German-American crisis will this afternoon and for several afternoons step on each other's feet and push and shove like wild school boys in grandstands and bleachers. On with the game. Play Ball.

The occasion, of course, was the onset of the world series. Babe Ruth of the Boston Red Sox and Pete Alexander of the Philadelphia Phillies were in contention rather than the Kaiser and President Wilson, and Oklahomans and Americans everywhere welcomed the less deadly rivalry.¹

¹Ibid., Oct. 4, 1915, p. 1; Oct. 6, 1915, p. 1; Oct. 8, 1915, pp. 2, 6; Bailey, A Diplomatic History, pp. 580-81. The "Arabic Pledge" further stated that new orders to submarine commanders, "have been made so stringent that a recurrence of incidents similar to the Arabic case is considered out of the question."

The diplomatic triumph gratified both Democrats and Republicans in Oklahoma, although the latter were less inclined to extend full credit to President Wilson and the Democratic Administration. A Muskogee Phoenix editorial reflected this fact and in addition, declared that "it is now more definitely and semi-officially known" that English blocking of the channels off her coast "by means of nets and other devices . . . has put a large part of the German fleet out of commission." The Phoenix, however, pleaded innocent to charge of political motivation:

We do not underestimate the services of President Wilson or disparage his attitude in the controversy with Germany over the submarine operations which has ended in a complete acceptance of our position. It is a real triumph for him and for this country. But it is in order, with all credit to him, to explain the extraordinary fact of Germany's acceptance of our point of view, after she has so frequently and contemptuously rejected it. The official mind of Germany does not reverse itself in this singular fashion. . . . Nor has she acted in deference to American public opinion, for which she cares a little less than nothing at all. There is something else behind her apparent surrender; and that something is a complete breakdown in her submarine attack. . . . While it was a novelty, the submarine wrought great havoc. Today commerce scarcely regards it. This is why Germany is willing to yield a point.¹

The report of German concessions in the Gulflight, Nebraskan, Lusitania, and Cushing negotiations reached the Sooner press on October 15. On October 31 the findings of a United States Naval Board of Inquiry confirming the fact that the September 4 sinking of the Hesperian had been caused by

¹Muskogee Phoenix, Oct. 14, 1915, p. 4.

a torpedo were announced but no public-outcry among Sooners resulted in either case, and the press failed to comment. No further sinkings of American ships occurred in 1915 consequent to the "Arabic Pledge" although nine United States nationals perished aboard two foreign liners. The torpedoing of the Italian Ancona on November 9, eventually admitted by Austria, received considerable publicity but only a minimum of guarded editorial comment. Only seven of the twenty-four Americans feared lost proved to be casualties. Two Oklahoman editorials typical of Sooner reactions appeared. The first, entitled, "First Be Sure You're Right," noted the "bewildering" circumstances and the "sad mess" of public opinion "so often fiercely divided within itself" and declared that the president should "bide the proper time" and then follow "the dictates of common sense and logic." The November 9 editorial, ignoring completely the fact of American casualties, termed the Austro-Italian wrangle a "dispute . . . over responsibility":

It is entirely a question of veracity between Italy and Austria and none of us at this distance is in a good position to fairly take sides. . . . One side has lied. Which it is we do not profess to know. . . . The situation, however, serves to again forcibly illustrate the horrors of submarine warfare. . . . It will be the cause of many an added prayer that this insane spectacle of man's inhumanity to man may soon be ended!¹

¹Daily Oklahoman, Oct. 15, 1915, p. 1; Oct. 31, 1915, p. 1; Nov. 11, 1915, p. 1; Nov. 12, 1915, p. 1; Nov. 13, 1915, p. 6; Nov. 19, 1915, p. 6.

The sinking without warning of the British ship Persia on December 30 with two American casualties elicited even less Sooner response than that of the Ancona. However, the Persia's destruction did precipitate a spirited Senate debate in which Robert L. Owen actively participated. The controversy concerned the rights and questionable patriotism of Americans who traveled on belligerent ships. United States Consul McNeely, enroute to his post in Aden, had gone down with the Persia. While the Senate directed no charges at either the Germans or the British, there was much criticism of McNeely's choice of the armed British liner rather than a neutral Dutch vessel. Owen discounted Senate charges of "braggadocio" and "unpatriotic purpose," but did suggest that "where we have need to send our representatives under difficulties it would be better to send them on an American ship under the protection of an American flag, safeguarded by the power of the United States." The Senator recommended an "armed vessel."¹ Official Washington, it appeared, reflected the attitudes of its constituency in this instance. One fact was evident. Oklahomans approved the post-Arabic cessation of submarine depredations and would go to considerable lengths to avoid further complications.

The Lusitania dispute, still unsettled, made one further 1915 appearance. Headlines on November 24 reminded

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Jan. 13, 1916, pp. 505-506; 65 Cong., 1 Sess., April 5, 1917, p. 395.

Oklahomans, "Lusitania Issues Far From Decided." The United States had declined Germany's offer of settlement at \$5,000 for each American casualty and the prospect of bargain counter haggling over the dollar value of American citizens somewhat appalled the Oklahoman. Without assessing particular blame, the editorial, "American Lives at \$5,000 Each," observed:

That may be the way of settling diplomatic issues involved and it is perhaps the satisfactory way. We believe the proper officials of the two nations are capable of settling the question. . . . And yet--Would you barter your life for \$5,000? Would you sell the life of your father or mother, sister or brother, your wife or your babe in arms, for \$5,000? If we are going to put a price on the lives of Americans who are murdered while traveling where they have a right to be, isn't \$5,000 a piece rather cheap?

The 1915 Thanksgiving proclamations issued by President Wilson and Governor Williams both included resolution of the submarine problem as a major item for thankfulness. The president's proclamation, published October 22, cited the fact that "we have been able to assert our rights and the rights of mankind without breach of friendship with the great nations with whom we have had to deal." On October 31 the governor's message asserted optimistically:

Notwithstanding the conflicts . . . between the nations of the old world and the complications thus occasioned, we are still at peace and the sky is clear. . . . Our citizenship has responded in thought and act to the highest ideals of a civilization that stands for honor, right, justice, and peace.¹

¹Daily Oklahoman, Oct. 22, 1915, p. 1; Oct. 31, 1915, p. 4-A; Nov. 24, 1915, p. 1; Nov. 26, 1915, p. 6.

The Arabic Pledge held the submarine at bay until the sinking of the Sussex some six months later on March 24, 1916. It was an uneasy truce but peace-inclined Oklahomans, like most Americans, welcomed any honorable means of averting further tension and the possibility of war. Wilsonian patience and persistence had produced results for which most Sooners were grateful and applauded the President. The indignities to which American rights and prestige had been subjected and the flaunting of international law troubled some, but the great majority believed that no basic principles had been sacrificed and that the continuance of peace vitiated temporary inconveniences and indignities. Negotiations, even though prolonged and frustrating, had achieved the American position in all major submarine controversies except the Lusitania and considerable progress has been made toward the resolution of that knotty problem.

The fact that basic and irreconcilable differences and continuing irritations had developed and that the measures adopted represented palliatives rather than permanent solutions was not immediately evident, at least to the majority. Perhaps more sensed this fact, at least vaguely, than cared to admit it but preferred to sublimate the unpleasant prospects. Although largely unrecognized, the seeds of war for America had been sown as their germination some eighteen months later proved. Oklahomans, like most Americans, however, preferred to view developments optimistically. As the noted diplomatic

historian Thomas A. Bailey observed, "the outcome of the Arabic case was a triumph--at least temporarily--for Wilsonian methods. . . . A clash with Germany might still be avoided if the submarine could be kept leashed."¹ The great majority of Oklahomans happily acclaimed the triumph and fervently hoped that the leash might be kept intact.

¹Bailey, A Diplomatic History, p. 581.

CHAPTER VI

CROSS-CURRENTS FOR WAR AND PEACE: THE PREPAREDNESS-PACIFIST CONTROVERSY IN OKLAHOMA, 1914-1915

Among all the states none demonstrated more characteristically than Oklahoma the validity of the observation advanced by the eminent historian Arthur S. Link that "during the first months of the war, before the submarine issue was raised, American sentiment was overwhelmingly neutral and pacific." Indeed, this reaction is not surprising, for as Professor Link indicated, "no catastrophe . . . occurred before April, 1917, to shock Americans out of their complacency; nothing compelled them to calculate seriously the consequences of German domination of Europe." These observations, made generally for the entire nation, applied with particular felicity to the Sooner commonwealth. Oklahoma was a young state in 1914 and such factors as inland location and a heterogeneous, native-American population, rural in outlook and occupation, conditioned Sooner attitudes against preparedness and involvement in foreign controversies. Reviewing the Sooner position in the pre-1917 period, a University of Oklahoma student, who had served overseas and

subsequently returned for graduate study, commented in 1923:

We of Oklahoma were a self-contented people in those pre-war days busily engaged in building an empire of prosperity on the recently raw sod of the prairie. . . . While the European volcano frothed and bubbled, emitting . . . premature explosions presaging trouble and grief for the future, our people were oblivious. No ties we felt, bound us to the woes of another continent. Daily we gave thanks to the bordering seas. . . . All pacifists, we felt . . . that modern war was a financial impossibility, an evil dream which the . . . Hague Tribunal had banished. Then came Serajevo! . . . A flare in the papers for a day or so and the incident was forgotten. . . . But war came. Dazed and uncomprehending our people witnessed a world gone to war. . . .

Whatever personal beliefs might be, . . . Oklahomans were strictly neutral. Oklahoma is a democratic state and she would do nothing to embarrass the first democratic president since Grover Cleveland. Obey and back the President became the watchword. While the east grew hysterical for intervention, the west was content to follow the judgment of those in authority. The sinking of the Lusitania profoundly stirred the state, but the president made no move and Oklahoma followed his lead. Few in the Sooner commonwealth knew anything of war first hand.¹

Such was the climate of opinion from which Oklahomans viewed the onset of war and its impact upon their personal and national existence.

The question of American preparedness did not assume major, direct, or even conscious proportions in Oklahoma in 1914. Initial reactions of the press tended to be brief, sporadic, incidental, and overwhelmingly opposed to an American preparedness movement. On August 4, the day Germany

¹Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 174; Edwin K. Wood, "The University of Oklahoma in World War" (unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1923), pp. 3, 5.

invaded Belgium and England declared war, the McAlester News-Capital, citing a report estimating the cost of the war at \$54,125,000 daily, deplored America's growing overseas interests. "We shall be drawn into the fatal web of European entanglements" through such commitments, declared the News-Capital, and as a result "spend our time and thought and our ablest men and billions of money" in developing and protecting them. The editorial closed on an ironic note, observing, "Isn't it a pity that we've got to be a 'world power'?" On the following day the Muskogee Phoenix, anticipating the preoccupation of Europe with the rapidly expanding conflict, advanced two cryptic comments. The first, recalling George Washington's advice to avoid entangling alliances, voiced satisfaction that "we don't have to fight anybody's battle but our own." The other, reflecting an interest in economic rather than military preparedness, observed that "now is our chance to rebuild the American merchant marine. The flag of no great nation but ours is safe today on the high seas."¹

The first expression of direct, full-scale, and unqualified opposition to American preparedness appeared in the Phoenix on August 16 and categorically denounced war as "An International Crime":

¹McAlester News-Capital, Aug. 4, 1914, p. 4; Muskogee Phoenix, Aug. 5, 1914, p. 4.

One lesson of the frightful war now devastating all the world outside of this continent ought not to be lost upon our people. It forever gives the lie to the damnable pretense that the best way to secure peace is to prepare for war. It is on the basis of this monumental falsehood that the people of the United States have already been persuaded to depart from their original principles; to enlarge the army beyond all real need; to pass a bill relating to the militia which practically makes it a part of the regular army by a huge system of subsidies; to build a navy of which we have no real need in any proportions. . . . The real primary cause of the war is the existence of immense standing armies and powerful navies in Europe. . . . It is the armies and navies that produce the temper of popular mind without which war would never be declared, and could not exist for a week if it were.

At the same time a companion editorial, "Still in the Middle Ages," called for economic preparedness in the form of an expanded merchant marine. Maintaining that the United States had already lost "a priceless advantage," in refusing "to relax only a little these madman's bonds," the Phoenix concluded with a scorching thrust: "Of all tariff-bred hogs, none is so hoggish as the shipping trust. Of all the anti-patriots it is easily the chief." The views of the Phoenix were those of the overwhelming majority of Oklahomans in 1914.¹

Interestingly enough, the sole editorial to appear in the early stages of the war suggesting, albeit reluctantly, that preparedness might be an eventual necessity appeared in the Wewoka Democrat, a weekly publication. However, the Democrat stood foursquare with the preponderant majority of

¹Muskogee Phoenix, Aug. 16, 1914, p. 4-B.

the weekly papers in a policy of cautious, conservative, and limited expression on all other war-related issues. Admitting to disillusionment and uncertainty, the Democrat candidly stated:

For a long time we have been opposed to standing armies and large navies. But in view of the present condition over the Atlantic we don't know so much about it. With other nations keeping millions of soldiers under arms and hundreds of war ships on the seas all ready to start something between suns, it may be well enough to be prepared for anything that comes. The rulers of Europe are like mad-dogs, ready to attack anything in sight. Gloomy as the prospect may be, it looks as if the time of disarmament is yet far off.

The preparedness issue found the Daily Oklahoman foregoing its usual role of editorial leadership until December 7. However, the Oklahoman indicated its unqualified opposition as early as August 25, when it attacked Theodore Roosevelt for militarist sentiments expressed "in his usual vein of impulsive bluster" in a speech delivered at Lewiston, Maine. Entitled, "Roosevelt at it Again," the editorial roundly criticized the aggressive and outspoken ex-president's

. . . meddlesome desire to "jine" in the European muddle. . . . It is one of the many blessings of the United States that in this trying period of the world's affairs, Woodrow Wilson is president. The "Watchful Waiting Policy" has long ago proved its superiority over the "Big Stick," even if it is less noisy and spectacular.¹

Those opposed to preparedness frequently employed bitter invective in personal attacks upon the leaders of the movement. Much of the Sooner press used this technique but

¹Wewoka Democrat, Aug. 20, 1914, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 25, 1914, p. 4.

none more so than the Oklahoman, and Roosevelt was the prime target. The ex-president and General Leonard Wood were the foremost leaders in the earliest preparedness agencies, the National Security League and the American Legion, Incorporated. The former sought to "insure for the nation an adequate system of national defense," the latter advocated establishment of a military training program. Oklahoma editors were also highly critical of four additional active and influential preparedness advocates: Congressmen Augustus P. Gardner of Massachusetts and Richmond P. Hobson of Alabama, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, a Republican and Senate Foreign Relations Committee member, and William Randolph Hearst, the New York jingo journalist.

Dubbed "Gussie" by a derisive Sooner press, the Republican Gardner, a Harvard graduate, Spanish-American War veteran, and Lodge's son-in-law, was the first prominent advocate of preparedness as an anti-war measure. Maintaining that the nation was totally unprepared to defend itself against the possibility of foreign aggression, Gardner sponsored the formation by Congress of the National Security Commission to evaluate the war potential of the army and navy. When Congress blocked his efforts to bolster the national defenses, Gardner sought to gain his objectives through public appeals and the establishing of preparedness organizations. The Alabama Democrat, Hobson, an Annapolis graduate, naval architect and lecturer, and veteran of nine years of active

navy duty, supported the preparedness movement with equal enthusiasm and vigor.

Most of the Oklahoma dailies carried accounts of these early and unsuccessful preparedness efforts in Congress. The Daily Oklahoman on September 12 reported the recommendation of the congressional commission that "at least" twelve battleships in addition to lesser craft be commissioned and that the standing army be increased to "at least 200,000 men with a reserve of 1,000,000." While a major headline, "Bigger Army and Navy Are Urged," was provided, the Oklahoman indicated its reaction to the development by relegating the story to page 4. No pertinent editorial comment appeared until six weeks later. Gardner's October 15 speech urging formation of the National Security Commission prompted the first headline in the Muskogee Phoenix relating to the preparedness issue. The headline embodied a quote from Congressman Gardner's speech: "What of Our Navy Should War Come; Are We Prepared?" No immediate editorial comment appeared.¹

The Oklahoma press unlimbered its anti-preparedness heavy artillery in mid-November and continued an almost unceasing bombardment until war developments in 1916 dictated either a reversal in position or cessation of comment. A

¹Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 12, 1914, p. 4; Muskogee Phoenix, Oct. 17, 1914, p. 1.

series of six significant editorials typified the position of the Phoenix and most Oklahomans throughout the balance of 1914. On November 18 the Phoenix initiated its campaign to defeat pending preparedness legislation. The initial attack bore the title, "The Fight Against Militarism":

It seems almost unbelievable that one man should be found in the United States so deaf to all reason as to demand an increase in our army and navy. Yet that is what the heads of the war and navy departments demand, what the jingoists all over the country echo. . . . Opinion in the United States is almost unanimous as to the cause of war in Europe, . . . the system known as militarism. Without these there would never have been a war. . . . But there can be no other motive in extensive preparations by us save a desire to bring about a future war. We are in no danger of attack. No nation will be fit for war for another generation after this. If fourteen miles of sea is saving England from invasion then four thousand ought to guard us. There is not one reason, not unworthy of a madman, for military extension.

Three days later, the editorial, "Peace if we Have to Fight For It," reminded Congress that "whoever votes for big increases in armies and navies votes to have the country placed . . . where Europe is today." The December 6 attack centered on a leading congressional preparedness advocate:

Although Representative Gardner is raising eternal cane over the pitifully small number of men we would be able to kill in a war, the records of the war department show that he was among the congressmen who did not offer to enlist when the recent Mexican trouble threatened.

Ten days later the industrialists were severely castigated for their profiteering and lobbying as the Phoenix sought to enlist public opinion in the anti-preparedness fight:

There is scarcely more devilish works done on the battle field of Europe than that done by a few politicians in this country, backed by a small army of contractors and their representatives who see fat pickings in big appropriations for war purposes. . . . There is no reason why we should move one further step in what is called "preparation." . . . No other nation will be in a condition to attack anybody for a generation to come. . . . All honor to every man who raises his voice against it.¹

Gardner's efforts to force a Congressional investigation of the military and naval establishments failed, however, and disgruntled preparedness advocates, largely Republican, charged obstruction by the Administration. Indeed, Newton D. Baker and Josephus Daniels, secretaries of war and navy, respectively, had painted an overly bright picture in attesting to the strength of the nation's armed forces and defense installations. The Oklahoma press and public opinion in general applauded the outcome. The Phoenix, in particular, lauded the military for recommending only a "moderate increase in our forces" and the navy for its view that the "present rate of increase in ships is rapid enough":

We wish to acknowledge the commission of an act of injustice. . . . We were mistaken, and we wish to give all honor and credit to the men from both branches [of the Armed Forces] who have expressed before an excited and thoughtless congress, their moderate view. The jingoes in this country, composed of the most demagogic and criminal element of both democracy and republicanism, . . . men like Gardner and Lodge in one party and Hobson in the other ought to be shut up in jail somewhere until they can learn to keep their mouths shut. The crime of the anarchists who were executed

¹Muskogee Phoenix, Nov. 18, 1914, p. 4; Nov. 21, 1914, p. 4; Dec. 6, 1914, p. 4-B; Dec. 16, 1914, p. 4.

for encouraging the killing of a few people in Chicago some years ago was a trivial offense in comparison with the guilt of such men as these. (*Italics mine.*)

A sizable cartoon depicting Lodge and Gardner with cannon-shaped mouths accompanied the editorial. Two days later the Phoenix vigorously attacked the President's plan for a government-owned and -operated merchant marine:

President Wilson is, on most occasions, so level-headed a man, and he is always so patriotic and devoted to duty according to his lights, that we are sorry to have to bring severe criticism to bear and to urge opposition to any of the measures on which he had set his heart. He has been coerced for political reasons into several unhappy concessions. But the bill for a government-owned marine, which he has made his hobby and which he intends to force through this session if he can, is so unnecessary and so entirely evil that it ought to be beaten even though congress should be obliged to sit continually through another year. His advocacy is all the more strange because this is the extremest form of that paternalism in government against which he and his party so often formally protested. . . . Any opposition, however prolonged [filibuster] that may be necessary to defeat this measure will be justified.¹

Caustic criticism of the foremost leaders of preparedness characterized the Oklahoman's tardy opposition to the movement, a technique it increasingly employed during the course of the war. A November 25 editorial sharply denounced the controversial journalist William Randolph Hearst for his conscienceless exploitation of the war to satisfy personal ambition. Entitled "The Demagogue," the diatribe castigated the New York editor for paying "a hired man a fabulous salary to write . . . bomb-inspiring, discontent-breeding

¹Ibid., Dec. 22, 1914, p. 4; Dec. 24, 1914, p. 4.

drival" and similar practices of yellow journalism:

Intelligence revolts with nausea from such contradictory, inflammable rot, but Mr. Hearst does not appeal to intelligence. He is a firebrand who would excite the rabble, a demagogue of the worst type, a suckling infant in statecraft, who inherited the money with which to employ brilliant minds to distort the truth. Mr. Hearst will never attain his presumptuous ambition, which is to be president of the United States, so he could involve us in wars and troubles every few minutes, or to be a political leader. Mr. Hearst may have the money but not the brains to be either.¹

Hearst, Gardner, and Roosevelt jointly received an equally severe denunciation on December 7. Labeled "Our Preparation For War," the editorial typified the Oklahoman's opposition to preparedness:

Congressman Gardner's resolution . . . to investigate and report upon our preparedness for war, is kicking up an unseemly flurry, particularly among the jingoes and alarmists. Mr. Hearst is throwing a series of fits daily and there are many others whose mouthings are equally grotesque. Militarist Roosevelt is likewise sniffing the smoke of battle from afar. It is extremely gratifying, however, to note that the man in the White House is keeping his head as usual. To us the silliest thing in the world is the proposition put forth by our militarists which involves the enforcement of peace preparedness for war. Europe's explosion of this theory is still ringing in our ears. . . . For more than a hundred years we have managed to avoid wars with the Old World powers by our unpreparedness for it. . . . The conclusion is evident, it seems, that the best way to avoid war is to avoid even the appearance of it. (Italics mine.)

Two weeks later Congressman Hobson, a Democrat, received the full force of the Oklahoman's editorial ire:

This fellow Hobson of Alabama, has turned out to be a bloviating bore. He chants his militarist requiem . . .

¹Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 25, 1914, p. 6.

and . . . will never be happy until we bankrupt the government in purchasing additional armament and drilling all able-bodied citizens for war. . . . To begin preparation for war at this time, because a few among us are nervous and excited, would absolutely nullify all our efforts of the past [to end the war]. . . . There ought to be some way of suppressing the Hobsons, Roosevelts, and Hearsts. Their war talk and clamor for additional armaments is the nearest approach to treason one hears these days.¹

While less clamorous and verbose, the basic reactions of the weekly press were identical with those of the major publications. Such coincidence was not surprising for in no single war-related issue through 1916 did the daily press present such a unanimity of ultra-conservative opinion. The Poteau News most characteristically reflected weekly press reaction when it observed:

If we raise our standing army to six hundred thousand men it will not be ten years till it will be two million and it's only a question of time till it will go to ten million. The nation that has a big army always has a chip on its shoulder and is daring some one to knock it off. To raise the army of the United States to half a million men would be a backward step for the nation.

The Enid Events, Republican in sentiment, came out strongly for a subsidized merchant marine in a lengthy editorial entitled, "A Lesson on Ship Subsidies."² Thus the Oklahoma press throughout 1914 demonstrated its aggressive and unqualified opposition to preparedness beyond the range of

¹Ibid., Dec. 7, 1914, p. 4; Dec. 21, 1914, p. 4.

²Poteau News, Dec. 24, 1914, p. 2; Enid Events, Aug. 12, 1914, p. 2.

"normal" and "modest" needs and even to these it often gave grudging consent. Opinion divided more sharply on the issue of a subsidized merchant marine, but the majority, while favoring generous federal assistance, opposed outright government ownership and operation. Further, these attitudes reflected the opinions of the overwhelming majority of Oklahomans in both public and private life.

Because of such factors as inland location, a basically rural economy, and, in particular, the short history of statehood, Oklahoma's public officials had both limited experience and opportunity in the field of foreign affairs. The nation had been involved in no major international crisis in the half dozen years after Oklahoma had been granted statehood in 1907. True, Mexico was an intermittently-erupting volcano, but to Sooners and their southwestern neighbors this seemed almost a regional problem. During the eleven sessions of the Sixtieth through the Sixty-third Congresses, extending from December 2, 1907, through March 4, 1915, Oklahoma's senators and representatives exhibited a remarkable reticence almost approaching disinterest in measures pertaining to foreign policy and national defense. Indeed, they asked for the floor but fifty-three times to present or to amend bills and resolutions or to address their colleagues on any major issue related to foreign affairs or national preparedness.

In this eight-year period only Senator Owen and Congressman Murray exhibited sustained interest and activity in matters of foreign policy and defense. Owen consistently opposed a government-sponsored merchant marine and continued expansion of the navy. At the same time he urged the extension of international law, cooperation, and arbitration to be supported by a modest \$130,000 appropriation, one-tenth of one per cent of the allocation for battleship construction in 1910.¹ In 1913 and 1914 Murray demanded armed intervention in Mexico, a revitalized Monroe Doctrine, and stringent curbs on the entry of Asiatics through Mexico and other adjacent countries. In his March 27, 1914, address, "Mexico and the Asiatic Menace," Murray enlarged on these concerns which, he insisted, predicated "conditions worse than war" and declared himself "at variance with the President upon his entire international policy."² Such activities eventually

¹Cong. Record, 61 Cong., 2 Sess., May 23, 1910, pp. 6732-33; 61 Cong., 3 Sess., Feb. 2, 1911, pp. 1821-22. For a general survey of Senator Owen's views and activities on foreign affairs and defense see Edward E. Keso, The Senatorial Career of Robert Latham Owen (Gardenvale, Canada, 1938), Chap. X, "Foreign Affairs-World War," pp. 149-69.

²Cong. Record, 63 Cong., 1 Sess., July 22, 1913, p. 2627; Appendix, Nov. 7, 1913, pp. 432-44; 63 Cong., 2 Sess., March 9, 1914, p. 4544; March 12, 1914, p. 4781; March 21, 1914, pp. 5238-39, 5269; Appendix, March 27, 1914, pp. 263-66; 63 Cong., 3 Sess., Jan. 4, 1915, p. 962; Feb. 24, 1915, p. 4446; March 1, 1915, p. 5058. Scattered references on Murray's role appear in William H. Murray, Memoirs of Governor Murray and True History of Oklahoma (3 vols.; Boston, 1945); and Gordon Hines, Alfalfa Bill: An Intimate Biography (Okla. City, 1932).

led to an open break with the Administration and his defeat in the primaries in 1916.

Congressmen Claude Weaver and Joseph B. Thompson each made a single significant contribution in 1913. Weaver enthusiastically supported the British proposal for a one-year moratorium on naval construction. He condemned the high cost and "the waste and wickedness of war" and proclaimed world peace the base of our "historic policy." Thompson strongly supported the Administration's Mexican policy and its bid for a government-sponsored merchant marine.¹ In 1911 Gore did speak out strongly for the volunteer army plan and both he and Ferris called for Philippine independence. Miscellaneous objections to steadily increasing army and navy defense appropriations occurred but except for Owen's two extended protests these were of minor consequence. In 1910 Owen questioned the motives of the "big navy" proponents whose selfish motives, he charged, place "a very heavy tax on the people":

Always when the naval bill comes up the press is filled with alluring arguments about the conservation of peace by making preparations for war. Slowly I have come to believe . . . that these arguments in the public presses are not in the interest of peace, but . . . of those who have something to sell. . . . We ought to put a limitation upon naval expenditures, and we ought . . . to invite the nations of the world to limit their naval armaments.

¹Cong. Record, 63 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, Sept. 6, 1913, pp. 274-76; 63 Cong., 2 Sess., April 27, 1914, pp. 7336-39; Dec. 6, 1913, pp. 410-18; 63 Cong., 3 Sess., Feb. 16, 1915, p. 3899.

Owen raised the same objections in 1911 in opposing the ship subsidy bill.¹

While Senator Gore was to achieve notoriety in 1916 and thereafter for his opposition to Administration policies relating to neutrality, conscription, entry into, and the general conduct of the war, his senior colleague, Robert L. Owen, concerned himself much more with matters of foreign affairs and defense in the period from 1908 to 1915. This activity did not cease with his major role in the naval appropriations and ship subsidy controversies in 1910 and 1911. On March 7, 1912, Owen voted for general treaties of arbitration with France and Great Britain and on July 15, 1913, he submitted a resolution calling for an international conference to establish a moratorium in the construction of war vessels so that peace might be restored. In January, 1915, Owen introduced resolutions "looking toward an international Conference at the Hague immediately after the close of the present war in Europe," (S. J. Res. 219), and proposing an amendment to the Constitution requiring a

¹Ibid., 60 Cong., 1 Sess., April 6, 1908, p. 4415; April 23, 1908, pp. 5104-109; 60 Cong., 2 Sess., Feb. 9, 1909, p. 2079; 61 Cong., 2 Sess., May 23, 1910, pp. 6732-33; 61 Cong., 3 Sess., Feb. 2, 1911, pp. 1821-22; 62 Cong., 1 Sess., May 9, 1911, p. 1127; July 8, 1911, p. 2740; 62 Cong., 2 Sess., May 31, 1912, pp. 7466-68; 63 Cong., 2 Sess., May 31, 1912, pp. 7466-68.

popular referendum before a war of aggression could be declared (S. J. Res. 227).¹

Senator Owen remained strongly opposed to a subsidized merchant marine but gave his active support to the establishment of a soundly financed United States Shipping Board. This board would both build and operate transport vessels which would employ only American seamen and operate under the American flag. While a partial about-face, Owen argued with considerable logic that the rights of private interests would not be infringed since they were unable or unwilling to provide adequate services, that the government had proved capable of successfully handling various transport facilities such as the New York to Panama shipping service and the latter's railroads, and that such provision would have great preparedness value since it would provide an immediate naval auxiliary transport service. Twice Owen engaged in spirited debate with the proponents of the previous bill to subsidize the private shipping interests, insisting that such a system would lead to "an absolute grinding monopoly," as had happened in the Oklahoma oil industry. The Oklahoma legislature also urged immediate adoption of the bill "to avoid calling

¹Ibid., 62 Cong., 2 Sess., March 7, 1912, p. 2955; 63 Cong. 1 Sess., July 15, 1913 (S. Res. 136), p. 2419; 63 Cong., 3 Sess., Jan. 5, 1915 (S. J. Res. 219), p. 964; Jan. 15, 1915 (S. J. Res. 227), p. 1601. The Daily Oklahoman, Jan. 6, 1915, p. 6 provides the details on Owen's war referendum proposal, as well as indicating its enthusiastic support.

an extra session of Congress." The measure again failed of passage.¹

Later in the same year the popular Oklahoma senator addressed the Academy of Political Science in New York on the merchant marine issue. Owen considerably enlarged upon his previous arguments, laying particular emphasis on the preparedness factor and the urgent need for expanded American shipping services:

The establishment of the auxiliary merchant marine is necessary for our preparedness. . . . Such ships would comprise a very important naval auxiliary and could serve immediately in case of foreign war as colliers, ammunition boats, supply boats, transports, oilers, hospital and repair ships, all necessary in times of war. . . . [2] We should put all vessels handling American freight under the supervision of the shipping board . . . treating the merchant service as a public utility.

Owen did not regard these views as a wholesale shift into the preparedness camp or as advocacy of a wide-scale invasion of the field of public utilities by the government but rather as a realistic approach to the needs of an expanding America.

"The highest modern function of government," he maintained, "is to use the combined power of the people to promote their happiness and prosperity, . . . their commerce, and . . . their productive energies."² Significantly, these observations

¹Cong. Record, 63 Cong., 3 Sess., Jan. 29, 1915, p. 2540; Feb. 8, 1915, pp. 3263-64; Feb. 15, 1915, p. 3770.

²Robert L. Owen, "What Congress Should Do to Develop an American Mercantile Marine," Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science, VI (1915-1916), pp. 48-60.

marked the first tangible step in his departure from an ultra-conservative, and idealistic view on preparedness and the eventuality of war. Owen's greater stress on preparedness in the New York speech undoubtedly stemmed largely from the fact that in the interim between the adjournment of Congress on March 11 and the presenting of the address on November 21, 1915, the German government had initiated submarine warfare, inflicting such losses as the Gulflight, Falaba, Lusitania, and Arabic. At the same time, however, he continued to promote the cause of international peace, one of his paramount interests.

Senator Thomas Pryor Gore, who had spoken only twice on matters of foreign policy and defense since early in 1909, also actively supported the Administration's demand for a merchant marine in 1915. On February 3 he introduced a bill authorizing a United States Shipping Board with power to construct and maintain a merchant fleet. On the previous day he also submitted an amendment to the identical "Alexander Bill," and on February 5 offered a resolution requiring the committee to discharge his measure for Senate debate. While chided for being "impatient at the lack of action," Gore's several closely-timed moves were designed to force action on the bitterly controversial issue. The Oklahoman's bill, although debated, never came to a vote. However, the "Alexander Bill," secured senate approval and the identical "Weeks Bill" survived stormy House debate by a vote of 215 to

121. Gore and Owen consistently supported all of these measures in the Senate. In the House, Representatives Carter, Ferris, Murray, and Weaver supported the Weeks Bill while Dick T. Morgan opposed it and Bird S. McGuire, James S. Davenport, and Thompson failed to vote. All except Morgan and McGuire were Democrats.¹ While the Sixty-third Congress failed to enact legislation establishing a United States Shipping Board, debate on the issue did create a most bitter partisan feeling. It remained for a subsequent Congress, faced with the grave imminency of war, to enact such legislation.

Support of the shipping bill marked Gore's only activity relating to foreign policy and defense prior to the impact of the submarine where his views eventually threw him into the national limelight. Neither Gore nor Owen held significant committee assignments in these areas. Oklahoma's congressmen, however, reflected the majority sentiment of the basically rural and isolationist West and South in this apparent lack of concern for preparedness and the threat of war. In the year immediately preceding the onset of war in Europe, the

¹Cong. Record, 63 Cong., 3 Sess., Feb. 2, 1915 (S. 6856), p. 2581; Feb. 3, 1915 (S. 7552), p. 2940; Feb. 5, 1915 (S. Res. 537), p. 3087; Feb. 16, 1915, p. 3923. See pp. 3875-93 for the entire proceedings of the stormy final debate on S. 5259 which continued uninterruptedly from 11 A.M. to 1:30 A.M., culminating in the affirmative vote. P. 3884 reviews the confusing history of the three related bills, S. 5259 (Weeks), S. 6856 (Alexander), and S. 7552 (Gore).

Second Session of the Sixty-third Congress, meeting from December 1, 1913, to October 24, 1914, considered only thirty-one war and defense measures.¹

While Oklahoma's senators and representatives demonstrated little interest and had no major influence in matters of foreign policy and defense, their activities, nonetheless, bore a significance beyond that of reflecting the sentiments of their predominantly isolationist constituents. For the representatives of the third youngest state, the experiences of the 1908 to 1915 period represented a conditioning process in matters of national and international policy. When the Sixty-fourth Congress convened on December 6, 1915, the Sooner representatives, in particular Senators Gore and Owen, with seniority and reputations established, were ready to assume more prominent roles in the increasingly troubled field of international affairs.

Oklahoma attitudes toward preparedness did not basically change in the early months of 1915 prior to the May 7 sinking of the Lusitania. The great majority continued staunchly to oppose, while a less vociferous minority felt

¹For committee appointments consult the Congressional Directory for the 60th through the 63d Congresses. For the thirty-one war and defense-related items considered by the Congress in the year preceding the war see the Index volume, 63 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 477, "War and Preparation for War," and p. 321, "National Defense." Owen served on the Committee on the Pacific Islands and Puerto Rico from 1908 to 1913 and thereafter on the Committee on Interoceanic Canals; Gore on the Committee on Canadian Relations since 1909.

world conditions regrettably necessitated, a larger defense effort. The Daily Oklahoman aggressively led the anti-preparedness forces. A January 3 editorial scoffed at "zealous and wholly blind republicans" who "made a partisan issue" of "America's 'unpreparedness for war.'" The Oklahoman termed such efforts "a boomerang," since long-time Republican control made them "alone and solely responsible for adequate or inadequate preparedness for war." Three days later the paper praised Senator Owen's proposal for a constitutional amendment requiring a popular referendum prior to declaration of war, observing that, "after all, since the people are the ones who do the fighting and foot the bills, it surely follows that they should be consulted in so serious matter."¹

On February 22 the Oklahoman announced that the ship purchase bill was "shipwrecked" in the senate and severely censured "the G.O.P. and the seven Democratic bolters. . . . [and the] archaic rules of the senate inviolate" for its demise. On March 17, an editorial headed "The Awful Waste of War" asserted that "we must place expenditures on military preparedness in the same category with fire insurance premiums--an expenditure made necessary by human frailty." On the following day the nation was reminded that if it "remains peacefully at work, . . . keeping its nose out of European affairs, it will remain adequately prepared for

¹Daily Oklahoman, Jan. 3, 1915, p. 4-B; Jan. 6, 1915, p. 6.

peace." This, said the Oklahoman, "is the sort of preparedness that every patriotic American desires." The same issue commended the plan of New Yorker Elijah Sills for replacement of national armies with "a great international peace force of 823,500 men," proportionately selected, and observed that "the thing is so simple that there is no doubt that would work--if it ever could be tried."¹

The Oklahoman increased the tempo of its attack in April. Noting that "America spends \$800,000 a day making preparations for war," an April 11 editorial ruefully commented:

Isn't that bad business? . . . Suppose that \$800,000 we spend daily getting ready to meet an emergency that may never materialize were devoted to construction of national roads. An army of 320,000 men could be employed at a daily wage of \$2.50. . . . Every highway of importance . . . would be converted into the equal of city boulevards. . . . War? And preparation for war? They're hellish inventions to rob peaceful people of their due!

Congressional preparedness leader Augustus P. Gardner received another blistering attack on April 16. Entitled, "Jingo Rhetoric," the diatribe employed such scathing terms as "cheap publicity," "unpatriotic notoriety seekers," "present day spectacle of disloyalty," "the windy Mr. Gardner," "a four-flushing politician of the noisiest type," and "the distinguished jingoist from Massachusetts." An April 20 commentary praised Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels for opposing

¹Ibid., Feb. 22, 1915, p. 6; March 17, 1915, p. 6; March 18, 1915, p. 6.

large naval expansion and derided the "piffle and hysteria" of the jingoes:

That there is no occasion for alarm as to the preparedness of the navy . . . will be a bit discomfiting to . . . [those] who make a big profit out of armament and war munitions and in consequence are always yawping for increased expenditures in this line. . . . Gussie Gardner, Willie Hearst and the rest of the jingoes . . . [insisted] that we were in imminent danger of attack from Germany, Japan, or some other naval power . . . [and] frightened a good many uninformed people. There was a temporary clamor for better preparedness. . . . No one with a thimbleful of brains believed for a moment that this country was in danger from any source.¹

While the Oklahoman undoubtedly reflected the attitude of the great majority of both the Sooner press and the public at large, there did exist a considerable minority who, while by no means jingoes, manifested a sober concern for a reasonable degree of preparedness. The Tulsa World, without evidence of Republican partisanship, reflected this school of thought. A January 4 editorial, "Doctrine of Preparation," while dismissing Theodore Roosevelt as an "extreme advocate" who overemphasized America's "ungirt loins and unlighted lamps," advocated such a course:

To our mind, a measurable preparedness is necessary for the proper protection of the lives, liberties, and the properties of American citizens at home and abroad. We believe in an army . . . and a navy strong enough to enforce the respect of our decrees on the part of every nation in the world. But at the same time we believe that this policy . . . can be carried to an excess. There has never yet arisen an emergency where the people of this country did not give a good account of themselves. . . .

¹Ibid., April 11, 1915, p. 6-C; April 16, 1915, p. 6; April 30, 1915, p. 6.

The United States within thirty days could place in the field an army as large as that of Germany. We do not want the rule of militarism in our country. . . . Naturally and inevitably, a man whose whole life has been turned to the profession of arms desires to whet his sword once in a while. . . . We always have been able to take care of ourselves, and by reason of our isolation such armaments as are necessary for the protection of European countries are out of place here. (*Italics mine.*)

The Enid News expressed similar views but with a greater degree of urgency. While advocating international agreements providing for universal mutual defense pacts and bans on armaments, the News saw no immediate alternative other than reasonable preparedness. A February 25 editorial put the question frankly and bluntly:

If we do not see to the matter of our preparedness, and all other nations continue to add modern equipment [of war] . . . what could we do if some one power should attack us? Would it be prudent to stand idly by if you knew some aggressive, eager adversary was in the back room loading a gun to . . . drive you from your position? . . . There is no immediate reason for the United States to become a great military power. But should we not take the necessary precautions which are plainly evident?¹

The torpedoing of the Lusitania on May 7 brought about the first marked change in Oklahoma attitudes toward American preparedness and related war issues. While by no means as profoundly disturbed as East Coast Americans, Oklahomans, too, lent support to Arthur S. Link's observation that "the great submarine crisis of 1915 and the concurrent

¹Tulsa World, Jan. 4, 1915, p. 4; Enid News, Feb. 25, 1915, p. 2. The Daily Oklahoman, March 17, 1915, p. 6 reported that one-fourth of all nationwide comment related to "world peace, international arbitration, and militarism." Oklahomans reacted similarly.

revelations of German intrigues against American peace and neutrality . . . caused . . . [a] significant turn in this segment [anti-preparedness] of American opinion." Initial reactions, however, were restrained. On May 11 the Daily Oklahoman declared that "this nation has not lost any war, but the chances are it will have to perk up a bit just to let them know that we cannot be used for a doormat." At the same time it sharply criticized the nation's most prominent advocates of preparedness, remarking sardonically that "the Lusitania incident is duck soup for the Colonel [Roosevelt], Willie Hearst, Richmond Pearson Hobson and Gussie Gardner. They are never so happy as when rocking the boat."¹

Two days later the same paper, in discussing the impact of the Lusitania's sinking upon American policies of neutrality and defense, observed that "it is going to be hard to forget the Lusitania." However, after another two-day interval, the Oklahoman again turned its editorial guns on Colonel Roosevelt, aiming three terse blasts at the forthright preparedness advocate who "emits fire, lava and brimstone" and would have the nation "wallowing in war."² Significantly, no full-length editorials opposing preparedness appeared in

¹Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 175; Daily Oklahoman, May 11, 1915, p. 6. Chapter V of this study develops Oklahoma reactions to the sinking of the Lusitania.

²Daily Oklahoman, May 13, 1915, p. 6; May 15, 1915, p. 6.

the Oklahoman between March 18 and August 14, a period of six months. Such reticence was not accidental. While still opposing large-scale preparedness measures, the paper's views were changing. Submarine warfare, particularly the Lusitania disaster, had hit the Oklahoman harder than it cared to admit. This fact became quite evident in August 14 and subsequent editorials. However, through the first six months of 1915 it remained the leading proponent of the anti-preparedness forces and reflected majority sentiments in Oklahoma.

While the Oklahoman, the state's largest and most influential Democratic newspaper, led the anti-preparedness forces, its Republican counterpart, the Tulsa World, spoke out strongly and consistently for preparedness. The World, however, did not initiate preparedness demands in 1915. The Muskogee Phoenix on February 5 suggested the need of a common effort on the part of neutral nations, concluding with the query: "Isn't it about time the neutral powers got together to take stock of their rights and concert measures for vindicating them?" It took the full force of the Lusitania disaster to commit the Tulsa World to a major preparedness program. In reporting the "masterful speech" of Roy Hoffman at the annual encampment of the Spanish-American war veterans at Tulsa on May 15, the World indicated its approval of the Colonel's strong pleas for preparedness without militarism:

I do not mean to be understood as desiring our country to stimulate militarism or cultivate its spirit. But I do wish to advance in the most emphatic terms that this country should make some adequate preparation for national defense. And this preparation should keep pace with the tremendous strides of our advancing country and its increasing interests among the nations of the earth. We should know how to take care of ourselves. By that is not meant that we should become a braggart or a bully, or go swaggering around with a chip on our shoulder among the family of nations. . . . Don't think in anything that I have said that I have any doubt as to the ultimate ability of this country to take care of itself. It is only the useless cost and sacrifice that I would avoid.¹

The World expressed its own frank appraisal of the need for preparedness in editorials appearing on June 3 and 11. The first, "More Men and More Guns," declared that Mexico, Japan, or even Haiti could overcome our weak coast defenses, and then called for greater preparedness:

The man with the gun on his hip is the man who is most liable to personal violence. But the nation which has the most battleships and the most men on the battleships is the nation which commands the respect of the world. . . . This is the greatest nation that the sun shines on. . . . But in the last analysis, . . . it is that nation which has the men and guns which commands the respect of mankind. Preparedness, preparedness, preparedness, always that sense of security and peace which comes to the man who has his quarrel doubly just and who is armed. More battleships, more men for the battleships, more guns and more men behind the guns. Keep the armies busy, keep bullet factories working overtime. Otherwise what is the dictum of this government worth? . . . Isn't it time that we were getting prepared. If we have to go broke through an increase in the national debt for the men and the guns, and the fortifications and the soldiers, let us go broke like a lot of good old sports and not like a Quaker meeting. (Italics mine.)

¹Tulsa World, May 16, 1915, p. 7; Muskogee Phoenix, Feb. 5, 1915, p. 4.

The second editorial presented arguments reminiscent of frontier-born manifest destiny:

We must all turn our minds to the future of our country. . . . It is now time for every American to stand on his feet and play the game. Not since the shot fired at Lexington . . . have we faced such a crisis. . . . We are all for a navy strong enough and an army big enough to maintain those natural and heaven-given rights everywhere and under any possible condition of circumstances. . . . We are always for that measure of defense which will make attack impossible, . . . which will make any possible combination of national enemy stop and think before it starts its battleships to these shores. God Almighty has done a great deal for these United States, but it is up to us . . . to do something for ourselves. The way to secure peace is to fight for it, and that nation which has the men and guns is the nation which lasts the longest. . . . Preparedness, preparedness, preparedness. Let us be ready for the German or the Turk or the Englishman or anybody else . . . at all times. (*Italics mine.*)¹

Notwithstanding the World's forthright preparedness arguments the desire for peace remained paramount. A July 1 commentary examining the extremist views of Hudson Maxim, an ardent Security League preparedness advocate, demonstrated this fact:

Hudson Maxim cast a bombshell into the camp of peace propagandists Saturday when he asserted that war was beneficial, that big guns were life-savers, and that it was more dangerous to ride in an automobile than it was to fight in the trenches. Whatever we may think of his extreme statement, we are all bound to concede that he was correct in his main conclusion, that the only safety of the United States lay in providing an army and navy strong enough to resist any coalition of nations that might attack us. . . . War is a desperate remedy, and is

¹Tulsa World, June 3, 1915, p. 4; June 11, 1915, p. 4.

only justified by a desperate disease that defies milder methods of treatment. . . . If it is just the same to Mr. Maxim, we will shun the trenches as long as possible and take our chances with the automobile.¹

Despite the aggressive leadership provided by the World the "peace through preparedness" cause gained relatively few adherents in Oklahoma in 1915. It remained for such untoward developments as the sinking of the Sussex to bring about a marked shift of opinion in the early months of 1916.

The sinking of the Lusitania did not precipitate any immediate, major move along the road to preparedness among the Oklahoma press and public. However, the opponents of preparedness gradually became less fervent. The Daily Oklahoman typified this segment of the press. Aggressively anti-preparedness in its views prior to the Lusitania disaster, the Oklahoman thereafter seemed to avoid the issue for a period of three months. On August 14, without officially admitting a revision, the paper announced its new position in the editorial, "If Done at All, Done Well":

The entente powers say we are not neutral, but we are. The central alliance says we are not neutral, but we know better. When we keep the peace we keep it, and we have kept it thus far with a patience that might almost be called startling. . . . We are as peaceable as ever--and thus far as peaceful--but a changing is coming o'er the spirit of our dreams; not a change toward belligerency or even minor pugnaciousness, but a mere decision to prepare for eventualities. . . . We have done things in their completeness since, as thirteen insignificant colonies, we taught a certain great nation where to

¹Ibid., July 1, 1915, p. 4.

disembark. Sometimes it happens that we are slow to get started; but when the start is effected something gives way. (*Italics mine.*)¹

The change in position had in no way altered the Oklahoman's forthright editorial vocabulary.

The sinking of the Arabic on August 19 consummated the Oklahoman's revisionist position. A prominent August 28 report headlined, "Governors Agree America Lacking in Strength," indicated the paper's tacit approval of the views expressed by Oklahoma's Robert L. Williams and the other governors gathered in annual conference. Seven days later the Oklahoman openly avowed its conversion to the cause of "Peace With Preparedness": "The United States has thoroughly demonstrated that fact [peace], but it is going forward with preparations for a sane degree of preparedness." However, on the same page the ultra-preparedness advocate, Roosevelt, was labeled a "jingo" and a "fool." Subsequent 1915 editorials merely extended the new position. "As to Preparedness," published on September 19, called for "a degree of military and naval preparedness which goes only so far as safeness and sanity dictate--and stops right there. To go beyond it would mean militarism . . . [and] would be the acme of foolishness and extravagance."²

¹Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 14, 1915, p. 6.

²Ibid., Aug. 28, 1915, p. 1; Sept. 4, 1915, p. 6; Sept. 19, 1915, p. 4-C.

During the final three months of 1915 the cost of even "sane preparedness" became a source of anxiety to the Oklahoman and in this it reflected a growing concern in Oklahoma. Official Army and Navy Department requests for \$842 million for defense over a five-year period staggered Editor R. E. Stafford. While supporting "reasonable steps" and "ordinary prudence," Stafford on October 22 averred that "it is extremely doubtful if the country is yet ready for assuming the burdens proposed in the face of imaginary enemies exhausted by war and no real enemies in sight." On November 1, under the heading "We Are With the President," the Oklahoman again affirmed its belief in "precautionary preparation against unforeseen exigencies." However, it condemned "a rabid degree of preparedness which approaches the militaristic," contravened "every national tradition," and would "Balkanize our ideals and make of our country an armed camp." Still cost-conscious, the Oklahoman asserted on November 16 that the nation would "rise upon its hind legs and howl . . . if it is forced to swallow a dose of bonds in times of peace" for preparedness and other current expenditures. Republican criticism of "exorbitant" preparedness costs drew a severe censure on November 23 as the Oklahoman indignantly pointed out that short-sightedness during previous G.O.P. administrations necessitated the present heavy financial outlay.¹

¹Ibid., Oct. 22, 1915, p. 6; Nov. 1, 1915, p. 4; Nov. 16, 1915, p. 6; Nov. 23, 1915, p. 6. On Nov. 7 the Oklahoman termed the Sooner farmer "the greatest living exponent of preparedness."

In December the Oklahoman recapitulated its views as it closed out a busy year of preparedness comment during which it had completely reversed its position. Conceding that "some additional degree of preparedness seems now to be almost unanimously admitted," the article declared that "strengthening is needed . . . on the navy and coast defenses." This done, "a foreign fleet of battleships would be unable to steam to our shores," thus eliminating any "evident need for a big standing army." The Oklahoman reasoned thus:

On sea there should be an increase in forces only to the point of adequacy. That point, we are convinced, will be reached when we have a fleet equal in efficiency to that of any country except Great Britain. The probability that we will have trouble with England is so remote that it is not worth considering. . . . With France or Russia, the probability seems almost as remote. All of us hope that we shall never have to contend with any of our sister nations, but there is a widespread belief that if we do it will be either with Germany or Japan. If then, we are willing that England shall always retain its present premier position on the waters, it would appear necessary that we should go only so far as to equalize our chances with those of the other second rate naval powers. . . . [That is] all human prudence calls for, and beyond human prudence it would be unnecessarily foolish to proceed.¹

The views expressed are significant in that, despite its long-standing and frequently expressed dislike for England's "arrogance" and "high-handedness," the Oklahoman preferred to remain a second rate naval power, relying when necessary upon the British navy, rather than incur the "spirit of militarism" and the heavy expenditures involved in

¹Ibid., Dec. 1, 1915, p. 6.

a greater degree of preparedness. The strongly Democratic and widely-circulated Oklahoman, of course, exerted a considerable influence in the formation of Sooner public opinion except in the Republican area in the northeast. Here the strongly preparedness-inclined Tulsa World predominated. These papers clearly demonstrated that by the end of 1915 a steadily increasing number of Oklahomans and Oklahoma dailies had come to recognize--albeit reluctantly--the need for a reasonable degree of preparedness. Considerable latitude existed as to the type and degree of preparedness needed but coastal defense ranked as the prime concern followed closely by naval expansion. Few recognized any need for an enlarged army.

Most of the rural population continued to desire peace and neutrality devoid of all but minimum defense requirements. A considerable urban element also shared this view. Reflecting the views of the urban minority, the Tulsa Democrat, four days after the sinking of the Lusitania, stoutly refused to recognize any need for accelerated preparedness:

Jingoes are talking war and criticizing the national administration for not taking more vigorous action against Germany. Next, they will want to fight England. . . . There is no occasion for this country to become involved in any war with anyone. Neither is there occasion at this time for any extensive preparation for war. Those involved in the present war will do all the fighting before they are through with the scrap now on that can be done for a generation anyway.¹ The longer this lasts the less probability of another.¹

¹Tulsa Democrat, May 11, 1915, p. 4.

With rare exception the weekly press consistently reflected the pacifist point of view. While less vocal, there was no question as to their sentiments. Even such major disasters as the sinking of the Lusitania and the Arabic failed to shake their position in the least. Two views represented the basic reaction of both the rural population and press: to keep the United States out of the war, and to exercise American influence--barring actual involvement--toward the cessation of hostilities. Theirs was not so much an opposition to preparedness per se but rather an utter devotion to the cause of peace that on occasion embraced idealistic, pacifist principles. In April of 1915 the Antlers American reflected this idealistic point of view:

Since August, 1914, the press of the world has occupied itself with the question as to which country was guilty of the present European holocaust. Let us leave this to history and see what means are at our disposal to extinguish the fire. We Americans possess these means. We are the only neutral power still permitting the delivery of war materials to warring nations. This is miserable hypocrisy--to pray for peace and at the same time prolong the war by furnishing the weapons. Use all your influence to stop these deliveries. We beg not for your sympathy for any one power, but we implore you as human beings, as Christians, to assist in bringing this fearful desolation to an end.¹

Post-Lusitania comments reflected an unchanged outlook. The Latimer County News-Democrat, on May 21, presented an even more idealized viewpoint:

¹Antlers American, April 1, 1915, p. 2.

The end of the war will be brought about by civilized neutrals, showing their contempt for war. Orderly progress and peace must rest on justice, and justice makes war illegal; consequently the end of war must mean disarmament. . . . If the United States expects to constitute an impartial head for an International Federation of co-operation and peace, she must now prove to be an impartial peaceful nation. . . . She must not adhere to and become further entangled with the past. . . . From the remarks credited to an ex-President [Roosevelt], it appears that the country has reasons to thank Providence for him being an ex-President. Patiently, but firmly standing for co-operation, peace and justice is the right and shortest way to end war.

The Enid Events indignantly branded as "war maniacs" those who advocated consideration of the prospect that some \$100 millions of German ships presently in American ports would become prizes of war in the event the United States entered the European conflict:

Inasmuch as our entry into the war would cost us a little matter of two or three billion dollars--to say nothing of the supreme folly of sending our American boys to death along the battle line--it seems incredible that this country should arise to such paltry bait.

None of the weekly publications came out foursquare for preparedness although the Durant Weekly News implied serious consideration of such measures in an October editorial entitled "Should We Prepare?":

Should the army be doubled? And should the navy be enlarged to twice its size? Should the schools be made military instruction government departments? Also should American people inaugurate a demand for preparedness that Congress cannot ignore?¹

¹Latimer County News-Democrat, May 21, 1915, p. 4; Enid Events, June 10, 1915, p. 2; Durant Weekly News, Oct. 29, 1915, p. 2.

Based on press reactions, Oklahomans at the close of 1915 appeared almost equally divided between those supporting--often reluctantly--and those opposing a "reasonable" increase in preparedness. Devotees of the Roosevelt-Gardner-Hobson school of extreme preparedness were rare indeed in the Sooner state. During the course of 1915 a bare majority of the urban element had become reluctant supporters of varying types and degrees of preparedness, while the overwhelming majority in the rural areas remained entrenched behind the bulwarks of pacifism and neutrality. Thomas A. Bailey's observation that "angered though they were, the American people showed a remarkable willingness to suspend judgment" had its classic expression in Oklahoma.¹

America's leading pacifist, particularly after his resignation as Secretary of State on June 8, 1915, in protest to President Wilson's second "Lusitania Note," was William Jennings Bryan. Bryan had long preached the folly of both war and preparedness and had a large following in Oklahoma. His populist background, progressive inclinations, support of Oklahoma statehood, and speaking engagements in the state had brought him many warm admirers including such "ardent supporters" as Congressmen Murray and Thompson.² These facts

¹Bailey, A Diplomatic History, p. 578.

²Congressional Directory, 63d Cong., 1st Sess., 1913, pp. 92-93. The Daily Oklahoman, particularly, the June 9 and 10 issues, carried the most complete account of Bryan's resignation, including the letter of resignation, Wilson's

caused many similarly-inclined Oklahomans to view his resignation with genuine regret. However, there was no criticism of the President for adopting a policy that made the resignation inevitable. The majority expressed regret at both Bryan's departure and the diminishing prospects for continued neutrality and peace, yet at the same time indicated their continued high regard for, and confidence in, the President. Many felt that the turn of world events left Wilson no alternative, others tendered their support out of respect for his high office or because of partisan loyalty.

The reaction of the Muskogee Times-Democrat aptly reflected majority opinion in Oklahoma:

The resignation . . . is probably the natural sequence of events which have been transpiring during the last six or eight weeks. Mr. Bryan for a number of years has been a strenuous advocate of peace. He is known to have favored the arbitration of almost every sort of dispute. President Wilson and the American public seem to be pretty well in accord in maintaining that there are some disputes which are not subject to arbitration unless provision is made for not permitting repetition of the cause of the dispute. . . . We regard Mr. Bryan as one of the greatest statesmen America has ever produced, but he is unfortunately out of harmony with the temper of the American people today and his leaving the cabinet will undoubtedly be a good thing for all concerned. This is no reflection upon Mr. Bryan's ability or his earnestness of purpose and his great ability. . . . He steps out of the cabinet to permit that body to act harmoniously. Retaining the most profound respect for Mr. Bryan, we cannot but express our satisfaction that he has severed

friendly and reluctant acceptance, and a cross section of sectional reactions thereto. The East, disliking Bryan and his ultra-pacifist policies, welcomed the resignation, the rest of the nation regarded it as the "unfortunate" result of "an honest, frank, yet firm difference of opinion between our greatest statesmen."

his connection with the Wilson administration. Bryan is too big a man to remain in the cabinet and give his formal assent to a policy he cannot personally endorse.

The Daily Ardmoreite took the same position, employing such identical phrases as "out of harmony" and "too big a man" and insisting that the resignation was "only an incident . . . and should not be a source of undue excitement." "There should be no fear of any war with Germany," declared the Ardmoreite, "withdrawal of diplomatic relations . . . does not mean war." The Muskogee Phoenix, reporting the development under a full page banner headline, indicated impatience with both Bryan and Wilson in the conduct of foreign affairs.¹

The Republican press was less kind in its treatment of Bryan's departure. The Tulsa World, Oklahoma's leading preparedness advocate, regarded the resignation as "inevitable" and long overdue:

Mr. Bryan's inaction in Mexico, his dilatory and slipshod method of handling the initial stages of our relations with all the nations of Europe during the earlier months of the war, his peace at any price lectures have all tended to lower him appreciably in the estimation of the American people. He has been entirely too pacific, in fact, he ought to have the Nobel peace prize.

Indeed, the World had published a strong criticism of Bryan's policies ten days prior to the resignation, insisting that his extreme pacifism needed "some qualifications when put to practical use" and that Wilson was "undoubtedly a greater

¹Muskogee Times-Democrat, June 9, 1915, p. 4; Daily Ardmoreite, June 9, 1915, p. 4; Muskogee Phoenix, June 9, 1915, p. 4.

statesman." The World further ironically observed: "We certainly have not secured the love of Mexico nor the fear of Japan, while Germany and England appear neither to fear nor love us." The front page of the June 12 issue displayed pictures of Bryan and his successor, Robert Lansing, under the cutting caption: "The Man Who Had the Moral Courage to Uphold American Dignity and the Man Who Didn't."¹

The Enid News likewise supported this view but with less vigor. Its editorial, "Bryan--Private Citizen," branded Bryan as "somewhat of a disappointment to those who expected so great a brilliancy," and regretted only the bad timing. It praised the new secretary as a man who "has been of so much power in the department of state already," and insisted that there was "no cause for alarm." Both, the Wewoka Democrat and the Tulsa World surmised that Bryan's political ambitions were the prime factor. The Democrat declared that "Bryan entered the cabinet a candidate for president" and "for these several months" had been seeking "a reasonable excuse for resigning." The World, recalling Bryan's "betrayal" of Champ Clark in the 1912 Democratic convention, suspected a similar motive.²

¹Tulsa World, May 30, 1915, p. 4; June 10, 1915, p. 4; June 12, 1915, p. 1.

²Enid News, June 10, 1915, p. 2; Wewoka Democrat, June 10, 1915, p. 4, Tulsa World, Aug. 24, 1915, p. 4.

Interest in the possibility that Senator Robert L. Owen might succeed Bryan overshadowed reaction to the actual resignation in a few papers. On June 9, the day Bryan's resignation was announced, the Daily Oklahoman carried a page one box entitled, "Owen Successor?" and reported "persistent rumors." Harlow's Weekly displayed Owen's picture on its front cover on June 12 and a subsequent issue discussed the possibility that Owen might be named Secretary of the Treasury with William G. McAdoo advancing to head the State Department. Editor Harlow lauded Owen as "possessing both brains and nerve" and declared that "no one in the country . . . is better equipped." Despite its enthusiasm for Owen, the Oklahoman on June 25 generously commended the departmental promotion of Robert Lansing. After terming him "vigorous," popular, and a "lifelong democrat," no doubt with Owen still in mind the Oklahoman concluded: "Mr. Wilson might have done as well but not better." Among the weekly publications, the Elk City News-Democrat, which rarely editorialized on national and international issues, strongly urged that Owen be made secretary of state.¹

As to Bryan's departure the Oklahoman was brief, respectful, and patently relieved. The incident was

¹Daily Oklahoman, June 9, 1915, p. 1; June 10, 1915, p. 6; June 12, 1915, p. 6; June 21, 1915, p. 4; June 25, 1915, p. 6. Harlow's Weekly, VIII (June 12, 1915), p. 387; (June 26, 1915), p. 438; Elk City News-Democrat, June 10, 1915, p. 6.

"regrettable," but implied no "slight" of Bryan who had been for years "this nation's most prominent and forceful exponent of peace." However, the President "had practically no alternative" and should be accorded "a loving and universal confidence." On June 21 the Oklahoman sought to terminate Sooner discussion of the issue which threatened to become a political liability. Reiterating "unqualified" support of the president, the editorial, "'Killing Off' Mr. Bryan," refused to brand the ex-secretary as a "fantastic idealist" but rather one who was "simply ahead of the times . . . in substituting persuasion for force" and who, politically, would "be heard from again."¹

The attention given to Bryan's resignation by the weekly press typified the high regard in which the rural areas held the "Great Commoner" and his pacifist views. No war-related issue through 1915 received as full and universal coverage. The Indian Journal at Eufaula, reflecting the attitude of the preponderant majority of the weekly press and the rural areas, expressed genuine regret. Terming Bryan "the Nation's strongest advocate of peace," the Journal applauded both the president and the ex-secretary for their "sacrifice" and "action in this matter." However, it regretted that the resignation came "at this time of strained international relations" so as to "cast a feeling of unrest

¹Daily Oklahoman, June 10, 1915, pp. 1, 6; June 12, 1915, p. 6; June 21, 1915, p. 4.

over the entire nation." The Osage Journal at Pawhuska and the Poteau News were other Democratic weeklies providing extensive front page coverage. Among the Republican papers the Enid Events outdid all other weeklies, carrying a double-column picture and two major stories. The headlines, "Bryan Tells Why He Quit" and "Tires of Being Just Scenery," typified the regret of most rural Republicans which the Stillwater Gazette also reflected.¹

Most Oklahoma officials avoided comment on the issue or expressed themselves briefly. Governor Williams indicated his disapproval of Bryan's action when, in response to a June 9 press query, he tersely stated that "all loyal democrats and patriotic citizens should firmly support the president." His telegram to Wilson on the same day pledged the "confidence and loyal and firm support" of Oklahomans. Senator Gore likewise expressed his disapprobation when, on June 30, he declared that "Bryan took the wrong time to resign. . . . But he will come back to life. He is bound to."² In essence, most Oklahomans admired and in large part supported Bryan's pacifist ideals, but regarded him as uncooperative and an

¹The Indian Journal (Eufaula), June 11, 1915, p. 4; Elk City News-Democrat, June 10, 1915, p. 1; Osage Journal, June 10, 1915, p. 1; Poteau News, June 10, 1915, p. 3; Enid Events, June 10, 1915, p. 1; Stillwater Gazette, June 11, 1915, p. 1.

²Daily Oklahoman, June 10, 1915, p. 1; June 30, 1915, p. 1.

inept diplomat and, as such, a stumbling block to the president that, regrettably, must be removed.

The pacifist activities of two of America's foremost industrial geniuses aroused Sooner interest and comment in 1915. Thomas Alva Edison, in refusing to build a weapon more deadly than the gas bomb, reportedly declared: "I don't want to destroy life, . . . I want to make the world a better place to live in. . . . It is not essential that we go into this war . . . that is absurd, no matter what happens." The Oklahoman, in reporting the incident, termed Edison "the deepest thinker . . . of his generation" and then observed: "It is believed that Mr. Edison is speaking the sentiment of an overwhelmingly big majority of Americans who, glimpsing the possibilities of war, want none of it."¹

The sincere but ill-starred effort of Henry Ford to conciliate the warring powers and "get the boys out of the trenches before Christmas" received considerable publicity from the Sooner press. While sympathetic to Ford's motives, the Oklahoma papers viewed the "peace ship" mission as an illogical and deleterious venture, which indeed it was. The Tulsa World utilized a red banner headline in reporting the sailing of the Oscar II on December 4 with 140 persons, including sixty-three delegates and fifty-seven reporters and motion picture technicians. Editorials on December 3 and 4,

¹Daily Oklahoman, June 19, 1915, p. 6.

while critical of the venture, were kindly and understanding and typified the attitude of most of the Sooner press and general public. Anticipating "fireworks" from such "credulity," the World declared:

The Henry Ford outfit was passed by the government as "tourists." . . . The government has given it out officially . . . that it has not authorized or approved the expedition. . . . Disapproval in America of the Ford project does not come from any lack of sympathy with their object or from any indifference to the great tragedy and its results, but because there is nothing tangible in the scheme to recommend it to a practical person and . . . promise [s] nothing but rejection and failure, together with the expenditure of money that could have gone far towards helping the unfortunate victims of the war.

The Daily Ardmoreite subsequently referred to the widely-lampooned expedition as the "Ford Fizzle."¹

Pacifist efforts by Oklahomans took a violent and tragic turn in July of 1915 when Frank Holt, a Cornell University graduate student and ex-University of Oklahoma German professor, committed two acts of pacifist-inspired violence that gained nationwide publicity and caused some temporary embarrassment among Oklahomans. Holt, reportedly overwrought because of intensive preparation for his Ph.D. comprehensive examinations at Cornell, and brooding over the continuance of war with its frightful casualties and threat of American involvement, placed a bomb in the reception room of the United States senate in the late afternoon of July 2.

¹Tulsa World, Dec. 3, 1915, p. 4; Dec. 4, 1915, p. 1; Dec. 5, 1915, p. 4; Daily Ardmoreite, Feb. 19, 1916, p. 4.

On the morning of July 3 Holt shot John Pierpont Morgan in a scuffle as the latter breakfasted in his New York residence with his wife and Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, the British ambassador.¹

The Morgan assault revealed a fantastic plan to end the war in Europe. Holt planned to kidnap the financier's wife and children and hold them captive on the second floor of their Glen Cove mansion until Morgan exerted sufficient pressure upon his banking associates and political leaders to bring about a cessation of arms exports and thus end the war. Captured by the Morgans, the family butler, and the Ambassador, Holt pleaded: "Kill me now please. . . . For six months I have lived in hell. I could not rest because of the frightful murders in Europe." Later he stated that he "only wanted to do something to stop this terrible war" and that he carried the dynamite and pistol "to show Mr. Morgan the very material that was killing so many people in Europe." The bomb caused minor damage and no casualties since the senate had recessed for the day and Morgan's injuries, two flesh wounds in the right hip, proved superficial.²

¹Daily Oklahoman, July 4, 1915, pp. 1, 2, 4; July 5, 1915, pp. 1-2; July 6, 1915, p. 1; July 7, 1915, pp. 1, 2; July 8, 1915, pp. 1, 2. Holt taught at the University of Oklahoma from 1909 to 1911.

²Ibid.

Of German-French descent and a native of Wisconsin, Holt was regarded by former associates and students as "peculiar" and "taciturn." His father-in-law announced:

Frank thought deeply on the European war . . . [and] opposed all war and all strife. He never advocated violence, however. . . . He . . . was closely associated with the German element at Cornell [while a graduate student and instructor], and naturally his sympathies were with Germany, but above all he desired peace. . . . Frank has overworked himself fearfully. . . . Temporary insanity must have caused the deed.

Holt had previously written war articles for an Ithaca newspaper calling for American neutrality. In a letter to the New York Times he termed himself "an old fashioned American with a conscience," absolved Germany and Bryan of responsibility for his acts, and referred to the senate bomb as "the exclamation point to my appeal for peace" which "ought to make enough noise to be heard above the voices that clamor for war and blood-money." He advocated a popular referendum on the question of war exports, branding such activity, "a colossal American crime," and insisted that "if Germany should be able to buy munitions here, we would, of course, positively refuse to sell to her." Adept and well-supplied with explosives, authorities were unable to connect him with any of a number of reported plots to destroy important buildings or ships at sea. A prison suicide ended the mystery-shrouded life of the much-traveled professor who had taught at five institutions since 1908. Previously he had served two years as a secretary in the Krupp works in

Mexico City, a further source of his pro-German leanings.¹

The Oklahoma dailies, led by the Daily Oklahoman, gave the sensational development considerable attention during the four-day period from July 4 to 8 and then dropped the matter completely. Both the Oklahoman and the Tulsa World referred to Holt as a "former Oklahoma Professor." The Muskogee Phoenix regarded him as a "fanatic," the Daily Ardmoreite as a "crazed Texan." There was no editorial comment.² With few exceptions the Sooner press exhibited little embarrassment over Holt's earlier Oklahoma connections and treated the affair basically as a human interest feature. However, the Sooner press manifested a certain sympathy for the professor's passion for peace, albeit missapplied.

Not every individual voice of protest to the export of war munitions emanated from a distraught person whose judgment and perspective had become unhinged. No one could question the motive, sanity, or patriotism of Roy Hoffman, the popular and highly-respected Oklahoma National Guard colonel and a lawyer by profession. Taking exception to the Daily Oklahoman's criticism of the resolution of the Oklahoma German society objecting to sale of munitions to

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.; Daily Ardmoreite, July 4, 1915, p. 1; July 6, 1915, p. 1; July 7, 1915, p. 1; Muskogee Phoenix, July 4, 1915, p. 4; July 8, 1915, p. 1; Tulsa World, July 4, 1915, p. 1; July 6, 1915, p. 1; July 7, 1915, p. 1; July 8, 1915, p. 1.

belligerents as being prompted by love of the fatherland, the forthright Hoffman bulwarked his reply to the editor with unimpeachable moral and legal logic:

You assume that such an expression would not have been made were Germany in a position to buy. While the situation may influence some, I believe in the mass such an assumption is unwarranted. Those behind the resolution wish our country to occupy a higher plane and take a broader view than that which springs from any kin or country. They objected because it is not right for a neutral to furnish the implements of slaughter. Because to say we want the fight to stop and then promote the means to keep it going on is hypocritical; and he who prays for peace and either sells or supports those who sell munitions, simply mocks God. . . . They believe that the man or country which furnished the means to kill is particeps criminis to this crime, and . . . is equally guilty morally with him who kills. In this state such a principal is recognized and crystallized into law [Section 2104, revised laws of Oklahoma, 1910]. . . Law or no law, put it squarely to your own conscience, and don't you think such a person equally guilty . . . in the sight of God? Now, that's the position a great many persons take in this country without regard to blood ties or fatherland. Isn't it a sneer in the face of all religion to ask the Prince of Peace to stop this useless slaughter, while with outstretched hands we are grabbing the money for lyddite and shrapnel shell sales? . . .

The only other argument I have heard for the sale is that we have always done it; that it has always been a custom among nations. Does that make it right? . . . Is it any logic to say we won't change because this is the way they always have done it back to Julius Caesar's time? It is idle to say we can't interfere with private business. We did do it and stopped the shipment to Mexico. Can it be urged that we must not stop the sale to England, because England is so much bigger than Mexico? . . . If you say that anyway we are entitled to profits, and should make hay while the sun shines and harvest these miseries, then we answer the profit does not flow to Oklahoma people [cites England's cotton embargo]. . . . These remarks are called forth by your repeated position . . . for the sale of munitions. I believe you are wrong. . . . The American arms manufacturers who are selling munitions to the belligerents are feeding the conflagration and are directly responsible for this debacle of hell, and it is inconceivable how anyone not in league with the devil could stand for it. (Italics mine.)

In the same issue the Oklahoman published a somewhat abashed reply, admitting that "from a moral standpoint his logic is faultless," and that prayers for peace then become "the rankest sort of hypocrisy." Pleading practical considerations, the editorial then pointed out that it was private citizens and not the nation as such that engaged in the munitions traffic and that to lay an embargo would be dangerous since America might have similar needs in some future war.¹

While never too large or well-organized, a German-American association did exist in Oklahoma. A pre-war organization, it had been formed to promote language and cultural traditions and, unlike its counterpart in a number of the states, never became an aggressive exponent of, or apologist for, the German cause during the war. However, such issues as neutrality, the invasion of Belgium, the execution of Edith Cavell, submarine policy, export of munitions, and war loans occasionally prompted individual expression or a mildly-worded resolution emanating from one of the association's annual meetings. The Kleinschmidt and Hoffman letters typified individual reactions, although the latter never established complete identity with the association. On January 4, 1915, through Congressman William Murray, the Oklahoma association had memorialized the United

¹Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 23, 1915, p. 6. The editorial criticizing the German-American demand for an arms embargo as one "with which a red-blooded American cannot agree" appeared on Sept. 15, 1915, p. 6.

States House of Representatives in support of the Hitchcock Neutrality Bill. Later in the same year the association adopted a series of resolutions calling upon President Wilson "to take a firm stand in dealing with all belligerent nations, including Germany, and disapprove of the sacrifice of the lives of neutrals and non-combatants through submarine warfare." The resolution further protested allied restrictions on American trade with neutrals and Germany, particularly in non-contraband items, and called for an embargo on munitions of war.¹

Even the Oklahoman, which by the autumn of 1915 had become mildly hyphenate-conscious, recognized the basic loyalty and integrity of the Oklahoma Germans, for its comments on September 15 contained more commendation than criticism:

The German-Americans of this state have evidently not been accepting at par everything one finds in "The Fatherland" and other pro-German publications. At any rate the sentiments embodied in the resolutions adopted . . . discloses that they are pretty fair American citizens notwithstanding the use of the hyphen in their title. . . . The sole phase of the resolution with which a red-blooded American cannot agree is the declaration in favor of . . . an embargo upon munitions of war. . . . If Germany occupied England's shoes in this instance who doubts that we would hear none of these pro-German protests against the traffic in war munitions? Sass for the goose, let it be remembered is likewise sass for the gander. However, it is refreshing to find a body of German-Americans speaking out boldly for a genuine American policy in our relations with

¹Cong. Record, 63 Cong. 3 Sess., Jan. 4, 1915, p. 962; Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 15, 1915, p. 6.

foreign nations. . . . It would not be far amiss to say that the German-Americans in this state are practically in a class by themselves.

Subsequent editorials, however, presented a progressively less tolerant view of the hyphenates. On September 29, the Oklahoman admitted the charge of the "pro-Germanists" that the Sooner press was "not neutral," stating: "We make no bones of the fact. . . . However, newspaper neutrality is one thing and government neutrality another. Newspapers . . . chatter incessantly. Governments rarely open their mouths."¹

On October 13, the Oklahoman placed itself at the forefront of the Sooner anti-hyphenate movement, aligning itself solidly behind the President when he called for one hundred per cent citizenship:

The country is wearied almost unto exhaustion of hyphenization. It is utterly devoid of excuse. . . . We are Americans here, first, last, and all the time; and the individuals who cannot subscribe to that doctrine after having solemnly sworn that he will [naturalization], belongs somewhere else--not in America. That he is entitled to his sympathies and hopes goes without saying, but when in the midst of a portentous national crisis his individual beliefs assume the role of violently unpatriotic outbursts against his country's policy, he then and there becomes a public menace--just that and nothing else.

When Roosevelt lauded Wilson's speech, the Oklahoman applauded, declaring on October 14 that "for once The Oklahoman finds itself thoroughly in accord" with the outspoken ex-president. An October 23 editorial berated "the inconsistency of the pro-German element of its readers,

¹Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 23, 1915, p. 6; Sept. 29, 1915, p. 6.

who sit in approving silence when this newspaper castigates the allies for some action we believe to be wrong, but who favor us with a letter of bitter protest if . . . we express editorial disapproval of something the Germans have done," an indictment reiterated on October 21 and November 24.¹

Occasional outbursts of Irish-American sentiment also occurred. However, when J. P. McGee of McAlester requested an editorial decrying English mistreatment of the Irish and of German sailors being shot as they swam from a sinking submarine, the Oklahoman curtly replied that it was "opposed to ruthlessness no matter by whom practiced," but that "the English-Irish question is beside the argument." The Tulsa World aptly reflected majority opinion in Oklahoma toward foreign-born Americans at the close of 1915, lauding the "nine-tenths" majority as "the kind of immigrants from which the bone and sinew of American citizenship have been built up." However, to those comprising the one-tenth minority, the World issued a reminder--and a warning:

A man [who emigrates] not only throws off his first allegiance, but takes upon himself an obligation to the powers of the land of his choice, the smallest part of which is his duty to be consistently loyal to the government of his adopted land and adhere to its principles fully. He may continue to love and sympathize with his native land, but that must be a secondary

¹Ibid., Oct. 13, 1915, p. 6; Oct. 14, 1915, p. 6; Oct. 23, 1915, p. 4-C; Oct. 31, 1915, p. 6-C; Nov. 24, 1915, p. 6.

matter. . . . Let us emphasize this idea that in all cases America, for Americans, should be first.¹

The continuing opposition of the overwhelming majority of the Oklahoma press and general public to the extreme pacifism of the Socialists and Industrial Workers of the World became increasingly evident as these organizations adopted stronger anti-war programs midway through 1915. While being questioned by the Industrial Relations Commission, I. W. W. leader, William D. Haywood, had declared that he opposed war but approved "violent measures in labor disputes" since "the working class is the only class entitled to any consideration." To this the Oklahoman acidly retorted: "Mr. Haywood has clearly never given his proposals a sober, second thought. The most characteristic estimate possible is that he is preaching the stuff because it pays a fair salary and saves him from hard work." Reaction to local I. W. W. activity proved equally hostile. The Oil and Gas Journal as early as April 30, 1914, had labeled Jack Law, George Fenton, and other Tulsa I. W. W. leaders as "blatant spellbinders" who "reviled American institutions and referred to the American flag as a 'dirty rag.'" Only prompt police action saved I. W. W. "street-corner" orators from a "rough reception" at the hands of "a crowd of incensed Tulsans." The Journal declaimed: "Agitators are in

¹Ibid., Sept. 30, 1915, p. 6; Tulsa World, Dec. 14, 1915, p. 4.

bad odor. . . . The oil-field workers possess a spirit of patriotism that forbids affiliation with men of the flag-trampling stripe" whose "inflammatory mouthings" reveal a "vicious" and "anarchistic spirit."¹

Oklahoma Socialists in 1915 not only strongly supported the national party in its pre-1916 convention resolutions opposing war, munitions manufacture and sale and providing for a "universal disarmament" peace program but further intensified their own anti-war, anti-preparedness struggle on the state and local levels. The articles of the Reverend Thomas W. Woodrow typified their bitter opposition. In March he published an anti-militarist blast entitled "Kruppism, The Virus of Capitalism." Severely censuring churchmen and peace advocates such as Andrew Carnegie and World Court members for holding stock in munitions companies, Woodrow declared:

To allow the manufacture and control of the common means of life, the instruments of production and distribution, in private hands for private profit is bad enough; but to allow the manufacture and control of the means of murder and death, the instruments and munitions of war is much worse. It is the virus of capitalism. It leads a few men for the sake of profits to poison and inflame the public mind with the passion of war. . . . Socialism applied to this one department of manufacture, destroying the possibility of private profits in war and preparedness for war, the passion for war would no more be inflamed by private interests and would entirely pass away and war would be no more.

¹Daily Oklahoman, May 13, 1915, p. 1; "Agitators Are in Bad Odor," The Oil and Gas Journal, XII (April 30, 1914), p. 4.

The same issue also considered the prospect that the dire extremities of war might force destitute nations into collectivism and eventually Socialism. Said Woodrow: "It will be a clean sweep of the Socialist broom before the conflict is over. . . . Instead of the new order being voted in by the Socialists it may be floated in on an ocean of blood."¹

In September, Editor Woodrow, after gloomily predicting war for the United States, issued an impassioned plea for peace:

Wall Street is in complete control of the National Administration, and the voice of the people will have no more effect to avoid it than the song of the kady-did. Notwithstanding all the people are opposed to war except a few who can keep away from the firing line and make profits and accumulate wealth by the murderous conflict of those whose labor creates wealth. While the war seems inevitable it is the duty of all to raise their voices against it. Let the people of the United States of all parties and churches flood the White House at Washington, D. C., with letters of protest against war. People of all churches, societies, and parties ought to be organized in a solemn pledge to refuse absolutely to enlist or be enlisted to fight. Let the pledge of membership be:

I refuse to kill your father. I refuse to slay your mother's son. I refuse to plunge a bayonet into the breast of your sister's brother. I refuse to slaughter your sweetheart's lover. I refuse to murder your wife's husband. I refuse to butcher your little children's father. I refuse to wet the earth with blood and blind kind eyes with tears. I refuse to assassinate you and then hide my stained fists in folds of ANY flag.

¹Daily Oklahoman, May 14, 1915, pp. 1, 6; Woodrow's Magazine, I (March, 1915), pp. 7, 26. Daily Oklahoman headlines on May 14 termed the national declarations "Radical Resolutions" but did not comment further.

The I. W. W., which had begun organizational activities in the Tulsa area of the Mid-Continent oilfield in February of 1914, held similar views. Indeed, The Oil and Gas Journal reported that "all the literature of the [I.W.W.] organization is purely of a Socialistic nature."¹

Nor were all organized efforts for peace sponsored by radical, minority groups such as the Socialists and I. W. W.'s. The Oklahoman, on August 14, reported a "mass meeting of peace lovers of the state" in Oklahoma City to consider resolutions and elect delegates to the national peace convention scheduled for September 5 and 6 at Chicago. The Sooner group adopted a resolution "decrying the gigantic slaughter in Europe and expressing its hope that the United States, which is friendly to all nations, will not become involved in war with any of them." Despite the fact that submarine depredations had shaken its peace and anti-preparedness position, the Oklahoman expressed the belief that the resolution reflected views "almost universal in this country" and that "the sensible, long-headed business man of Oklahoma City and Oklahoma at large wants the peace under which he is prospering to continue."²

¹Ibid., I (Sept., 1915), pp. 25-26; A. J. Hazlett, "Organizing Field Workers," The Oil and Gas Journal, XII (April 23, 1914), p. 24. The latter includes the ten major points in the I. W. W. program for oil-field workers.

²Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 15, 1915, p. 4-C.

There were other less vocal voices of protest in Oklahoma than the Socialists, the I. W. W.'s, the minute pro-German element, and occasional individuals such as a distraught Frank Holt and severely logical Colonel Hoffman. The Sooner population in 1916 included some 5,472 religious pacifists but these dissidents were not inclined to public outcry. Not given to forceful expression, they totaled 1.3 per cent of the Sooner population and sensed the growing hostility to their particular brand of sectarianism.¹

The latter months of 1915 provided still another incident that contributed significantly to the crystallization of Sooner attitudes toward peace, preparedness, and the warring powers. The Germans, on October 12, executed Edith Cavell, a British nurse on duty in Belgium, for assisting "some two hundred and fifty" allied prisoners of the German army to escape. News of the execution did not reach Oklahoma until ten days later. While there had been "a general cleanup" of allied spies, the terse initial reports emphasized the strenuous efforts of the American ambassador in Miss Cavell's behalf and the expressed regret of the German foreign minister "that a woman must be executed." On the following day the Oklahoman first aired its views on the execution.

¹Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies, 1916, Part I, pp. 299-301. The total included 2,159 Quakers, 1,473 Mennonite Brethren, 915 General Conference Mennonites, and 925 German Baptist Brethren or Dunkers.

While strongly disapproving, the carefully and cautiously worded editorial contained no direct indictment of the Germans:

The Oklahoman . . . frankly disapproves of the punishment accorded Miss Cavell. If her womanly sympathies brought indiscretion in their path it is also true that those same womanly sympathies caused her to nurse many a wounded German and Austrian soldier back to health and strength, notwithstanding they were her enemies. We do not believe the cause of Germany will be greatly enhanced in the United States because of this woman's execution, and, if it is not, Germany has only herself to blame.

When corroborated reports of French execution of nine women spies reached the Sooner press, the Oklahoman, on November 3, merely reiterated that it was "opposed to the killing of female prisoners of war, whether the killing is done by Germany or by any of the nations she is fighting. . . . The Oklahoman abhors ruthlessness." The paper reported subsequent developments without comment.¹ While the Cavell incident created no sustained and embittered reaction in Oklahoma in 1915, when comprehended with other subtle forces it did facilitate acceptance of the war in 1917.

As the year 1915 drew to a close the preponderant majority of Oklahomans still firmly desired peace and observed the fiction of American neutrality. However, the hard lesson

¹Peterson, Propaganda For War, pp. 61-63; Daily Oklahoman, Oct. 24, 1915, p. 1; Oct. 25, 1915, p. 1; Oct. 26, 1915, p. 6; Nov. 3, 1915, p. 6; Nov. 6, 1915, p. 6. Peterson points out that the allies made Miss Cavell "the personification of innocent people who were crushed under the German war machine."

of continuing war had brought a less sizable majority to accept reluctantly a reasonable degree of preparedness. The "hyphenates" as yet were not cordially disliked but the breach was widening. While seldom overtly expressed, a consciousness of national identity had grown with each subsequent war crisis. In like manner, the cold fact of economic gain undoubtedly influenced many. Even organized labor, a major voice for strict neutrality and minimum preparedness, admitted this fact:

The outlook for organized labor was never brighter. . . . Whatever may be the results of the great European war, one thing is certain, it is going to result in steady employment for American workmen for years to come . . . [because of] ruined countries.¹

Whatever the factors, few in Oklahoma believed in 1915 that American involvement in the war was inevitable or even likely, but far more sensed the frightening fact that such a catastrophe was possible.

¹"Future Looks Bright," The Oklahoma Labor Unit, VIII (Dec. 4, 1915), p. 2.

CHAPTER VII

THE GORE-McLEMORE RESOLUTIONS: PACIFISM AND NEUTRALITY AT HIGH TIDE

The advent of 1916 brought no essential change in the Sooner pacifist-preparedness controversy, although an additional voice was raised in opposition to preparedness. The Oklahoma Federationist, published by the Oklahoma State Federation of Labor, made its initial appearance on January 1, 1916, and soon established itself as the official voice of labor in the state. Successor to the Oklahoma Labor Unit, the Federationist viewed the news, including war developments, from the viewpoint of labor, "the people who fight, die, and suffer." From the very onset the paper opposed "the huge war budget and the 'cult of preparedness,'" giving generous front page coverage to the activities of the newly activated "Anti-Militarism Committee," a nationwide organization "formed to protest against attempts to stampede this nation into the adoption of a dangerous program of military and naval preparedness." Spearheaded by such nationally prominent figures as Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, Louis P. Lochner, and Max Eastman, and reportedly "in close conference with the

anti-preparedness minority in both the Senate and the House," the organization drew the enthusiastic support of the Sooner labor publication.¹

A week later the Federationist committed itself even more strongly. Rear Admiral French Chadwick, an implacable foe of preparedness, had declared in a recent conference on the war at Clark University that "navies and armies are insurance for capital owned abroad by the leisure class. . . . It is for them that empires and spheres of influence exist. The great war now raging is a culmination of efforts to maintain and extend these spheres. The time has come to call a halt." Reminding the public "that it is a rear admiral, not a labor agitator or a visionary who is speaking," the Federationist lashed out strongly at all preparedness advocates:

And the day Rear Admiral Chadwick was laying his finger on the sore, the president of the steel trust and other dreamers of world conquest, based on exploitation at home, were giving a dinner in New York to Theodore Roosevelt, foremost champion of preparedness. Is not the whole sordid scheme plain? Some deluded (?) individuals have suggested that Uncle Sam should manufacture his own war paraphernalia. How foolish! Such a procedure would take all the profit out of the game and end forthwith the strenuous demand for "preparedness." . . . Like a beast of prey that has tasted the blood of its victims, the powerful war trust will not be contented until it has consumed the entire carcass of the "enormous profits" of war manufactures. . . . Educate our youth for progress and preservation rather than destruction and death and we will do something worthwhile. Real patriotism? Yes! Money-mad patriotism? No.

¹Oklahoma Federationist, VIII (Jan. 1, 1916), pp. 1, 2.

While not all of the Sooner labor element reacted so decisively, the Federationist in large part reflected the attitude of its constituents. This position of strong opposition to preparedness remained essentially unchanged until American entry into the war brought a new theme, namely, "labor is always patriotic."¹

All other segments of the press maintained their previously declared positions, although the preparedness advocates became increasingly vocal. The Republican Tulsa World, while it scored jingoism, insisted, on February 15, that "the real idea is that we must prepare for peace if we expect to retain it. . . . We glory in peace, but . . . we seek a degree of preparedness that will discourage war." The less partisan Muskogee Phoenix urged its constituents to pressure their congressmen for preparedness measures, that they "make a noise at home like real preparedness and keep on making it." Among the influential weeklies the Democratic Durant Weekly News, editorializing on "The Naval Program," concluded that "those whose criticism is that the program is too small have much better ground than those who think it is too large."²

p. 1. ¹Ibid., VIII (Jan. 8, 1916), p. 2; (April 7, 1917),

²Tulsa World, Feb. 15, 1916, p. 4; Muskogee Phoenix, March 12, 1916, p. 6-B; Durant Weekly News, Feb. 18, 1916, p. 4.

Meanwhile the progressive shifting of President Wilson from his previous position of "impartiality in thought as well as in deed" to active espousal of national preparedness early in 1916, caused increasing concern among the majority of Oklahomans and other Americans still committed to a policy of neutrality and peace. Interpreting the President's position as a conscious attempt to commit the nation to war, a number of congressmen, some motivated by a genuine concern for neutrality and peace and others with an eye to the approaching election, sought to challenge the President's policy and leadership. In this struggle to force Wilson's hand, to gain for the legislative branch a greater measure of control over foreign policy, and to preserve peace and neutrality for America, Senator Thomas Pryor Gore of Oklahoma played a leading role. Numerous resolutions seeking to embargo armaments exports, control munitions manufacture, and to regulate commercial intercourse with the warring powers were introduced in Congress, but the real fight to forestall Wilson's new-found preparedness endeavors and eventual American participation in the war centered upon the so-called Gore-McLemore resolutions.¹

¹The best detailed account, both factual and interpretive, of the Gore Resolution, the motives prompting it, the ensuing bitter debate in Congress, and the nationwide attention of the press appears in Monroe Lee Billington, "Thomas P. Gore: Oklahoma's Blind Senator" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1955), Chapter IV, pp. 134-69. For the introduction, debate, and vote on the Gore resolution see the Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess.,

As Professor Monroe Billington has pointed out, "the preparedness controversy was only one aspect of the larger problem of neutrality facing the United States." A "particularly perplexing problem" was that of armed merchant ships and passenger liners and the rights of neutral Americans under international law to travel on such vessels. Months before the Germans initiated their submarine campaigns the State Department had classified merchant ships armed solely for defense as peaceful vessels. Germany's desperate attempts to neutralize the British blockade and the resultant Lusitania sinking renewed the controversy over the status of armed ships. Relations were further strained on December 30, 1915, when the Persia, an armed British liner, was torpedoed in the Mediterranean with two American casualties, one of them the newly-appointed consul to Aden.¹

Feb. 25, 1916, p. 3120; March 2, 1916, pp. 3405-12; March 3, 1916, pp. 3458-59; 3463-87. For the McLeMore resolution see ibid., Feb. 17, 1916, p. 2756; Feb. 22, 1916, p. 2958; March 4, 1916, p. 3583; March 6, 1916, pp. 3624-25; March 7, 1916, pp. 3689-3720; Appendix, Feb. 18, 1916, pp. 361-65; March 7, 1916, pp. 468-71; March 8, 1916, pp. 453-54, 484-86. The papers of Senator Gore located in the Division of Manuscripts at the University of Oklahoma also contain considerable useful information.

¹Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 144-48, provides both the facts and the documentation on the significant developments backgrounding the Gore Resolution. See also Alice M. Morrissey, The American Defense of Neutral Rights, 1914-1917 (Cambridge, 1939), pp. 106 ff.; Carlton Savage (ed.), Policy of the United States Toward Maritime Commerce in War (Washington, 1936), II, pp. 71 ff.; Edward Borchard and William Potter Lage, Neutrality for the United States (New Haven, 1937), pp. 40 ff.; Papers Relating to the Foreign

Fearing both public and congressional repercussions, Secretary of State Lansing sounded out Wilson through a January 2, 1916, cipher message in regard to redefining American policy concerning armed ships. Lansing pointed out that submarines hardly could observe the proprieties of a warning since the armed ships actually could destroy the more fragile craft and often operated under such orders. The Secretary reasoned that if the allies would disarm their vessels, the German submarines could then issue the conventional warning. Wilson authorized Lansing to sound out the Allies which was done on January 18. The suggestion that armed merchant ships be treated as auxiliary cruisers, if carried out, would have confronted Great Britain, as Billington indicates, with "the fatal choice of either disarming its great merchant fleet and laying it open to potent submarine or of defying the American government and endangering Anglo-American relations." The Germans blunderingly resolved Britain's plight by announcing unrestricted submarine warfare on February 10, effective after eighteen days. Lansing then announced on February 15 that the United States "would not insist upon its new position" nor would it warn its citizens to refrain from traveling thereon although it would continue

Policy of the United States, Supplement, 1916 (Washington, 1929), pp. 146-48; "Armed Liner Issue," Current History, VII (April, 1916), pp. 14-23; "Armed Ships: Official Documents," ibid., pp. 24-30.

to support the proposed disarming "in the interests of humanity."¹

In this welter of diplomatic exchange Senator Gore, seriously disturbed over the retreat of American diplomats from the position he so strongly advocated, took steps to combine legislative action with the force of public opinion to gain the desired objective. Gore did not oppose the President and his policies for either personal or political reasons. Indeed, Gore had strongly supported Wilson's candidacy in 1912 and had delivered one of the seconding speeches to his nomination at the Democratic convention. Wilson, in turn, had warmly supported the Senator's reelection in 1914 and subsequently tendered a personal letter of congratulation. On June 30, 1915, the Daily Oklahoman had referred to Gore as "one of President Wilson's most ardent supporters."² Senator Gore's motives in opposing the

¹Ibid.

²"Second to Nomination of Woodrow Wilson," Cong. Record, 62 Cong., 2 Sess.; Appendix, Aug. 5, 1912, pp. 467-68. Gore was one of Wilson's five campaign managers at the 1912 convention. Wilson and two of his co-managers praised Gore's contributions. William McAdoo lauded Gore's "skillful and active" efforts. McAdoo, Crowded Years (Boston, 1931), p. 152. The New York Times on Aug. 12, 1912, reported Wilson as observing just prior to the deciding ballot that Gore was "a field general so capable that it would be mere impertinence on his [Wilson's] part to intervene in the situation, instead of trusting all to the Senator." The Gore Papers contain a circular from the Senator's 1914 campaign that reprinted a letter from Wilson to Eugene M. Kerr, April 24, 1914, in which the President expressed the "warmest admiration for" and "the greatest confidence in" Gore. See also Wilson to Gore, Oct. 30, 1914, Gore Papers; Daily Oklahoman, June 30,

President were sincere and reflected the attitude of the preponderant majority of his constituency despite the pyrotechnics of the subsequent "represent Oklahoma or resign" campaign. An isolationist, a pacifist, a progressive, and an advocate of strict neutrality, there was no other course open to the Sooner Senator, even though such opposition inevitably forged the first link in the chain of events that disrupted a "heretofore solid friendship" with the President and ultimately helped Gore to lose his senate seat in 1920.¹

The Oklahoma Senator initiated his campaign to discourage--in certain instances actually to prohibit--American citizens from traveling on armed ships, whether of belligerent, American, or other neutral registry, when on January 5, 1916, he introduced two bills for Senate consideration. The first measure bore the title, "A bill (S. 2022) to prohibit the issuance of passports for use on the

1915, p. 1; Charles Seymour (ed.), The Intimate Papers of Colonel House (2 vols.; Boston, 1926), I, pp. 84-85, 93. Gore's significant role in the election of Wilson in 1912, particularly in convention maneuverings, is carefully developed in two articles by Monroe Lee Billington, "Thomas P. Gore and the Election of Woodrow Wilson," Mid-America: An Historical Review, XXXIX (July, 1957), pp. 180-91; and "Senator Thomas P. Gore," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXV (Autumn, 1957), pp. 269-73.

¹Billington capably develops Gore's views in these areas in "T. P. Gore," pp. 134-69; "Senator Thomas P. Gore, Southern Isolationist," unpublished paper read before the Southern Historical Association, Atlanta, Georgia, Nov. 14, 1959; and "Senator Thomas P. Gore and Oklahoma Public Opinion, 1917-18," unpublished paper read before the American Historical Association, Washington, D. C., Dec. 30, 1958.

vessels of a belligerent country"; the second, "A bill (S. 3034) to prohibit belligerent vessels from transporting American citizens as passengers to or from ports in the United States, and to prohibit American and neutral vessels from transporting American citizens as passengers and contraband of war at one and the same time." These severely restrictive measures contained, essentially four basic provisions. They would have (1) denied American passports for use on the ships of any belligerent power, (2) withdrawn the protection of the government from citizens who traveled on such ships without benefit of, or in violation of, the passport oath, (3) refused entry into the ports of the United States to belligerent vessels transporting American citizens, and (4) prohibited the simultaneous transport of contraband of war and American citizens on all neutral vessels, including those of the United States. Penalties extending upward to five thousand dollars and five years imprisonment were established for the various violations and administration of the act rested with the State Department and the President.¹

Gore admitted that the legal right to unrestrained travel existed under both national and international law but, like Bryan, he saw legal and moral grounds justifying wartime suspension. The Senator summarized his position clearly and concisely:

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Jan. 5, 1916, pp. 495-96.

Every American citizen . . . has the legal right [but] not the moral right, to run the risk of involving this Nation in war and entailing the sacrifice of millions of lives and billions of treasure. So long as this legal right exists it must be defended by our Government at whatever the cost. We can not suffer the rights of our citizens to be invaded or violated with impunity. Only the Government . . . can suspend this right without the forfeiture of our prestige and self-respect. I believe the Government should suspend this right. No single citizen should be allowed to run the risk of drenching this Nation in blood merely in order that he may travel upon a belligerent rather than a neutral vessel. . . . If any American citizen, without regard to his own safety and the safety of his country, persists in [such travel], . . . the Government should order him to stop or else oblige him to go at his own peril. This act voluntarily taken by our Government, would not be incompatible with national honor.

The Oklahoma Senator had not acted impulsively. H. C. F. Bell, points out that Gore consulted with Bryan prior to introduction of the two bills. Indeed, Bell refers to the measures as "the Bryan-Gore position." Senator Robert M. La Follette's biographers corroborate the Bryan role. A letter written to A. L. Thurman of the United States Department of Commerce as early as November 16, 1915, indicated that Gore had carefully and painstakingly developed his proposals, consulting frequently with Thurman and other Commerce officials as well as the State Department so that the measures would be unquestionably legal and come "within the purview of Constitutional powers."¹ The tone of the letter

¹Ibid.; H. C. F. Bell, Woodrow Wilson and the People (Garden City, 1945), p. 194; La Follette and Follette, Robert M. La Follette, I, p. 553; Gore to A. L. Thurman, Nov. 16, 1915, Gore Papers, Subject File, 1890-1914, Folder, "Travel on Belligerent Vessels, 1916." Bell calls Gore "a leading Democrat."

indicates that these officials cooperated willingly and extensively, and further, implies a sympathetic interest in and approval of the Senator's proposals.

Although his measure died in committee, Gore did not stand alone in his demand for government action. Indeed, on the same day his colleague, Robert L. Owen, in the course of debate over the death of American Consul McNeely on the Persia, declared: "I think the Government of the United States should take some steps to advise its citizens in a formal way to keep them from endangering themselves and from endangering the peace of the United States." Concerning the travel of American officials in danger zones, Owen contended that "it would be better to send them on an American ship ["an armed vessel"], under the protection of an American flag, safeguarded by the power of the United States." On the same day Owen further manifested his concern over the international situation by submitting Senate Joint Resolution 69 authorizing the President to call a conference of "the nations of the world" to meet in Washington in May, 1916, "for the purpose of making more certain and properly declaring the rules of international law, proposing means by which such laws may be enforced, and laying the foundations by which the future peace and happiness of the world may be assured through acceptable international agreement." The plan, calling for representation on a proportionate basis, failed in the Foreign Relations Committee but nonetheless

envisioned the post-war League of Nations for which the Senator worked assiduously.¹

Five days later Senator Gore renewed his efforts to force Congress to commit itself on the armed ship controversy. Feeling that a number of his colleagues were giving lip service only to the President's position on the rights of American citizens, Gore introduced two resolutions designed to expose such inconsistency and political expediency. Senate Joint Resolution 73 authorized the President to halt the exportation of contraband to all signatories of the Declaration of London interfering with American noncontraband commerce. The companion resolution (S.J. Res. 74) prohibited national banking associations from making loans to such nations. Obviously directed at the blockade practices of Britain, the major Entente power, Gore's "smoking out" strategy became embarrassingly evident as he developed his arguments in support of the resolutions.

Every American citizen has the right under international law to engage in innocent commerce with neutral nations and no belligerent government has authority to abrogate this right. It is quite as important to protect this right of American citizens to ship innocent goods to neutral countries as it is to protect their right to run the risk of involving this nation in a carnival of slaughter. It will be interesting to see if those who insist so vehemently that every citizen should have the right to travel on a belligerent rather than on a neutral ship at the peril of engulfing the country in a sea of blood will be equally insistent that

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Jan. 5, 1916, pp. 495-96, 505-506.

American citizens should proceed in their immemorial and sacred right to ship noncontraband goods on neutral vessels. I trust these joint resolutions seeking to protect the rights of American citizens will commend themselves to the favor of all those who stand for the interest and security of . . . the American people without reference to the interest or the fortunes of any belligerent.¹

The measures, of course, never reached the floor of the Senate for debate but they did contribute significantly to the climate of opinion that eventually forced Congress to commit itself. Gore had never expected more than that.

Despite his unremitting interest in the explosive problem of American travel on belligerent ships, Senator Gore also actively concerned himself with the preparedness issue. Consistent with his previously expressed opposition to all forms of preparedness except a navy "adequate to defend our shores against attack," Gore on February 2 introduced Senate Joint Resolution 95 which, if passed would have transferred control of the militia from the President to Congress. The proposed constitutional amendment (Article XVIII) read: "The Congress shall have power to provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrection, repel invasions, and carry on war [*italics mine*]." The Committee on the Judiciary pigeonholed the proposal.²

¹Ibid., Jan. 10, 1916, pp. 753-54.

²New York Times, July 25, 1915, p. 1; Nov. 19, 1915, p. 1; Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Feb. 2, 1916, p. 2003.

In the meantime Gore's maneuverings in the armed ship controversy gained increasing and influential support. Conscious of the rising force of public opinion and troubled by the increasingly legalistic attitude of the President and the indecisiveness of the State Department in twice having reversed its position, William J. Stone, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, arranged a conference of congressional leaders with the Chief Executive in an effort to resolve the incipient crisis. The meeting took place late in the afternoon of February 21 with Senate Majority Leader John W. Kern, Henry D. Flood, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Stone, and Wilson in attendance. In this conference the President reiterated his determination for a policy of "strict accountability," contending that any further violation of this principle should mean a rupture in diplomatic relations. Outraged by the President's uncompromising attitude, Stone, a loyal Wilson supporter, reportedly beat upon the table with both fists and shouted, "Mr. President, would you draw a shutter over my eyes and intellect? You have no right to ask me to follow such a course. It may mean war for my country."¹

A condition little short of panic prevailed in both houses of Congress on February 23 as reports of the Stone-Wilson

¹New York Times, Feb. 23, 1916, p. 1; Feb. 24, 1916, p. 1. Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 150-51, cites the Executive Officer's Diary, 1916, Wilson Papers, in support of this explosive incident.

altercation and of Germany's public reaffirmation of unrestricted submarine warfare became known. Many of the legislators, convinced that Wilson was committed to war, favored immediate steps to forestall such a calamity. The Democratic majority of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, including Joseph B. Thompson of Oklahoma, hurriedly met and called for immediate passage of the resolution (H.Res. 147) introduced by Representative Jeff McLemore of Texas on the previous day. The McLemore proposal, the House counterpart of the subsequent Gore Resolution, when stripped of its verbiage, crystallized essentially into one basic proposition:

The House of Representatives . . . solemnly does request the President to warn all American citizens, within the borders of the United States or its possessions or elsewhere, to refrain from travelling on any and all ships of any and all the powers now or in future at war, which . . . mount guns. . . . The House expresses the determination of the people and Government of the United States both to uphold all American rights and to exercise care, consideration, and wisdom in avoiding actions which tend to bring American citizens and . . . interests into the zone of conflict where the passions of war are raging.

In issuing this "solemn warning" the resolution professed "no desire and no right to dictate to any of the powers whether they shall arm their merchant ships, and . . . no interest in the success or failure of the submarines or other naval vessels in escaping or destroying . . . merchant ships so armed." On the other hand, the declaration asserted that "the United States is vitally concerned to offer its own citizens the best possible advice, counsel, and assistance in avoiding the hazards of war," although "indifferent as to

quibbles about such terms as 'offensive' and 'defensive' as applied to guns of ships of powers at war." McLemore had introduced the same proposal as House Resolution 143 on February 17 but it languished in committee.¹

Amid clamor for immediate passage from the overwhelming majority of the House, Speaker Champ Clark and Majority Leader Claude Kitchin, although favoring the resolution, were able to delay action until the Chief Executive could be consulted. On the following day both Congress and the President moved swiftly to the offensive. Gore sought to introduce a concurrent resolution in the Senate declaring it to be the sense of Congress that American citizens should not travel on armed vessels, but he could not gain the required unanimous consent. Wilson, faced with incipient revolt against his foreign policy engineered by the Democratic leaders of Congress, viewed this as a challenge to his own personal leadership of both foreign affairs and of the party. Determining to carry the fight to Congress, Wilson dispatched an open letter to the Foreign Affairs chairman, Stone, in which the executive position was made painstakingly clear. The President was for peace and to that end he would bend his unflagging efforts. But there would not, indeed, could not, be the slightest equivocation in regard to the rights

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Feb. 17, 1916, p. 2756; Feb. 22, 1916, p. 2958; Appendix, Feb. 18, 1916, pp. 361-65.

of American citizens. No other alternative was possible, contended Wilson, for "once accept a single abatement of right and many other humiliations would certainly follow and the whole fine fabric of international law might crumble in our hands piece by piece."¹

Early the next morning, February 25, occurred the controversial and much beclouded "Sunrise Conference" between the President and the three principal Democratic leaders in the House, Clark, Flood, and Kitchin.² Informed that the

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Feb. 24, 1916, p. 3021; New York Times, Feb. 24, 1916, p. 1. Senator Frank B. Brandegee of Connecticut objected to the introduction of the Gore proposal.

²Most authorities now agree that there actually was a "Sunrise Conference" and that it occurred at 9:00 A.M., Feb. 25. However, there is still considerable confusion as to what transpired at this meeting and that preceding it at 5:45 P.M., Feb. 21. Monroe Billington, the most creditable and extensive researcher on this subject, corroborates the dates and facts utilized in this study in his "The Sunrise Conference: Myth or Fact?", The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XXXVII (March, 1957), pp. 330-40; and "T. P. Gore," pp. 153-54, 158-60. Senator Gore, in the course of debate on his resolution, made the initial verbal reference to the conference although the story did not reach the public press until 1924 and thereafter. Gore spoke of the report as one "which seemed to come from the highest and most responsible authority." Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., March 2, 1916, p. 3410. See also William Allen White, Woodrow Wilson (Boston, 1924), pp. 328-31; Gilson Gardner, "Why We Delayed Entering the War," McNaught's Monthly, III (June, 1925), pp. 171-73. The Gore Papers (especially the folder, "Sunrise Conference") and the Claude Kitchin Papers, University of North Carolina Library (in particular Kitchin to C. H. Claudy, April 2, 1921), and the Wilson Papers (White House Executive Officer's Diary, 1916) provide the basic sources of documentation. Billington, in his "Sunrise Conference" article refuses to consider Wilson a "crafty schemer" for war or the conference as a secret, sunrise

preponderant majority in the House favored immediate passage of the McLemore Resolution, Wilson replied that congressional resolutions would not deter or alter his position. Reiterating his desire for peace, the President nonetheless stated flatly that the next instance of American fatalities resulting from the torpedoing of an armed ship would bring an immediate severance in diplomatic relations with the Central Powers and, if need be, war. The New York Times reported Wilson as observing further that American intervention in the war would hasten the conclusion of the conflict. Socialist leader Allan L. Benson, citing Kitchin as his source of information, stated that the President pounded a table for emphasis and almost shouted that "if this country were to declare war at once hostilities would be ended by August."¹

Reports of the February 25 "Sunrise Conference" conversations, as well as the previous meeting of the President and congressional leaders on February 21, convinced the already seriously alarmed Senator Gore that only immediate

meeting. The article also presents and evaluates the views of fourteen American historians and contemporaries, including Ray Stannard Baker, Josephus Daniels, Horace C. Peterson, Charles A. Beard, and Arthur S. Link, which largely substantiate the Billington thesis. See p. 340, in particular.

¹New York Times, Feb. 26, 1916, p. 1; March 3, 1916, p. 1; Allan L. Benson to Alex M. Arnett, Dec. 31, 1935, cited in Arnett, Claude Kitchin and the Wilson War Policies (Boston, 1937), p. 189. See also Benson, Inviting War to America (New York, 1916), pp. 112-14.

and forthright action by Congress could avert the imminency of war. Accordingly, on the same afternoon he introduced in the Senate the concurrent resolution that subsequently became the crux of the sharply contended issue as to whether Congress or the President should control foreign affairs and the extent to which strict neutrality should be observed. The Gore Resolution and its House counterpart, the McLemore proposal, represented the high tide of congressional pacifist and neutrality expression. Monroe Billington considers them to be "the culmination of a long struggle between high-ranking officials in the government over American citizens' rights as neutrals." Horace C. Peterson, regarded them as "the most vigorous attempt on the part of American pacifists to keep the United States out of the bloody shambles of Europe." Two authorities on the twentieth century term them the issue upon which "the real fight" was staged in Congress "by those seeking to embarrass the administration."¹ The resolution declared it to be the sense of Congress that American citizens should, "in behalf of their own safety and the vital interest of the United States," refrain from travel upon any belligerent armed

¹Gore to Charles A. Beard, Sept. 28, 1926, "Sunrise Conference" Folder, Gore Papers; Billington, The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXXVII, p. 333; Peterson, Propaganda For War, p. 217; Oscar T. Barck and Nelson M. Blake, Since 1900 (New York, 1947), p. 176.

ship, "whether such vessel be armed for offensive or defensive purposes."¹

The Oklahoma Senator realized from the outset that acceptance of his resolution was unlikely. The day prior to

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Feb. 25, 1916, p. 3120. The complete text of Gore's resolution (S. Con. Res. 14) read:

"Whereas a number of leading powers of the world are now engaged in a war of unexampled proportions; and
Whereas the United States is happily at peace with all of the belligerent nations; and
Whereas it is equally the desire and the interest of the American people to remain at peace with all nations; and
Whereas the President has recently afforded fresh and signal proofs of the superiority of diplomacy to butchery as a method of settling international disputes; and
Whereas the right of American citizens to travel on armed belligerent vessels has recently received renewed guaranties of respect and inviolability; and
Whereas the right of American citizens to travel on armed belligerent vessels rather than upon unarmed vessels is essential neither to life, liberty, or safety, nor to the independence, dignity, or security of the United States; and
Whereas Congress alone has been vested with the power to declare war, which involves the obligations to prevent war by all proper means consistent with the honor and vital interest of the Nation:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring). That it is the sense of the Congress, vested as it is with the sole power to declare war, that all persons owing allegiance to the United States should, in behalf of their own safety and the vital interest of the United States, forebear to exercise the right to travel as passengers upon any armed vessel of any belligerent power, whether such vessel be armed for offensive or defensive purposes; and it is the further sense of the Congress that no passport should be issued or renewed by the Secretary of State or by anyone acting under him to be used by any person owing allegiance to the United States for purpose of travel upon any such armed vessel of a belligerent power." Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 3120.

its introduction he publicly admitted this fact, although expressing the belief that the President and the Secretary of State could hardly ignore it if Congress by chance gave its approval. Gore's motive, the enlistment of public opinion, became clear when the day following its presentation he stated that the nationwide attention and discussion engendered in itself accomplished his purpose, namely, an unofficial warning against American passage on belligerent armed ships. The Senator also realized that the President could not long ignore such a direct and major challenge to his control of the nation's foreign policy. Such a condition was clearly untenable, from the point of view of both foreign and internal policy.¹

Within three days the issue was joined. After quickly and quietly assuring himself of party support, Wilson on February 29 called upon Congress to declare itself on the Gore and McLeMore resolutions. The demand, issued in a letter to Edward A. Pou of North Carolina acting chairman of the House Committee on Rules in the absence of Robert L. Henry of Texas, was stated in courteous but unmistakable terms:

The report that there are divided counsels in Congress in regard to the foreign policy of the Government is being made industrious use of in foreign capitals. I believe that report to be false, but as long as it is anywhere credited it cannot fail to do the greatest harm and expose the country to their most serious risks.

¹New York Times, Feb. 26, 1916, p. 1; Feb. 27, 1916, p. 1.

Confident of ultimate victory, the President enlisted the pro-administration national press to rally public opinion to his cause. On March 3 the nation's leading papers called for unqualified support of the President's position in the armed ship crisis and for continued authority to determine foreign policy. The press, like Wilson, declared that the resolutions of warning under consideration would increase rather than decrease the likelihood of war.¹

Debate on the Gore resolution aroused intense feeling and public interest surpassed only by the subsequent questions of arming American merchant ships and actual entry into the war in 1917. Immediately upon conclusion of the roll call on March 2, Senator Stone initiated the discussion. While frankly admitting that he was "not in accord with the President on the main issues," Stone termed the situation an "emergency" and called for an immediate decision, "some definite step," free of "evasion or finesse . . . [or] partisanship." After speeches by Henry Cabot Lodge and John Sharp Williams in support of the President's position which included a sharp reprimand by the latter against congressional interference with Wilson and the State Department, Senator Gore rose in support of his resolution. Sharply criticizing all groups and individuals that placed personal interest

¹Wilson to Pou, Feb. 29, 1916, Wilson Papers, cited in Billington, "T. P. Gore," p. 156; New York Times, March 3, 1916, p. 1.

above the nation's welfare, the Oklahoman in plain-spoken terminology clearly defined his own views and the purpose of his resolution:

Any American citizen who places the interest of Germany . . . [or] the allies above the interest of America is a traitor to his country. These two types of traitors . . . are equally reprehensible. I have little doubt that the American owners of ships flying the flags of the allies would like to see the United States police their vessels across the high seas and protect them against assault from any belligerent power. I have little doubt that the purchasers and the owners of the \$500,000,000 worth of bonds recently issued by the allies would rejoice to see the United States underwrite their investment and guarantee the sovereignty and the ultimate success of their debtors. I have no . . . sympathy with them. . . .

I think it is true, perhaps, that any one of the 100,000,000 American citizens has a right to travel on an armed merchant ship. He has a right to run the risk of losing his own life and engulfing this Republic in a sea of carnage and of blood. . . . [But] I believe that the 100,000,000 American citizens have a right to be protected against such recklessness; . . . against . . . the sacred, the inherited right of a single irresponsible adventurer . . . to throw away his own life, and to cause the sacrifice of millions of his fellow citizens together with billions of their treasure. . . . With me it is a fixed conviction that American citizens ought not to travel on these vessels and that they should be warned not to exercise the right.¹

Intensive questioning and debate followed in the wake of Gore's forthright observations and to these the Senator gave frank and, for the most part, unequivocating response. When asked if, despite the warning, Americans should travel on armed ships would the Government then withdraw obligatory protection, Gore acknowledged, "that is doubtless implied."

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., March 2, 1916, pp. 3405-3408. Pp. 3405-12 record the entire March 2 debate on the Gore resolution.

Pressed further as to whether the Government could disregard its "high obligation" and "wholly abandon" a citizen so traveling, the Oklahoman sidestepped the basic issue by replying that, in his judgment, adoption of the resolution "would serve as an effectual warning to American citizens not to embark on these armed vessels." Since the proposal further provided that passports should be denied to those seeking passage on armed ships, Gore expressed confidence that the Secretary of State "would observe such an injunction on the part of Congress," since the State Department itself had issued a directive in October, 1915, discouraging travel "merely for pleasure, recreation, touring, or sightseeing." The resolution, therefore, would accomplish the purpose behind the two bills the Senator had introduced in January, 1916. The prerogatives of those traveling for legitimate business reasons, Gore felt, interposed no serious problems. "There is no distinction in right," he argued, "let them wait for an American--a neutral--ship."¹

The question of loss of national dignity and prestige in foregoing a recognized "sacred and immemorial right" did not impress Gore. Neutral Sweden had taken such action, he pointed out, without loss of dignity, independence, or sovereignty. To the query as to why the proposal had been presented as a concurrent rather than a joint resolution or

¹Ibid., March 2, 1916, pp. 3409-10.

a bill, the Oklahoman finally admitted that the fact that the former was not subject to a presidential veto, as were the others, was one of the "considerations" that had "influenced" his decision. "I do not deny," said Gore, "that the Executive Department is entitled to exercise authority in respect to our international relations." This, he contended, had prompted him not to press for adoption of his two January 5 bills. At this juncture the Senator interjected his account of the purported secret "Sunrise Conference" proceedings into the Senate. Admitting that he could not vouch for the absolute truth in the matter, Gore pointed out that his information "seemed to come from the highest and most responsible authority" and, as such, had prompted introduction of the pending resolution. "I was apprehensive," he said, "that we were speeding headlong upon war. . . . I did not feel . . . I could withhold whatever feeble service I might render to avert the catastrophe. . . ." ¹

Senator Stone, upon inquiry by Gore, denied that the President had ventured to him the opinion that American entry "might bring the war to a close by the middle of the summer." When asked why he, "one of the President's closest friends," had not gone to the Chief Executive to ascertain the true state of affairs, Gore replied that he professed "to enjoy no such confidential relationship." Denying deliberate attempt

¹Ibid.

to malign or embarrass the President, Gore insisted that he desired only "to pursue the path of duty" as he "saw it under the circumstances available" and that he had "no disposition to interfere with diplomatic relations or negotiations so long as they do not impinge upon the constitutional power of Congress to declare war--to control the issue of peace and war."¹

On the following day the Senate resumed consideration of the Gore resolution. Although the Democratic majority at the behest of the President was committed to oppose the resolution, Gore was not without support from both prominent Democrats and Progressive-Republicans. Indeed, the official La Follette biography refers to the situation as "a non partisan revolt" and speaks of joint "excited conferences" held to discuss Wilson's "unneutral attitude and policies." La Follette, strongly supported Gore's proposal, presenting three telegrams from groups of citizens of Wisconsin and one from the American Independence Union in California urging its adoption.²

Porter J. McCumber of North Dakota, a leading proponent of neutrality legislation, offered a substitute to the Gore resolution which did little more than reword the

¹Ibid., pp. 3410-11.

²Ibid., March 3, 1916, pp. 3458-59; La Follette and La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, pp. 553-57.

pending proposal to make it less offensive to Wilson supporters. McCumber's resolution, subsequently withdrawn, acknowledged the leadership and efforts of the President in diplomatic negotiations and recognized separate legal categories of offensive and defensive arms for merchant ships but concluded with the same deterrent to armed ship travel. At this point Ollie James of Kentucky, an ardent Wilson supporter, moved that the Gore resolution, including all substitutes and amendments, be laid on the table and called for a record vote. Gore immediately rose to a point of personal privilege, offering a startling amendment that threw the Senate into virtual chaos. While leaving all but the final paragraph intact, Gore scrapped the concluding resolution, the heart of his proposal, and substituted in its place this statement:

That the sinking by a German submarine without notice or warning of an armed merchant vessel of her public enemy, resulting in the death of a citizen of the United States, would constitute a just and sufficient cause of war between the United States and the German Empire.¹

The amendment, in effect a complete reversal of the original, hit the Senate with the force of a bombshell. Five Senators clamored for recognition including Wesley L. Jones of Washington who asked if it was "too late to offer an amendment." Vice President Thomas E. Marshall, visibly perturbed, replied that it was "too late to offer anything." Gore himself

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., March 3, 1916, pp. 3463-65.

called for the regular order and the roll call began.

James P. Clarke of Arkansas protested that the amended resolution could not be considered until the next day except by unanimous consent since it was "an entirely new resolution." The Chair denied the point of order as well as a demand for the floor by William E. Borah who contended he had asked for recognition prior to the initiation of the roll call. Borah later complained that he had been "gagged."¹

The amended resolution was tabled by a decisive 68 to 14 vote with fourteen Senators abstaining. Both Gore and his Sooner colleague, Owen, voted to table. Among the fourteen negative votes, all but two, James A. O'Gorman of New York and Jacob H. Gallinger of New Hampshire, were from the Midwest and Pacific Coast regions. Among them were such Progressives as La Follette, Moses E. Clapp of Minnesota, George W. Norris of Nebraska, Albert B. Cummins of Iowa, and Asle J. Gronna and McCumber of North Dakota. Among these the first three and the latter had directly or indirectly supported Gore in the course of Senate debate. Gallinger, of German ancestry, was the Republican minority leader; O'Gorman, of Irish background, was a New York City Democrat.²

The roll call vote did not terminate discussion of the Gore resolution and the principle involved. The

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

administrative curb, the heat of debate, and the sensational Gore substitute precluded such a course. Ten senators immediately expressed opposition to and twelve support of the measure. Among the latter were four who had voted to table, John W. Kern of Indiana, Robert R. Broussard of Louisiana, Clarke of Arkansas, and James K. Vardaman of Mississippi, the latter "regretfully." Jones of Washington, strongly pro-resolution declared: "We have decided nothing today except that the Senate can be gagged absolutely." The confusion engendered by Gore's last minute substitution did not leave the issue clearly defined. Clarke frankly stated in the ensuing discussion that he understood neither Gore's motives nor the content of the modified resolution. A number of Senators subsequently admitted similar confusion. Loyalty to the party and the President prevailed, however, and the Senate never again seriously raised the issue, despite expressed determination to do so.¹

Gore's motives, particularly for his sudden, about-face substitute, have been the subject both of much speculation and intense criticism. Monroe Billington, Gore's biographer, holds that the Oklahoman's reversal "was not

¹La Follette and La Follette, Robert M. La Follette, pp. 553-55; Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., March 3, 1916, pp. 3463-65. Pp. 3465-87 record the often heated post-tabling debate on the resolution. March 3 debate prior to the vote occupies two pages in the Record, that following the tabling, twenty-two pages. Total pre-tabling discussion totaled ten pages. The New York Times, March 4, 1916, p. 1, carried reports of senatorial confusion on the nature of the Gore substitute.

inconsistent with his primary motive," and was not prompted by his "violent" opposition to the President's position, either on an individual basis or "as a member of a sort of cabal set upon discrediting Wilson." Gore had informed the Senate that the basic purpose of his resolution, indeed, of the entire armed ship controversy, was to ascertain "indirectly and by implication" whether the submarining of an armed merchantman involving American casualties would "be deemed by this Senate a sufficient cause for a declaration of war." Billington further terms Gore's substitution a "shrewd" move. By reversing the original resolution the substitute actually represented a "parody on the President's stand," and placed Wilson's Congressional supporters, most of whom "did not want war," in the embarrassing and inconsistent position of voting contrary to their own views in order to support the Chief Executive. Thus the vote was "no victory for anyone," except an exhibition of the President's ability to command the party. C. Hartley Grattan supports these conclusions:

Wilson had asked for a vote on the Gore resolution: instead, he got a vote tabling a resolution epitomizing his own policies. He did not win a victory on the question at stake nor did any clear-cut expression of sentiment of those voting emerge. If Wilson won he won by default.¹

Four days later the House debated--and tabled--the equally controversial McLemore resolution. Pou of North

¹Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 162-64; Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 3410; C. Hartley Grattan, Why We Fought (New York, 1929), p. 336.

Carolina, acting chairman of the Committee on Rules to whom the President on February 29 had directed the polite but firm request for immediate consideration of the Gore and McLemore resolutions, asked and received unanimous consent that debate on the proposal be limited to one and one-half hours followed by a vote. Under the agreement Pou and Philip P. Campbell of Kansas, Republican proponent of the resolution, each controlled one-half of the debate.

Introduced as House Resolution 147 on February 22, the measure had been reported back adversely by the Foreign Affairs Committee on March 4. The recommendation that "it be laid on the table" contended that "under the practice and precedents in this country the conduct of diplomatic relations has been left to the President." On March 6, upon the demand of George E. Foss, an Illinois Republican, the proposal had been removed from the table and referred to the House calendar.¹

Among those prominent in the consideration of the resolution was Joseph B. Thompson of Oklahoma. Aggressively forthright, Thompson opposed the cumbersome and abstruse

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Feb. 22, 1916, p. 2958; March 4, 1916, p. 3583; March 6, 1916, p. 3624; March 7, 1916, p. 3689. Pp. 3689-3720 record the entire March 7 debate and eventual tabling of the McLemore resolution. See Appendix, Feb. 18, 1916, pp. 364-65, for the complete text of the resolution. Although McLemore did not participate in the heated March 7 debate--an unusual procedure--he did speak twice in defense of his two proposals. See Appendix, Feb. 18, 1916, pp. 361-65, for the lengthy discourse on H. Res. 143 and Appendix, March 8, 1916, pp. 453-54, in defense of H. Res. 147.

McLemore proposal although heartily favoring adoption of a simple warning such as that contained in the Shackelford resolution in the House or Gore's original proposal in the Senate. A member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Oklahoma congressman had first supported the Shackelford measure. Upon its rejection by the committee and the Senate's tabling action on the Gore resolution on March 3, he unsuccessfully proposed the Gore substitute since it appeared that the latter "was entirely satisfactory to the President."¹

Thompson's position, reiterated in both his March 6 and 7 comments, embraced five basic contentions: (1) "this is a time for honest thinking and plain speaking;" the President had asked for a vote, he should be given a direct reply, devoid of "shilly-shallying" and political chicanery, (2) the President is "the proper party to conduct diplomatic relations" although in so doing he must not impinge upon the Congressional prerogative to declare war, (3) Wilson could be trusted with this responsibility. "His patience, his restraint, his great abilities, and his passions for peace" in previous situations demonstrated this, (4) the legal right to travel on belligerent ships unquestionably existed but it could be restricted in the interests of the national welfare and safety. President Taft had done so in the Mexican crisis, Sweden in the present war, (5) the present emergency

¹Ibid., March 7, 1916, p. 3717; Appendix, March 7, 1916, p. 470.

called for such a resolution, simply and directly stated.

"The rashness of some pusilanimous and pitiful madcap" should not be permitted to create countless widows and orphans.¹

Thompson sought to circumscribe the area of provocation for war. "I feel sure," he said, "that our country will not be plunged into war unless there is a real, a substantial necessity for such action--a necessity that appeals to the honor, the dignity, and the prestige of our country." War should not be the result of irresponsible behavior. Condemning the "spirit of recklessness and utter abandon" of those Americans who insisted upon such travel, the Oklahoman then launched into the heart of his Gore-oriented argument:

I think a man who is capable of treating so serious a matter, fraught with such grave consequences to the peace, the happiness, and the welfare of 100,000,000 people, should be restrained the same as we would restrain an escaped madman. . . . I do not believe we ought to permit our country to be placed in a position where it would be possible for one of its citizens, so thoughtless of its peace, its welfare, its happiness, its prosperity, by gallivanting over the high seas on armed merchantmen for the measly purpose of enjoying a "thrill," to levy so great a sacrifice on the mothers of this Republic.

Thompson deprecated the political maneuverings that prevented a clear vote on a clear issue. "I think now," he declared, "that this agitation, this discussion, will not be productive of good." With the submission of the resolution in its

¹Ibid., Appendix, March 7, 1916, pp. 468-71, records Thompson's lengthy March 6 comments. The March 7 speech, largely a condensed reiteration of his previous argumentation, appears on pp. 3716-17 (March 7) of the Record.

present form, he stated, "I was left an orphan; . . . without the opportunity to express . . . [my] opinion."¹

The Oklahoma Congressman placed particular blame for this unfortunate condition upon James B. Mann of Illinois, leader of the Republican minority in the House. Mann's amendment allowing American passage on belligerent ships only "in cases of imperative necessity," Thompson declared, allowed "every manufacturer of munitions who is trading with the allies, every Wall Street banker who is loaning them money, and every highbrow who desired to cross the ocean for financial or foolish reasons" complete freedom to travel. Only "the poor people of the country,"² he maintained, those who "are engaged in agriculture or productive occupations," are restricted.³ Feelings between the two congressmen reached an explosive state when Mann objected to Thompson's request for unanimous consent to extend his five-minute speech into the Record. The Oklahoman acidly commented that there would "be no further extension of remarks . . . by unanimous consent." To this Mann retorted, "I hope the gentleman will stick to

¹Ibid., Appendix, March 7, 1916, p. 470, records Thompson's March 6 observations. For the final "orphan" statement made on March 7 see p. 3717.

²Ibid., Appendix, March 7, 1916, p. 470.

³Ibid., March 7, p. 3717.

it," and Thompson, amid House laughter, rejoined, "I will stick to it all right."¹

Acrimonious exchanges, no doubt heightened by the Gore tabling, marked debate in the House. Pou referred to those who sought to "misrepresent" the President as "fools" and "liars" and McLemore's proposal as "audacious" and "shameful."² Pat Harrison of Mississippi, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, maintained that an affirmative vote would "send joy to the hearts of people in certain foreign capitals" and "stab . . . the President in the back."³ Allen T. Treadway, a Massachusetts Republican, derisively declared that the "four pages of printed matter" contained "only two lines . . . worthy of consideration" while James A. Gallivan, a Democrat from the same state, termed it a "freak resolution of whereases."⁴ On the vote to table, moved by Chairman Flood of the Foreign Affairs Committee, 276 Congressmen supported the action, 142 opposed, and 16 abstained. Davenport, despite his unhappiness with evasive parliamentary tactics and his earnest desire for a simple direct warning, supported the tabling action. As he had stated on the previous day, the

¹Ibid., p. 3716.

²Ibid., pp. 3689-90.

³Ibid., p. 3691.

⁴Ibid., p. 3708.

"nine 'whereases'" containing "statements of fact which no one can say are true or false" precluded acceptance unless amended. In this he was joined by his six Oklahoma Democratic colleagues, James S. Davenport, William W. Hastings, Charles D. Carter, William H. Murray, Scott Ferris, and James V. McClintic. Dick T. Morgan, the lone Sooner Republican congressman, opposed tabling the resolution. None of the Oklahomans save Thompson participated in the debate nor, indeed, had McLemore the sponsor of the resolution.¹ No doubt others among the Oklahoma delegation, like Thompson and Gore, favored a warning resolution, but the nature of the proposals brought before Congress and loyalty to the President and the party kept them silent. Despite threats to the contrary, Congress never again raised the issue and presidential control in the sphere of diplomacy received no further serious challenge.

The reaction of the press and, as a result, the general public, was quite a different matter. Oklahomans, keenly aware of the tempest stirred up by their junior Senator, viewed the situation with mixed emotions. On March 2, as the Senate commenced debate on the Gore proposal, the Oklahoma City Bar Association, through its president, Charles B. Ames, memorialized the entire Oklahoma Congressional delegation urging the defeat of Gore's resolution. The telegram, direct and strongly stated, declared:

¹Ibid., p. 3720.

Such resolutions are in direct opposition to the President and the rights and dignity of American citizens. . . . Government is organized to protect and defend the rights of persons and property and not abandon them; and . . . a nation that yields the rights of its citizens upon the demand of an foreign nation ceases to be independent and becomes pusillanimous. . . . We condemn the pending resolutions and request our senators and Congressmen to use their utmost influence to defeat them.

Joseph P. Tumulty, Wilson's private secretary, acknowledged this communication the same day, extending the President's "cordial thanks" and "warm appreciation" of the "generous action." On the following day Democratic State Committeeman C. B. Holtzendorf "and a score of other prominent Democrats" at Claremore dispatched a vigorous remonstrance to Gore expressing "keenest regret" at his "attack upon the president's foreign policy." The telegram further stated:

We feel that your words were an attack upon the Democratic party, as well as the president personally, and as part of your constituency we assure you that the people of your state are in hearty sympathy with our president and his policies and we believe that you should make reparation for the injury already done in this possible hasty moment and withdraw your opposition to the president's policy, and stand by the administration when it needs you most.¹

The majority of the state's Democratic daily papers strongly denounced Gore's actions although party loyalty rather than personal convictions seems to have been the predominant motive. The Oklahoma City Times typified the

¹C. B. Ames to Wilson, March 2, 1916; Tumulty to Ames, March 2, 1916, both in the C. B. Ames Papers, Envelope, "Correspondence, General"; Holtzendorf to Gore, March 3, 1916, cited in Tulsa World, March 4, 1916, p. 1.

almost unanimous opposition of the dailies, reporting the tabling vote as a complete repudiation of the blind Senator. Incidental mention of the substitute appeared at the very end of the account and was broken over to page two. The Muskogee Phoenix reported the Senate and House debates in careful detail. Banner headlines on March 3 and 4, respectively, announced: "Senate Aroused by Gore Resolution," and "Senate in Uproar As Gore's Resolution is Decisively Cast Aside." The national attention focused on the Gore-inspired controversy seems to have greatly embarrassed the Phoenix. Significantly, it published no editorials directly attacking Gore although the tone of its headlines, news stories, and two general commentaries implied opposition to the resolution. Apparently, however, the Phoenix was unsure of its own views on the subject or out of loyalty to party and President felt constrained to adopt a noncommittal policy.¹

The Daily Ardmoreite, after providing extensive coverage, recapitulated the crisis with complete candor, observing on March 10 that "the press of Oklahoma has been very kind to . . . Senator Gore" but that there were two sides to the question, each possessing merit:

¹Oklahoma City Times, March 3, 1916, pp. 1, 2; Muskogee Phoenix, March 3, 1916, pp. 1, 8; March 4, 1916, pp. 1, 2, 4; March 5, 1916, p. 1; March 7, 1916, p. 4; March 8, 1916, p. 1. The two general editorials bore the titles, "A Muddled Country" (March 4, p. 4), and "A Showdown" (March 7, p. 4).

It is probable that Senator Gore did wrong. He probably should have stayed with his chief in order to present a solid front to Europe in the days of . . . emergencies. . . . But . . . it is also probably true that deep down in the consciousness of the people there is a belief that Americans should avoid involving the country in trouble by staying off of armed ships of the nations which are at war. . . . Every man forfeits some of his own liberties that he may avoid trouble, and what they do for themselves they would also have the nation do for them. . . . We by all means want to keep our hands out of the European war. It would be the part of wisdom, and not of cowardice, to stop travel and trade, if necessary, until the war ends, rather than become involved. (*Italics mine.*)

Among the few weekly publications attacking the Senator was the Hartshorne Sun. Located in the Pittsburg County coal mining district, the Sun observed with more asperity than understanding that "Senator Gore got so badly mixed on his resolution that on final roll call he voted against his own measure."¹

One of a larger number of pro-Gore weeklies, the Latimer County News-Democrat in adjacent Wilburton, on March 17 sought to clarify its neighbor's stricture. Asserting correctly that Gore's vote was consistent with the intent of his original resolution, the Wilburton weekly declared: "It was the opponent of the warning idea that got mixed. The Congressional record will put you right on this proposition." However, the News-Democrat, fearing political repercussions

¹Daily Ardmoreite, Feb. 24, 1916, p. 1; Feb. 25, 1916, pp. 1, 5; March 2, 1916, p. 1; March 3, 1916, p. 1; March 10, 1916, p. 4; Hartshorne Sun, cited in the Latimer County News-Democrat; March 17, 1916, p. 4.

for Oklahoma, previously had suggested that "instead of Mr. Gore breaking with the President, he had better warm up to him and court his influence." A leading "Wheat Belt" publication, the Elk City News-Democrat, took a position similar to that of its eastside namesake. While an editorial appearing on March 9, 1916, unquestionably indicated its preference for the neutrality views of Gore and Bryan, a subsequent commentary entitled, "American Pride," proclaimed that the publication was "standing by the President" and his policies.¹ Such Democratic weeklies as The Osage Journal, the Poteau News, the Wewoka Democrat, and the Eufaula Indian Journal, ordinarily alert to significant national and international issues, failed to mention the controversy. Apparently conflict between personal convictions on the one hand, and loyalty to Wilson and the party and reluctance to appear out of step with the point of view championed by the national press on the other, dictated such a course.

The Republican press evidenced a more unanimous opposition in which the Tulsa World played the lead role. On March 3, in particular, the World, a consistently vigorous proponent of extensive preparedness, reported the Congressional debate in great detail. On the day following it reported with ill-concealed satisfaction "evidence of the

¹Latimer County News-Democrat, Feb. 18, 1916, p. 4; March 17, 1916, p. 4; Elk City News-Democrat, March 9, 1916, p. 4; March 23, 1916, p. 4.

bitter feeling aroused . . . among the leading Democrats and loyal supporters of the administration's policy." The World's personal reactions appeared on March 17 under the heading, "Wading in Gore." The comments were as uncomplimentary as the title. Referring to the substitute proposal, the Tulsa paper refused to credit Gore with "a sincere desire to pronounce the opinion of Congress on the subject." Declaring that it would be "really a slander on the Germans" to compare the Senator's "underhanded trick to discredit his opponents and make their decision look inconsistent" with the conduct of the Kaiser's submarine commanders who "followed the semblance of frankness even in their most inexcusable outrages," the World grudgingly recognized one positive point in Gore's behavior:

Despicable as was the course of Senator Gore, we must give him credit for a little more honesty than some of our other representatives who fought so long to avoid going on record either for or against Americanism or had a lingering desire to discredit the president without showing their colors.

However, even the enlightened World either misunderstood or deliberately misrepresented the Senator for it reported him as voting to table his own resolution without troubling to explain that the amendment completely reversed the resolution's meaning and purpose.¹

¹Tulsa World, March 3, 1916, pp. 1, 2; March 4, 1916, p. 1; March 17, 1916, p. 4.

The rural Republican weeklies commented even less on the Gore resolution than their Democratic counterparts. Even the larger Stillwater Gazette remained silent although The Enid Events, giving way to political animosity, vented its spleen in a vindictive diatribe. Characterizing the blind Senator as "Gore the Gossip," and "merely a more or less pitiful spectacle," the Events launched into a vicious tirade:

A blind man has to employ his time somehow. He can't read, . . . can't draw conclusions by use of his optics. Must depend upon the caprice of others for all his information. What else is there for him to do? . . . A state that elects a Gore gets just what it bargains for. . . . Gore is a voice, a parrot and a propensity--a phonographic record of Bryanistic propaganda minus Bryan's brains, ability and astuteness--a shadow thrown upon the screen--a Charley Chaplin doing his stunt by rote. 'Ray for Gore. He leads a blind political organization in a temporarily blinded state--and together they will soon fulfill Scripture by both falling into the ditch. God hasten der tag.¹

The outspoken Oklahoma Federationist developed labor's position in support of Gore and his resolution in a lengthy March 18 editorial entitled, "People Are Not Fooled." Speaking not only for labor but for "the great majority . . . of the people of Oklahoma," the Federationist bluntly declared:

The cry of the Daily Oklahoman and other newspapers against the Gore resolution, the appeals to patriotism and the attempt to discredit men in the national law-making body who are making every effort to keep the United States out of the bloody conflict now raging in Europe, is not fooling the people in the least. . . . It is very noticeable . . . that those legislators who are known as corporation attorneys and whose records are consistent in opposing any reforms in the interest of the masses, were the loudest and most patriotic in their

¹Enid Events, March 9, 1916, p. 2.

pleas not to interfere with the rights "of the humblest American citizen . . . [to] ride on the armed ships if he desires." . . . Wall Street wants war. . . .

It was also noticeable that as a rule the younger men of all parties were in favor of warning Americans of the prudence of not sailing on armed ships. . . . A young man, . . . Congressman Decker, in his five minute address was not only expressing the sentiments of the great majority of the people of his district, but of the people of Oklahoma as well. And no doubt it will be a pleasure for Senator Gore to stand trial for his actions if it becomes necessary, before the peace-loving citizens of Oklahoma. (*Italics mine.*)

The Federationist was one of the few papers in Oklahoma to bespeak its true state of mind in such complete frankness. Even the outspoken Populist-progressive editor, J. P. Renfrew, an ardent Gore supporter, made no mention of the resolution. The Sooner Press sank to perhaps its lowest ebb in reporting the Gore controversy. Party loyalty largely determined the reaction of the Democratic publications; political animosity that of the Republicans. Many did not understand the true meaning of the Gore substitute and many who did made no effort to enlighten the public. Deprived of their common source of leadership and information, confused and opposed to the trend of events, the masses lapsed into a troubled silence. With this development Gore indeed had embarked upon the thorny path leading to his political golgotha.¹

¹Oklahoma Federationist, VIII (March 18, 1916), p. 2. Pearl Decker of Missouri, in the speech cited, declared: "I am willing to go to war for an American right, but not for a 'doubtful legal right,' as Mr. Lansing says this is. . . . It must be a vital right. . . . In the name of God why am I a traitor and a coward when I stand in the halls where Henry

The national press for the most part strongly supported Wilson in his fight to quash both the Gore and McLemore Resolutions and the Congressional revolt challenging the President's leadership in foreign affairs. Headlines proclaimed the Senate's tabling action as a decisive defeat of Gore's original resolution. If mention was made that the vote actually had been taken on the radically different substitute proposal, the fact was reported incidentally or obscurely. The New York Times spearheaded a vigorous and vicious campaign to kill the resolutions and discredit those supporting them. Charges of treason and Democratic disloyalty highlighted a series of three scathing editorials entitled "Plotting Against the President," "The President Speaks For the Nation," and "Have We an American Congress?":

These reckless men would betray their party, the President who is their leader and their party's, they would betray the country into danger and dishonor. There could be no more abject surrender of principle and

Clay stood and say, 'You shall not hurl the miners and the farmers of my district into this hell of war; you shall not take the sons from the mothers of my district and sacrifice them at Verdun or in the trenches of Europe to maintain a doubtful right.'" Ibid. Renfrew in 1914, frequently and lengthily had praised Gore's "brilliant record." Renfrew's Record, July 10, 1914, p. 1; July 17, 1914, p. 1; July 31, 1914, pp. 1, 4; Aug. 7, 1914, p. 1. Renfrew, of course, also strongly supported Governor R. L. Williams and the President. See ibid., Sept. 11, 1914, p. 4 for the pro-Williams position; Jan. 21, 1915, p. 4; Feb. 11, 1915, p. 4; June 11, 1915, p. 4 for approbation of Wilson which reiterated the phrase, "President Wilson is right" on all matters of war policy.

position than . . . the proposed measures. . . . If the pacifists, the Bryanites and the Hyphenates in Congress and out who are trying to bedevil our foreign relations really want war, they are going at their work in the right way.

The Philadelphia Inquirer echoed these sentiments, denouncing "the Bryans and Gores and their ilk" and branding Gore's substitute proposal as "a contemptible trick worthy only of the commander of a German submarine."¹

The New York World, a notorious hyphen-baiter, maintained that the National German-American Alliance and its so-called German lobby was the "driving force behind both the Gore-McLemore resolutions and the resulting congressional revolt. Gore, of Anglo-Irish ancestry, scoffed at these charges:

There is nothing easier to say than that Senators and Congressmen have been influenced by a German lobby. This argument proves nothing except the absence of other argument. It would be just as easy to say that the paper making the charge has been bought, bribed, corrupted, and debauched by the American owners of British ships and bonds, by a pro-British lobby in the United States.

Admittedly, the German press and propagandists and American pro-Teutonic elements welcomed the Gore-McLemore furor.

George Sylvester Vierick, editor of The Fatherland, later recalled two "voluminous" propaganda pamphlets based on the resolutions and the alleged major role of the able Irish-American, Shaemus O'Sheel, in the McLemore proposal. Vierick's

¹New York Times, Feb. 24, 1916, p. 12; Feb. 25, 1916, p. 10; Feb. 26, 1916, p. 8; The Philadelphia Inquirer, cited in the Tulsa World, March 3, 1916, p. 4.

contention that the near passage of the two resolutions represented "one moment when German propaganda almost succeeded in barring American passengers from all ships" undoubtedly was overdrawn and, in addition, minimized by overwhelming counter forces.¹

Paramount, of course, among the counteractive forces was the inclination--whether consciously felt or not--of the great majority of Oklahomans and other Americans, including the President, to favor the point of view of the Allies. Joseph Tumulty, Wilson's private secretary, probably over-emphasized the pro-German propaganda value of the Gore-McLemore resolutions when he observed:

While these petitions were signed by many devoted, patriotic Americans, it was clear to those of us who were on the inside of affairs that there lay back of this movement a sinister purpose on the part of German sympathizers in this country to give Germany full sway upon the high seas, in order that she might be permitted to carry on her unlawful and inhuman submarine warfare.

In a letter to Wilson on February 24, Tumulty accused "the anti-preparedness crowd, the Bryan-Kitchin-Clarke group, and some of the anti-British Senators like Hoke Smith and Gore"

¹New York World, March 7, 1916, p. 1; Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 165-66; George Sylvester Vierick, Spreading Germs of Hate (New York, 1930), pp. 85, 104-105. Gore's statement concerning the World's charges appeared in the New York Times, March 8, 1916, p. 1. The Daily Oklahoman, July 13 and 18, 1920, during the bitter campaign to defeat Gore, reprinted excerpts from the following papers to demonstrate the favorable reaction of the German press to the Gore resolution: New York Staats-Zeitung, March 4, 1916; Frankfurter [Germany] Zeitung, March 4, 1916; Berlin Vossische-Zeitung, March 6, 1916.

of "lining up" against the President to "discredit . . . his leadership." Monroe Billington contends that "there is no evidence whatever that Gore was in sympathy with the German cause" and that he "was honestly trying to be neither pro-German nor pro-Ally, but pro-American." There is no reason to doubt that the Senator was a loyal American and prompted by the highest motives. Gore said:

Whenever the honor, whenever the vital interests of the United States, whenever the essential rights of any American citizen are violated or outraged, I shall go as far as who goes farthest to place at the disposal of the Commander in Chief of the Army and the Navy every available man and every available dollar, whether that power be Germany or any nation under the sun. As an American standing for Americans only I have no choice of enemies.¹

Gore was no outright pacifist. He favored moderate preparedness for home defense and would fight if attacked. An economic conservative, representing a young state whose finances and economy had not yet completely stabilized, the Senator consistently advocated tax reduction and economy in government. In defending his resolution, Gore had declared that next to anxiety for the needless sacrifice of lives he was most concerned over the loss of "billions of . . . treasure." His fear that Wilson desired war in the spring of 1916, of course, was unfounded but at the moment the President's

¹Joseph P. Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson As I Know Him (Garden City, 1921), pp. 202, 204; Tumulty to Wilson, Feb. 24, 1916, cited in ibid., p. 204; Billington, "T. P. Gore," p. 166; Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., March 2, 1916, p. 3411.

position was unclear and there were evidences lending support to Gore's pro-war conclusion. Due largely to popular support of Wilson and the critical attitude of the press, the Oklahoman's motives and actions were largely misunderstood. Few realized the basic difference between the substitute proposal and the original resolution and to most the administration-decreed defeat of the former represented a blanket repudiation of the entire measure. Indeed, numerous papers, either through lack of understanding, or deliberate intent, said little or nothing about the Gore substitute. Billington provides the most valid summation:

Wilson's opponents hardly had a fair hearing as the press of the land rallied to defend its popular leader. Taking its cue from the press, the public at large expressed negligible interest in Gore's parliamentary tactics. The vote was accepted by the American people as being a resounding victory of the executive over the legislative branch of the Government; no longer was Congress to interfere with matters within the President's jurisdiction.¹

The urban papers and public in Oklahoma largely reflected the point of view of the Administration and the National press while the rural areas, where Gore's support was the strongest, generally backed the Senator's position. The very fact that the majority of the rural press remained silent on the issue provides the strongest evidence supporting such a conclusion. The Gore-McLemore resolutions, indeed, the entire issue of peace and neutrality, placed them

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong. 1 Sess., March 2, 1916, p. 3408; Billington, "T. P. Gore," p. 164.

in a serious dilemma. Motivated, in most instances, by loyalty to country, the President, and the Democratic party, yet holding staunch convictions for neutrality and peace, there seemed no other alternative but silence. The only major voice of the common people to defy this pattern was the Oklahoma Federationist. Such influential weeklies as the Republican Stillwater Gazette and the Poteau News, The Osage Journal, and the Wewoka Democrat, all Democratic, quite consistently reported and commented on significant national and international developments both prior to and immediately following the Gore-McLemore resolutions, yet on these vital issues they remained silent.

Billington declares:

I see no other conclusion . . . concerning the attitudes of the small town newspapers in Oklahoma. . . . These papers were generally for neutrality but found themselves in a dilemma when they were supporting the administration's measures. . . . They preferred to be called patriotic in 1916 than to be called neutral, even though neutrality appealed very much to them.

Edwin C. McReynolds indicates a similar view, observing further that "in 1798, 1916, and 1956, the voters followed leaders in droves, without comprehending their principles." Observed casually, it appeared that the sentiment of the Oklahoma rank and file shifted, that loyalty to the party and the President had replaced desire for neutrality and opposition to preparedness as the primary consideration. Such was not the case. Most Oklahomans still firmly adhered to these beliefs--and to Senator Gore. Indeed, no major element of

Gore's support defected until August and September of 1917 when his opposition to conscription and the Food Control Bill culminated in the Daily Oklahoman's "Get Right or Get Out" campaign and censure by the heretofore staunchly loyal Oklahoma State Federation of Labor. At the same time, however, the Oklahoma State Farmers' Union adopted resolutions strongly endorsing the Senator rather than the President and letters from rural and labor supporters still continued to appear, even in the Daily Oklahoman.¹

To the careful observer, however, surveying the period in retrospect, four major developments had crystalized in the course of the Gore-McLemore episode in the armed ship controversy. Bearing most directly on the Oklahoma scene, Gore had officially broken with the Administration in the areas of diplomacy, preparedness, and subsequent conduct of the war. This course eventually was a major factor in the Senator's defeat in 1920 despite fourteen years of continuous service during which he had enjoyed the unwavering support of the common people. Further, the President's control of foreign policy never again was seriously challenged until the post-war League of Nations controversy. In addition, American

¹Monroe Billington and Edwin C. McReynolds, personal letters, April 11, 1960; Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 21, 1917, p. 8; Aug. 25, 1917, p. 6; Aug. 28, 1917, p. 6; Aug. 29, 1917, p. 5; Aug. 31, 1917, p. 8; Sept. 9, 1917, p. A-13; Sept. 20, 1917, p. 6; Oklahoma City Times, Aug. 22, 1917, p. 1. The Gore Papers, Folder, War Policy, 1915-1917, contains numerous typical anti- and pro-Gore petitions, totaling 3,032 signatures demanding his resignation and 712 opposing such a move.

preparedness was definitely on the march. In Oklahoma, as elsewhere, those who did not support the effort with few exceptions--notably the Socialists--hereafter remained silent. Finally, the movement represented the initial phase of the high tide of strict neutrality and wide-scale pacifist sentiment reflected later in 1916 by the rank and file in reactions to the Sussex affair; the Army Reorganization, Naval Appropriations, and War Revenue Bills; and the Armed Ship Controversy. America, although largely unconscious of the fact, had embarked on the road to war, and Oklahomans, more reluctant than most, moved with the main stream of public opinion.

CHAPTER VIII

PORTENTS OF THE FUTURE: OKLAHOMA REACTIONS

TO PEACE AND PREPAREDNESS IN 1916

The twin triumphs of the President's widely acclaimed Western tour in late January and early February of 1916 and the resounding defeat of the Gore-McLemore resolutions seemed to herald the dawn of a new era for the Chief Executive and his coterie of advisors. Congress had been brought to heel, the Midwestern mind had been converted to the cause of preparedness, and the course had been cleared for the unhindered operation of the Administration's foreign and defense policies. If he believed that he enjoyed universal majority support, however, Wilson was mistaken.¹ While the

¹Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 174-96, provides the best summary of recent scholarship on the preparedness controversy in 1916 as well as the 1914-15 period. Link maintains that Wilson temporarily lost control of Congress early in 1916, partially because of his month-long absence following his Dec. 18, 1915, second marriage to Mrs. Edith Bolling Galt. During this interim "discordant elements," in the House and elsewhere, seized the initiative. House and Tumulty, his chief advisors, urged an immediate "appeal to the country . . . on the question of preparedness," insisting that "our all is staked upon a successful issue in this matter." The Jan. 27-Feb. 3 New York to St. Louis tour sought to accomplish this. Link contends that the acclaim of the press and public "deluded him [Wilson] into thinking he had

Administration's policies on foreign affairs and preparedness made appreciable gains in the spring and early summer of 1916, the forces of opposition in Congress, temporarily frustrated by the Gore-McLemore defeat, were regrouping their ranks for an even more formidable assault upon the bastions of Wilsonian policy.

The issue upon which the arch-foes of preparedness rallied for the second major attack was the plan of Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison and the Army War College for a greatly expanded military arm in the form of a "Continental Army" reserve program. On March 4, the day following the defeat of the Gore resolution, George E. Chamberlain of Oregon, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee which was dominated by big-army proponents, introduced a bill implementing the Garrison-Army War College plan. The bill increased the regular army by 150 per cent and authorized a "Continental Army" reserve force of 261,000 men.¹ Two days

changed the Midwestern mind." Actually, "the masses of the farmers and workers in the Midwest were uncovered" and the President "had failed to convince many leaders of opinion that the United States confronted any grave danger abroad." Ibid., pp. 183-86, includes Tumulty's Jan. 17 letter to Wilson. Wilson's addresses are printed in Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd (eds.), The New Democracy, Addresses and Other Papers, 1913-1917 (New York, 1926), II, pp. 1-121.

¹See Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., March 4, 1916, pp. 3519-20, for the introduction and a summary explanation of the main features of S. 4840, the Chamberlain Bill. Chamberlain termed it "the most comprehensive measure that was ever presented to Congress for the reorganization of the Army." The Senate Foreign Affairs Committee spent two months preparing this bill.

later James Hay, Chairman of the Military Affairs Committee in the House, proposed a quite different plan calling for a federalized National Guard and a modest forty per cent expansion of the Regular Army.¹ The House Military Affairs Committee, controlled by an anti-preparedness coalition of some fifty Southerners and Westerners led by Claude Kitchin and Warren Worth Bailey, represented the major stumbling block to Wilson's ambitious national defense program. Sensing no real change in the attitude of Southern and Western Congressmen following the President's recent tour, Kitchin and his associates took steps to force the issue. Hay and his committee saw in Secretary of War Garrison's plan the complete triumph of uncontrolled militarism dictated by the professional military coterie. "Thoroughly antagonized," the House committee, forced the issue. Hay, in conferences with the President on February 5 and 8, prevailed upon Wilson to accept the principle of "federalization" and the resignation of Garrison.²

¹See *ibid.*, March 6, 1916, p. 3624, for the introduction of H.R. 12766, "A bill to increase the efficiency of the Military Establishment." This lengthy bill of eighty-five pages was variously known as the "Army Reorganization Bill," the "National Defense Bill," and the "Hay Bill."

²Five days after Wilson's return from St. Louis, Kitchin commented to Bryan: "I see no real change in the attitude of the Members [of the House] since the President's Western tour." Link observes that "events proved the accuracy of Kitchin's surmise" and that "even before he left on his Western tour, Wilson gave signs of weakening." Link, *Wilson and the Progressive Era*, p. 186. Link cites the Kitchin to Bryan, Feb. 9, 1916, letter from the Kitchin papers.

Six weeks later, on March 23, the House approved the Hay or "National Defense" Bill by an overwhelming 403 to 2 margin. Only Meyer London, the New York Socialist, and Fred Britten, an Illinois Republican, opposed the measure, although twenty-seven members failed to vote. While the entire Sooner delegation voted affirmatively, only William Murray actively supported the measure. Murray drew applause as he championed the compulsory training provision of the bill for high school and college youths over sixteen. Citing German self-discipline, Murray declared: "If there is one thing an American boy ought to know, it is how to throw a brake on his appetites and passions. . . . Also . . . this discipline . . . will increase his earning capacity and his economic value to society." Immediately preceding final passage the House voted 224 to 180 to adopt the McKenzie Amendment which eliminated the nitrates plant provision.¹

Morgan, the lone Oklahoma Republican, joined with Democrats Davenport, McClintic, Murray, and Thompson in supporting the appropriation. Carter, Hastings, and Ferris opposed it although the latter subsequently reversed his position. Preparedness advocate Gardner's amendment providing that after one year of service an enlistee might be furloughed into a seven-year Regular Army reserve program, failed by a

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., March 23, 1916, pp. 4720, 4728-31. Pp. 4696-731 record the entire March 23 debate on H. R. 12766.

margin of 191 to 213. The proposal, designed to implement the Administration's "Continental Army" plan, received no support from the Oklahoma delegation.¹

On the day following House approval of the Hay Bill the Germans torpedoed the Sussex and an atmosphere of crisis prevailed as the Senate initiated debate on the radically dissimilar Chamberlain proposal. Four days later the Senate substituted the House-approved Hay Bill for the Chamberlain measure. On April 18, the same day Wilson threatened to break off diplomatic relations with Germany, the Senate adopted the House bill in a form so radically revised that it actually embodied the basic provisions of the Chamberlain plan. Senator Owen figured prominently in these discussions and offered amendments to increase the size and efficiency of the Medical Corps.² He also strongly supported the provision for a government-owned nitrates plant to produce "abundant and cheap" explosives and fertilizers. "I should like to see the Government harness these water powers," he declared, "not in a slight way as this amendment proposes, but on a large scale, . . . for the service of mankind." Strongly urging government ownership, construction, and operation of such facilities, Owen maintained that such a project would provide employment,

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., March 22, 1916, p. 4594; March 28, 1916, p. 5015; April 8, 1916, p. 5735; April 17, 1916, pp. 6296-97; April 18, 1916, p. 6360, 6375.

promote "the efficiency, and the happiness of our people," and "make this country what it ought to be--the most powerful in all the world and the guide of all other nations."¹

Senator Gore likewise manifested a major interest in the army reorganization bill and submitted amendments related to the compulsory military training feature of the proposal. He wished to clarify the relationship between the War Department, the State Legislatures, and the State Superintendents of Public Instruction in establishing such programs. Again Gore evidenced his distrust of overweening national authority, mounting military expenditures, and increased tax burdens. Citing comparative outlays for preparedness in the United States, Germany, Japan, Great Britain, and France at 60, 55, 45, 37, and 35 per cent, respectively, the Oklahoma Senator reminded his colleagues that "the ratio of this country . . . [is] larger than that of any other country, military or nonmilitary, in the entire world." All the estimates, he stated, were pre-war figures. At the same time Gore introduced a separate bill (S. 5517) designed to increase the efficiency of the cavalry and artillery, but no action resulted.²

¹Ibid., April 12, 1916, p. 5973; April 13, 1916, pp. 6030-31; April 14, 1916, pp. 6120-21; April 18, 1916, p. 6376. Pp. 6332-76 record the entire April 18 debate and passage in the Senate of H.R. 12766, the amended Hay Bill.

²Ibid., March 31, 1916, pp. 5211-12; April 1, 1916, p. 5299; April 12, 1916, p. 5935 (S. 5517); April 13, 1916, p. 6039. Under Gore's military training amendment the State Legislatures must authorize such training and the War Department would provide from forty to sixty per cent of the drill instructor's salary.

On May 13 the House and Senate conferees finally agreed to a regular peacetime army of 11,327 officers and 208,338 men, increases from 5,029 and 100,000, respectively. Voluntary summer training camps and a \$20 million nitrate plant were authorized, and the National Guard thoroughly integrated and increased to 17,000 officers and 440,000 men. Only Secretary of War Newton Baker's Council of National Defense provision failed to gain at least partial consideration. Section 2 of the subsequent Army Appropriation Bill enacted this feature. Oklahoma's Robert L. Owen figured prominently in the final Senate debate prior to adoption on May 17. While indicating his approval of the entire bill, Owen lauded in particular the nitrate plant provision as had his colleague, Gore, in an earlier discussion. Owen argued that the nitrate plant was needed, to prepare "this country against the exigencies of war." He defended government operation of this and other enterprises essential to the common good. Such activities, Owen insisted, were in the true Jeffersonian tradition and an extension "in the highest degree" of the "spirit of democracy . . . which has been born out of modern necessity." He further cited German successes in government-operated enterprise. Cheap nitrates, he declared, combined with "labor and intelligence," had in 1915 enabled a Mississippi farm boy in the sandy piney woods area to produce

216 bushels of corn on a single acre.¹

To these comments, Thomas W. Hardwick of Georgia and Stone of Missouri took strong exception. Hardwick strenuously objected to calling "'State socialism' democracy," declaring it "a profanation of the term." Owen, however, insisted that "Democracy means the rule of the people for the people--for all of the people, for their happiness, health, and efficiency." "Corporate power," while "magnificent" and needed, must come second. "I believe in a liberal interpretation of the Constitution," he declared; "my only regret is that we could not go further along these lines."²

Congressman Scott Ferris twice spoke in support of the compromise measure. On May 8 he strongly supported the nitrate plant provision as a logical defense measure, urging that farmers receive any excess production "to improve their impoverished farms." Citing the efforts of DuPont and other private munitions firms to defeat the bill, Ferris declared: "The thing to do when there is such a stress of circumstances, when three-fourths of the world's map is at war, is to build our own munitions plant and thereby legislate the profit out of war and war materials." Again on May 20, in the final House debate, Ferris registered his approval of the

¹Ibid., May 16, 1916, pp. 8027-47, printed the text of the lengthy May 13 conferee agreement as S. Doc. No. 422. May 17, 1916, pp. 8118-19.

²Ibid., pp. 8112-39 record the entire final Senate debate and vote on the compromise measure.

measure because it would not "get a big Army in time of peace." "I am not," he stated, "in favor of compulsory service, now or next year." Ferris applauded Hay as a "fighter," whose view was "the correct one," even though it would please neither the extreme pacifists such as Henry Ford and Socialist Congressman London nor the radical disciples of preparation led by Gardner, Mann, and Theodore Roosevelt--men with "pugnacious dispositions."¹

Ferris drew the applause of the House in asserting that he hoped the measure would "please the great body of the American people, and that an army of 220,000 men represented an adequate "minimum peace force." Once again he supported the Government munition plant provision as "a step forward toward legislating profit out of war and war material." Murray took no part in the debate although he had previously expressed preference for an expanded National Guard over against compulsory service, a large standing army, and the "Continental Army" reserve plan. The final House vote on May 20, while less than the original 402 to 2 margin,

¹Ibid., May 8, 1916, pp. 7610-11; May 20, 1916, pp. 8401-402. Pp. 8372-406 record the House debate in entirety. See pp. 8405-406 for the record vote to adopt. The bill became Public Law No. 851 with Wilson's signature on June 3, 1916. See ibid., June 3, 1916, p. 9267. Murray's comments appear in ibid., Appendix, April 5, 1916, pp. 698-705--p. 701, in particular. Successive citations from the Cong. Record proper are cited hereafter as "ibid."; those from the Appendix as "ibid., Appendix."

nonetheless was decisive. All seven Oklahoma Democrats were among the 351 affirmative voters while their Republican colleague, Morgan, cast one of the twenty-five negative votes. Fifty-eight members did not register their opinion. Two weeks later Wilson approved the measure which provided the military base for the American fighting force in World War I.¹

Once the army reorganization issue had been settled the House and Senate began discussion of the annual Naval Appropriations Bill with its proposals for navy construction. On May 24, House Naval Affairs Chairman Lemuel T. Padgett, introduced the bill prepared by his committee. A middle-of-the-road proposal, it ignored the opposition of both the die-hard House pacifists who opposed increased naval appropriations and the "big navy" proponents, as well as the Administration's provision for a five-year building program. However, the total tonnage provided exceeded the first year quota of the Administration plan and battle cruisers replaced the heavier dreadnaughts. Debate on the measure, while not as heated as that on the army issue, extended from May 26 to June 2. Oklahoma's congressmen took no part in the debates although they unanimously supported the measure. Two months earlier, in an April 4 speech urging "reasonable preparedness," Murray had advocated a large Pacific fleet and extended harbor and coast defenses. Morgan refused to

¹Ibid.

support the "big navy" amendment advanced by the Republican party on June 2 and which failed of passage by a narrow 189 to 183 vote. The House, however, did increase the submarine quota to fifty and almost doubled the naval air force appropriation. Morgan also joined his Oklahoma colleagues in supporting the government armor-plate factory amendment which was approved by a vote of 236 to 135. The measure was adopted by the overwhelming margin of 363 to 4. Thompson was absent and did not participate in any of the June 2 votes, although he was announced as paired in support of both the armor-plate amendment and final adoption. No Democrats opposed the measure.¹

The course of the navy bill in the Senate proved far more torturous. Referred to the Senate Naval Affairs Committee on June 8, the proposal emerged for full-scale debate on June 20 as a severely reconstructed "big navy" measure. The alleged superiority of the dreadnought over the battle cruiser in the recent battle of Jutland greatly influenced the Senate. On July 21 seventy-one Senators supported the bill and only eight opposed it. Sixteen Senators failed to vote including Gore of Oklahoma. Gore was

¹Ibid., May 24, 1916, pp. 8759, 8620. The June 2 votes are recorded as follows: Armor-plate amendment, pp. 9187-88; "Big-Navy" amendment, p. 9189; vote to adopt, pp. 9189-90. Two Republicans, William Browning of New Jersey and George Graham of Pennsylvania, Socialist Meyer London of New York, and Prohibitionist Charles Randall of California opposed the measure. See ibid., Appendix, April 5, 1916, pp. 698-705 for Murray's previous speech. The navy reference occurs on p. 701.

absent from the Senate at this time but on the basis of both prior and subsequent comments it is not likely that he would have supported the bill. Senator Owen, who presided over a part of the final session, voted consistently in support of the measure but took no part in the discussions. Six Midwestern and Far Western Republicans and two pacifist-conservative Southern Democrats opposed adoption. After almost a month of protracted discussion involving some forty-seven distinct compromises, Senate and House conferees, aided by the effective intervention of the President, formulated a revision accepted by both bodies on August 18. In effect, the House, following the example of Naval Affairs Chairman Padgett, capitulated, for only five of the compromises were Senate concessions. Wilson's fear of a victorious Germany, an expanding Japan, and dependence upon the naval superiority of an imperious England prompted his aggressive support for an American navy second to none. House Majority Leader Claude Kitchin of North Carolina typified the reaction of the chagrined anti-preparedness forces when he declared: "The Congress today becomes the most militaristic naval nation on earth."¹

¹Ibid., June 8, 1916, p. 9356; June 30, 1916, p. 10249; July 21, 1916, pp. 11376, 11383-84. Kitchin's observation is cited in Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 190. The six Senate Republicans opposing the measure--most of them Progressives--were Clapp, Minnesota; Charles Curtis, Kansas; Gronna, North Dakota; La Follette, Wisconsin; Norris, Nebraska; and John Works, California. Robert Thomas of Kentucky and Vardaman of Mississippi were the Democrats.

None of the Oklahoma delegation reacted so strongly although the absent Gore had voiced a less severe stricture during the previous month. In an article, "The True Basis for America's World Influence," prepared for publication by the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences under the general volume heading, "Preparedness and America's International Program," Gore had traced the rise of the United States as a world power without recourse to preparedness and military training. Bitterly attacking those who maintained that "unpreparedness is the pathway that leads to war," the Senator termed this approach "the logic of militarism," cited its role in the present plight in Europe and insisted that the United States was "as well prepared today both for domestic and foreign policies and protection as we have ever been in our history." Gore then summed up his unequivocal opposition to wide-scale preparedness:

We have never been a nation at arms. We have, indeed, maintained moderate navy and military establishments; relatively they have been small. Our moral and political conquests have been out of all proportion to our organized militant forces. . . . No nation should be too proud to do right. Herein lies one of the chief evils and dangers of militarism. A sense of power is calculated to breed an indifference to justice. Might usurps the jurisdiction of right. . . . Have vast naval and military armaments, has preparedness, enabled other nations to work out their destinies as world powers without war?

The entire gamut of Gore's war and preparedness activities can be understood, basically, in the light of this single, clarifying assertion. With Wilson's signature, a foregone

conclusion, the navy bill became a law on September 8.¹ Its passage represented a distinct Administration triumph, for in it the Wilson forces gained the major portion of their naval program and at the same time administered a decisive defeat to the anti-preparedness bloc in the House.

Lack of participation, indeed, a seeming disinterest or disinclination to express their state of mind, characterized the role of the entire Oklahoma delegation in the final three major preparedness measures fought through Congress in the latter half of 1916. On May 8 the House reactivated the carefully redrafted "Ship Purchase Bill," defeated in 1915 after bitter controversy. The measure, authorizing \$50 million for the purchase or construction of merchant ships adapted to navy use, prompted no Sooner response. The House approved the proposal authored by Secretary McAdoo with only minor revisions on May 19 by a vote of 209 to 161. There were sixty-four abstentions. Morgan was the lone Oklahoma dissenter, opposing both final passage and the move to delete Section 5, the heart of the measure, which authorized federal merchant ship construction.²

¹Thomas P. Gore, "The True Basis for America's World Influence," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, LXVI (July, 1916), pp. 130-35. Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Aug. 25, 1916, p. 13243; Sept. 8, 1916, p. 14157. H.R. 15947 became Public Law No. 241.

²For the introduction, House consideration, and adoption of H.R. 15455 and its precursor, H.R. 10500, see Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Jan. 31, 1916, p. 1929; May 8, 1916, p. 7618; May 19, 1916, pp. 8356-57; May 20, 1916,

In the Senate Owen supported final adoption while Gore failed to vote, as did more than a third of the members. Gore's abstention was a frequent circumstance at this juncture. At odds with the Administration on most war-related issues, Gore apparently found it embarrassing to be in continuous opposition to the President, the Party, and what appeared to be a growing, press-sponsored national sentiment. Hence, the closer the Nation moved to war, the more frequently he abstained.¹ The only major senatorial revision prior to the 38 to 21 vote on August 18 was the denial of authority to purchase vessels of belligerent registry. Owen, of course, had strongly supported the original measure in 1915 but lent no support to the new bill other than to sponsor the printing of Senator Duncan U. Fletcher's address, "What Congress Has Done to Build Up an American Mercantile Marine."²

pp. 8374-75; Aug. 30, 1916, pp. 13419-64; Sept. 4, 1916, p. 13774; Sept. 8, 1916, p. 14158. The bill became Public Law No. 260.

¹Billington comments thus: "His voting record in 1916 was definitely anti-war and anti-preparedness when he voted at all. Why he did not vote at times is a mystery. . . . I suspect . . . that he was ducking his responsibility." McReynolds points out that a "politician . . . may abstain from voting when a reversal of former views would embarrass him." Personal letters from Billington and McReynolds, April 11, 1960. Charges of abstention for political reasons were not new in Gore's case. One such charge declared that from 1909 to 1915 Gore voted only 730 times while abstaining on 872 occasions. Circular letter in C. B. Ames Papers, Correspondence, General.

²Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Dec. 10, 1915, p. 134; Aug. 18, 1916, pp. 12792-825; Sept. 2, 1916, p. 13670. See Chapter VI of this study for the role of Owen and other Oklahoma Congressmen in the 1915 "Ship Purchase Bill" controversy.

The equally significant Army Appropriations Bill (H.R. 16460) received similar cavalier consideration from Oklahoma Congressmen. Providing for an outlay of \$157 million, the measure received House approval ten days after its introduction on June 16. Radical Senate revision included doubling the appropriation necessitated by the recent federalization of the National Guard, and the addition of section 2 providing for a Council of National Defense.¹ Both Gore and Owen were among the forty-three Senators who abstained in the 39 to 13 vote of adoption on July 27. Wilson's August 15 veto because of "archaic" provisions in the articles of war section bestirred an election-conscious Congress, anxious for adjournment, into feverish activity. Introduced on August 18, the substitute measure (H.R. 17498) passed the House four days later, was approved by the Senate on the following day, and received Wilson's approval on September 8, the day Congress adjourned. The entire Senate consideration of the bill occurred within a single day, including disapproval of the Underwood Amendment seeking to

¹Section 2 read: "That a council of national defense is hereby established, for the coordination of industries and resources for the national security and welfare." The council consisted of the Secretaries of War, Navy, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor. These in turn nominated to the President an advisory commission of not over seven specialists in industry, finance, science, labor, and other areas to direct the various phases of the war effort. *Ibid.*, Aug. 22, 1916, p. 12991. For earlier attempts to establish such an organization see *ibid.*, Dec. 10, 1915, p. 127 (S. 1160), and Jan. 24, 1916, p. 241 (H.R. 9906).

legalize enlistment of youths under twenty-one without parental consent. Owen favored the amendment which failed by a narrow 23 to 25 margin. Half the Senators, including Gore, failed to vote. Thus, attended by haste and wholesale absences, was born the organization which assumed direction of the entire civilian war effort.¹

The "War Revenue Bill," designed to finance the preceding preparedness measures, was introduced on July 1, 1916, and precipitated a congressional revolt as intense as those produced by the Gore-McLemore Resolutions and the Army Reorganization Bill. Southern and Western elements, incensed by the Administration's attempt to shift much of the cost of preparedness on the already tax-burdened lower and middle classes, rebelled under the leadership of the die-hard foe of preparedness, Claude Kitchin, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. Assured of support from the Progressives, anti-preparedness adherents, pacifists, and certain election-sensitive party regulars, Kitchin's bill (H.R. 16763) retained only one feature of the Administration's proposal. Designed to produce some \$250

¹Ibid., June 16, 1916, pp. 9526, 9551 (H.R. 16460); June 26, 1916, p. 10037; July 27, 1916, p. 11647; Aug. 8, 1916, pp. 12275-76; Aug. 9, 1916, pp. 12380-400; Aug. 15, 1916, p. 12644; Aug. 18, 1916, pp. 12844-45. For H.R. 17498: Aug. 18, 1916, p. 12884; Aug. 22, 1916, p. 12993, 12977; Aug. 23, 1916, pp. 13031-42; Aug. 25, 1916, pp. 13203-208, 13243; Sept. 8, 1916, p. 14157. The entire text of H.R. 17498 appears on pp. 12983-91. The bill became Public Law No. 242.

million in new revenues derived largely from a doubled income tax and a net profits tax on munitions, the bill gained House approval ten days after its introduction on July 1 despite the cry of a "gigantic raid on northern wealth." Further Senate increases representing "a frank assessment against privileged wealth," were adopted on August 5.¹

Oklahoma's Congressmen concurred in the measure although they remained strangely silent during the heated debates that occurred in both Houses. However, as early as April 5, Murray had declared that "surplus wealth should pay for its surplus protection." Preparedness revenues, he contended, should derive from inheritance and income taxes, with the munitions factories bearing one-half of the total burden. The margins were convincing, 238 to 142 in the House and 42 to 16 in the Senate. Fifty-four Representatives and thirty-seven Senators, however, did not vote, including Gore and Murray of Oklahoma. Influencing the Oklahoma vote, no doubt, was the repeal of the stamp tax section of the war emergency tax law of 1914 against which the Sooner press and public had raised loud and continuous objection.² Again the

¹Ibid., July 1, 1916, p. 10372; July 5, 1916, p. 10470; July 10, 1916, pp. 10727-69; Aug. 5, 1916, p. 12129; Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 195.

²For a typical example of Oklahoma opposition to the war tax see the Daily Oklahoman, April 2, 1915, p. 6-A. The editorial, "War Loans and Losses," cites \$100 million in war tax among the "billion-dollar loss" "Oklahoma and the south alone were suffering," while Eastern capitalists subscribed to large foreign loans and enjoyed huge war munitions profits.

press of time and the national emergency were factors which brought final agreement in both Houses on September 7. Wilson approved the personally distasteful bill on the following day. Indeed, Congress adjourned within minutes after receiving word from the President of his favorable action.¹

While Oklahoma's congressmen displayed considerable reticence in the controversy that raged over the major items of preparedness legislation, only Murray could be termed an outspoken advocate of even "reasonable" preparedness. Morgan and Gore held ultra-conservative views on neutrality and preparedness with the others ranging in between. They all felt that the profit motive should be carefully regulated, by government production of arms and munitions if need be. Thompson had introduced a bill on January 7 providing for government erection and operation of an "arms, ordnance, armor, munitions" plant but no action resulted. Owen's bill to "establish and maintain the American school army and to organize and equip the American reserve army," submitted on March 3, fared no better.²

The Republican Enid Events, Sept. 10, 1914, p. 2, termed the war tax proposal "another splendid example of the good old Princetonian theory of tariff reform. . . . So pleasant! And satisfactory!"

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., July 10, 1916, pp. 10727-69; July 11, 1916, p. 10804; Aug. 16, 1916, pp. 12709, 12783; Sept. 5, 1916, pp. 13872-73; Sept. 7, 1916, pp. 14016-32, 14103-20; Sept. 8, 1916, pp. 14157-58; Appendix, April 5, 1916, p. 703 (H.R. 1673 became Public Law No. 271).

²Ibid., Jan. 7, 1916, p. 698 (H.R. 8239); March 3, 1916, p. 3461 (S. 4759).

Murray saw no alternative to "reasonable preparedness," maintaining that the only debatable question was the "degree or amount necessary." In his extended March 25 peroration the colorful Oklahoman contended that the "pacifists' dream" of "universal and permanent peace" never would be realized. "There is nothing," he said, "to justify the belief in permanent and universal peace, either from man's nature, his past experience, or his religion, nor from Divine purpose or the tendency of the times." No nation can become great without a merchant fleet, which requires "guns to protect them." America must avoid militarism and the other evils so often attending status as a major power by

. . . preparing not only in military and naval fleets but with markets and trade, by the development of her industries, by keeping the farmer happy and prosperous, and giving employment to labor and making them contented. . . . Our wise course is to stay clear of entangling alliances with the Old World, to remain absolutely neutral, and be prepared to husband our own resources and to protect them, if need be, by naval and armed strength, which our rich Nation is capable of paying for.

Such a course, he contended, might well make America "the beacon light of weak and nervous civilization" rather than a "stumbling block."¹

Murray, on April 5, developed at greater length his formula for "reasonable national preparedness." Denouncing all extremists, he saw no reason "why the pacifist should exist at all" yet declared himself "opposed to militarism."

¹Ibid., Appendix, March 25, 1916, pp. 636-40.

While professing to "dread and regret war," he did not account it "altogether the worst of evils." "Foreign war" he held to be "more preferable" than "anarchy and insurrection." In the "exercise of the right and duty of self-defense," Murray advocated "a large navy, the greatest on the Pacific Ocean--I would not say the largest on the Atlantic--and greater harbor and coast defenses." In addition, he called for a larger and more efficient National Guard, military training in the schools, subsidization of the private munitions industry rather than government-operated establishments, and a "school of diplomacy and international law." Opposing compulsory service, the continental army plan, and a large standing army, the plain-spoken Oklahoman recommended "an army of about 50,000 soldiers" above those needed "to man all fortifications." While admitting that he did "not agree with the President in all matters of his international policy," he commended Wilson for taking "constructive" steps and issued a plea for "sensible" precautions since war, like a fire, could occur at any time. In a subsequent speech on June 28 Murray developed his own unique views on personal neutrality, alluding to his own Scotch ancestry in the process:

I am neutral. I think I am. While personally I sympathize with Germany's great civilization and would hate to see her crushed, yet, remembering my own Republic, I realize it is wisest if both groups of belligerents shall thoroughly and completely "lick" each other. . . . I do not blame any foreigner [in America] for desiring the success of his native land or for wishing its supremacy over all nations of the world except the United States. I am Scotch. . . . I love to read of the

achievements of Scotchmen. . . . But, above and beyond all this I am an American; and in every conflict where the United States is involved I am against her enemies, though they include . . . the Murray clan; and any foreigner who . . . becomes a naturalized citizen of the Republic and does not feel that way is at heart a traitor.¹

Despite his abstention from nearly every vote on the five major items of preparedness legislation in 1916, Senator Gore was the most vocal of the Oklahoma legislators in expressing opposition to preparedness and militarism. On December 17, 1915, twelve days after the new Congress convened, he indicated his disapproval over the necessity of extending the 1914 emergency revenue legislation through 1916. In discussing the serious reduction of federal revenues due to drastically decreased foreign trade in the early months of the war, Gore sharply criticized the North Dakota Republican, Gronna, for observing that the "embarrassed condition of the Treasury was not due to the war, but . . . to our unwise fiscal system [the Democrat-devised Underwood Tariff]." In the subsequent debates on the "Military Academy Bill" (S. 4876) to increase the number of West Point cadets, Gore offered an amendment on March 22 authorizing the President to fill all vacancies occurring after the qualifying entry examinations from the ranks of seniors and graduates of the various colleges where Regular Army men were stationed as military instructors. In addition, he indicated his willingness

¹Ibid., Appendix, April 5, 1916, pp. 698-705; June 28, 1916, pp. 1290-91.

to add two hundred cadets, or even three hundred, from the enlisted personnel of the Regular Army and the National Guard. Again Gore indicated his omnipresent concern for economy and a "democratic" rather than a professional or "militaristic" army. Opposing the system of congressional appointment as one with "no reference to military aptitude or . . . fitness," the Senator maintained that the "doors of West Point ought to stand ajar to everyone," and particularly to the 30,000 youths enrolled in college drill programs. Said Gore:

I think everything possible ought to be done to democratize the army, especially . . . officers of the army. This is essential to the improvement of the army and . . . the protection of the army against the growing evil of militarism. . . . The amendment does not propose any increase whatever. It simply seeks to avoid 100, 200, 300 vacancies in this expensive educational institution.¹

In May the sizeable "River and Harbor Appropriations Bill" brought a protest from the economy-minded Oklahoman. Calling for a redemption "to the uttermost letter--not only the letter, but the spirit" of the "pledge of economy" given the people, Gore pleaded for a "scrupulous economy":

These revenues must come out of the people's earnings. . . . The treasury is depleted. It is a grim condition that stares us in the face [the need for 2 billion in added revenue]. . . . This is a result of the European war [both increased expenditures and decreased revenues], or rather a result of the imaginary terrors, of the hysteria that has grown out of this war.

¹Ibid., Dec. 17, 1915, pp. 390-92. H. J. Res. 59, originally passed on Oct. 22, 1914, was extended through Dec. 31, 1916. Ibid., March 22, 1916, pp. 4600-601 (S. 4876).

Preparedness at any price is not a cheap blessing.
Militarism is not an inexpensive curse. (*Italics mine.*)

The ordering of the National Guard--including that of Oklahoma--to the Mexican border precipitated another Gore outburst. In opposing doubling the pay of National Guard privates and the pension increase proposed in the "National Defense Bill" (S. 6452), the Senator envisioned the establishing of "a precedent for a universal pension of \$50 a month" and the "raising up in this country of a military caste," "one of the evils" he had "apprehended in militarism." Scoring motivations of "maudlin sentimentalism," Gore delivered the devastating, albeit well-intentioned, stricture which contributed heavily to his defeat by Scott Ferris in the bitterly-contested Democratic primary in 1920:

It is a reflection upon their [soldiers] Americanism. Shall we upon the threshold of militarism, undertake to capitalize the heroic virtues of our gallant defenders. . . . Can you measure patriotism by the dollar mark. . . . This is a practical question and must be dealt with in a practical way, with deliberation and due regard not for the soldiers only, but with regard for the public treasury and the public generally. . . . Shall we treat these soldiers as milksops and mollicoddles? Shall we send with these soldiers their valets, chiropodists, and manicurists to attend them? Shall we by implication convey the idea that they are summer soldiers, that they are sunshine patriots, that they are knights of the drawing room? I would prefer to treat them as real soldiers. Would they not prefer to be treated as real soldiers?

Such phrases as "milksops and mollicoddles," "summer soldiers," and "sunshine patriots," misquoted and taken out of context, alienated particularly the soldier vote in a state already

acutely embarrassed by the blind Senator's wartime role.¹

A heated and protracted argument ensued with Democrat James A. Reed of Missouri, author of the bill, who charged that Gore, deluded by an "overheated and superexcited brain," would "besmear with filth" the nation's soldiery. "To sit safely and serenely behind a mahogany desk," shouted Reed, "secure in the salary of \$7,500 a year and sneer at young men in khaki uniforms who are already in camp preparing to defend our country, is an office unfit the Senator from Oklahoma." Gore, refusing to be intimidated, objected to the second reading of the bill. The Daily Oklahoman, already disenchanted with Gore, misquoted Reed to have said "supinely," a less complimentary connotation.²

Moments later, when the resolution was considered to grant government employees full pay while on emergency duty and to guarantee their job status "as far as practical," the aroused Oklahoman again objected, this time to immediate consideration of the proposal. His comment that the resolution "simply illustrated the tendency which I referred to a moment ago" [trend to militarism], prompted a second bitter exchange. James E. Martine of New Jersey, highly incensed, exclaimed: "God knows it is a good tendency" and

¹Ibid., May 29, 1916, p. 8842; June 24, 1916, pp. 9914-16 (S. 6452).

²Ibid.; Daily Oklahoman, June 25, 1916, p. 1.

demanded to know "what food a man should have lived on in Oklahoma which would . . . staunch the wellsprings of his heart." To this acid comment Gore tartly retorted: "It is not altogether a matter of food."¹

Two days later the resolution (H. J. Res. 242) authorizing emergency federalization of the National Guard and its reserves again raised Gore's anti-preparedness hackles. In a verbal altercation involving both Gilbert M. Hitchcock of Nebraska and Reed, the enbattled Oklahoman once again pled for an avoidance of militarism, war, and unnecessary tax burdens. Challenging the need for increasing the monthly pension of widows of deceased soldiers to fifty dollars and a departure from the traditional reliance upon the volunteer system, Gore declared: "We shall never want defenders so long as valor is esteemed a virtue and so long as heroism is honored among the sons of men."²

In the June 28-30 interim the Oklahoma Senator figured prominently in Senate discussions of the section of the "Fortification Appropriation Bill" dealing with the Hammond and Clark torpedo devices. Contemplated as a means of coastal defense, the inventions featured direction of torpedoes by "radiodynamic energy"--wireless or remote control. Gore

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., June 24, 1916, p. 9918 (S. J. Res. 146).

²Ibid., June 26, 1916, pp. 9966-91 (H. J. Res. 242).

questioned the logic of appropriating \$750,000 for "exclusive control" of the previously patented invention of John Hays Hammond of Montana when an Oklahoman named Clark had perfected a similar device some two years earlier which was "superior to the Hammond invention," and could "be purchased for much less money." The Clark torpedo had cost only \$1,500, Gore had seen it successfully demonstrated, and for these reasons he offered an amendment authorizing that it too be tested. The Senate, he felt, was being "a little hasty" and should first investigate the alternative invention. However, he admitted that the larger price was "moderate" in view of the possible defensive advantages.¹

Gore's aggressive opposition to extensive preparedness, war, militarism, a conscripted army, and overseas duty for American troops had crystalized by the midsummer of 1916. His actions, therefore, in opposing the draft, arbitrary war controls, and excessive civilian regimentation in 1917 should not have been surprising. He had formulated his position, sincerely, deliberately, and irrevocably, almost a year prior to the actual declaration of war and, although fully aware that he courted personal and political disaster, did not deviate from his predetermined course. Gore himself documented his position two decades later. In a speech delivered in 1936, as he retired from Congress for the second time, he declared:

¹Ibid., June 13, 1916, pp. 9502-506; June 28, 1916, pp. 10150-51; June 30, 1916, pp. 10254-56, 10271 (H. R. 14303).

It will appear elsewhere in the Record [Congressional] that I promised the people of Oklahoma in 1916 that I would oppose the United States entering the World War and I kept that promise although it cost me my seat in the United States Senate [in 1920]. That record should convince people that at least I try to keep my promises.

Again, in 1938, in a letter to an Oklahoma farm mother of five sons who had solicited his aid in "helping the poor class of people" in order that "our boys not be sent across the ocean and slaughtered like beef cattle," Gore reiterated his position:

As you know in 1916 I was opposed to casting our boys . . . into the slaughter pens of Europe. I have not since changed my mind. . . . I would not sacrifice the life of one American boy, I would not break the heart of one American mother to defend the boundaries or maintain the territories of all the faith-breaking, debt-defaulting nations on the face of the globe.

The veteran ex-Senator readily concurred with the distraught mother's assertion that "those rich fellows that have their money invested over there do their own fighting to protect it."¹

No other Oklahoma legislator committed himself so strongly to the cause of strict neutrality and peace as did Gore, although all of them exhibited similar but decidedly less-intense inclinations. Murray and Ferris viewed developments with a more judicious mixture of practicality

¹MS copy (6 pp.) of a 1936 speech opposing a further increase in the tax burden, Gore Papers, Subject File, 1890-1948; War Policy, Folder, "War, Gore's Opposition to."; Mrs. J. F. Williams to "Kind Oklahoma Senator [Gore]," March 28, 1938; Gore to Mrs. Williams, Leedy, Okla., April 12, 1938; *ibid.*, General Correspondence, 1911-1948, Folder, "Williams, J. F."

and idealism. Murray's March and April observations regarding permanent and universal peace as an unfortunate impossibility and support of reasonable preparedness as "essential to national safety," eventually contributed to his defeat in the subsequent primary election. Ferris, less consistently forthright, received applause in the course of debate on the bill to provide relief for the families of National Guardmen engaged in combat duty when he declared: "The American Nation is today . . . the richest nation of all the world both in patriotism and wealth. . . . I insist that it is the duty of Congress this day to take this step. . . . It is not too much . . . to do in a time of great stress like this." The bill received overwhelming 299-2 House approval although 134 failed to vote including Murray. His seven colleagues supported the measure which subsequently died for want of Senate action.¹

The same reticence, inconsistency, and neutralist tendencies marking the attitudes and actions of Oklahoma's Congressmen in the preparedness controversy also characterized majority reaction among the Sooner press and the public. While desiring peace and neutrality, there was, nonetheless, a definite reluctance to appear unpatriotic and at odds with what the national press and the Administration declared

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., July 1, 1916, pp. 10356-57 (H. R. 16734); Appendix, March 25, 1916, pp. 636-40; April 5, 1916, pp. 698-705.

to be the nation's paramount need. Party loyalty, of course, proved an added motivation in the predominantly Democratic state. In the course of the preparedness debates the Muskogee Phoenix strongly supported the Administration's "continental army" plan as did most of the larger Democratic papers. Impugning such base motivations as political and financial gain, the Phoenix angrily declared:

For months past the whole United States has been stirred by what they call "preparedness." Under the appeal to love of country, whether with reason or without, it has been proved that the people are ready to contribute any sum that may be found necessary to carry out an adequate scheme of national defense. Now what has happened to it? This great patriotic impulse has been pressed into the service of the grafters to do their dirty work for them. A real scheme of military increase was drawn up. The pork barrel hogs would have none of it. They did not want real soldiers. They wanted appropriations for the militia, that should be paid by the federal government to the states and so divided that they should get their share. They made their usual combinations in congress. They made the president surrender. They forced out of office the one man in the cabinet [Garrison] too intelligent and too honest to stand with the gang. Unless something is done this country will be saddled with a standing charge for its army greater than that carried by the military nations of Europe. . . . Washington . . . uttered against just this mistake of proposing to rely upon a militia force as a means of national defense. It is worse than a mistake. It is a treason. . . . Where, now, are the mass meetings and the orators of preparedness, to protest against and to prevent this great iniquity?

The loyalty of the Phoenix had improved since January 29 when it had labeled the Merchant Marine Bill as "half-baked socialism" which "should be beaten . . . to a frazzle."¹

¹Muskogee Phoenix, Jan. 29, 1916, p. 4; March 11, 1916, p. 4.

The Tulsa World, the leading Republican preparedness advocate, sounded its trumpets for a greatly expanded naval program. Impatient with the protracted army dispute, the World exclaimed:

It is one of the ironies of political maneuvering that we should hear so much more about the controversy between the advocates of a "continental army" and those of the national guard than we hear about the plans of a navy. We need a stronger army all right, but the people realize that our greatest concern is for the defense of the seacoasts. It is much more important that we should be prepared to stop an enemy before it reached our shores than to give it tardy attention after it achieved a landing. . . . The politicians have worked the army phase to a frazzle while almost ignoring the navy. . . . The most reliable insurance of continued peace is to have a navy of such power and efficiency that other nations will deem it the part of wisdom to cultivate our friendship, rather than to be continually stepping on our toes and then apologizing for their rudeness.

Later in the month the same paper chastised the Democratic majority in the House for temporizing in the Hay Bill discussion. Charging "timidity" and "trepidation" the World asserted:

The members seem to be afraid to antagonize the president or to ignore the popular demand for preparedness, and at the same time are scared of the pacifist sentiment in the country and fearful of the hyphenated vote. . . . The American soldier is brave enough and skilled enough, but there are not enough of him, and he cannot expect to do the service required of him as long as he is hampered by the blundering inefficiency of those in authority and by the niggardliness and insincerity of our representatives in congress. Let congressmen forget the prejudices of their constituents. . . .¹

The seeming conversion of the large dailies to the cause of preparedness and conformity with the pattern of the

¹Tulsa World, March 1, 1916, p. 4; March 24, 1916, p. 4.

Administration and the national press, however, did not represent a wholesale conversion of rank and file citizens. The voices of labor and agriculture, although progressively less vocal, still maintained a preponderant affinity to the cause of strict neutrality and minimum preparedness. The activities and voting records of Gore and Morgan best typified their unswerving point of view, while Kitchin, Vardaman, Bailey, Stone, and La Follette were more distant heroes. Labor's most vocal organ, the Oklahoma Federationist, continued to cry against large scale preparedness. Under the title, "What is Preparedness?," the Federationist declared:

Again is heard the wail of unpreparedness. . . . The charge is made that we have never been ready for any war. But does this really signify much? Of all the countries at war in Europe, only one [Germany] was thoroughly prepared. . . . Yet that country has not won the war. Do these preparationists know what they are talking about; or are they being victimized by the dealers in war supplies?

On April 22 the same paper, quoting a prominent labor leader, demanded:

If you want us to be patriotic, give us something to be patriotic about. Take the profits out of war and let the Government furnish what defense we need at cost. Tell us what has been done with the billions we have already spent. . . . Take the drones off our backs . . . and give us a chance to have our own homes . . . and make a decent living.

A month later the Oklahoma City Trades and Labor Council adopted a strongly-worded resolution charging that "various interests in this community, including the daily press are seeking to stampede the citizens of Oklahoma on the question

of preparedness." It urged "all trade unionists and truly patriotic citizens" to exercise "cool, calm, and deliberate judgment" and to refuse to participate in "parades or any other form of demonstration" designed to influence "our representatives in Congress, with a view to entering the wedge of militarism."¹

The Elk City News-Democrat, in a March 9 editorial entitled, "Fear of Bryan," reported that "all of the metropolitan papers" were striving to minimize the ex-Secretary's influence upon the House of Representatives to defeat the President's preparedness legislation. Lauding Bryan as "an advocate of peace," the Oklahoma paper then proceeded to outline its own anti-preparedness views:

Mr. Bryan, if he succeeds in his undertaking, to prevent army and navy preparedness . . . will be likened unto Moses delivering his people out of bondage, for "preparedness" as recommended, means nothing more or less. . . . "Stand by the President," is the cry of the Eastern autocrats and munitions men and "damned be the man who hollers nuff." They are not satisfied with the millions which have poured into their coffers, but would dip the Nation red with blood, a disaster Mr. Bryan would avert by all honorable means. This is why he would use his influence in Congress and this is what makes him "the greatest Roman of them all."

While indicating its dislike of Bryan, the Republican Enid Events nonetheless declared: "Mr. Bryan strenuously opposes 'Preparedness' and a 'Tariff Commission.' . . . At that Bryan

¹The Oklahoma Federationist, VIII (March 25, 1916), p. 2; (April 22, 1916), p. 2; (May 27, 1916), p. 1.

is not far wrong."¹

While a number of the rural weeklies became more vocal in their loyalty to President and country, their utterances were almost entirely devoid of preparedness sentiment. The Elk City News-Democrat's March 23 editorial, "American Pride," supported the "stand by the President" theme and termed "Peace, economy and prosperity . . . the assets of Americanism," but it made no mention of preparedness. As in the case of the Gore-McLemore resolutions, the consistent silence of such staunchly Democratic weeklies as the Poteau News, the Eufaula Indian Journal, the Osage Journal, the Wewoka Democrat, and the Cimarron News on all preparedness issues demonstrated even more eloquently the position of the rural constituency. Unwilling to place their loyalty in question and to embarrass the President and the party, yet unable to support whole-heartedly the Administration's preparedness and foreign policies, they chose to maintain a discreet silence. Lack of interest and information does not explain their position for these papers, unlike many, had reported and editorialized quite consistently and intelligently both on war developments and consequent American reactions and policies. The leading Republican weeklies, the Enid Events and the Stillwater Gazette, for the most part, manifested the same tendency. The

¹Elk City News-Democrat, March 9, 1916, p. 4;
Enid Events, March 9, 1916, p. 2.

populist-inclined Renfrew's Record was a notable exception to this trend.¹

Even the dailies most inclined toward preparedness exhibited a marked tolerance and understanding of views and developments inconsistent with their own. The Muskogee Phoenix applauded the Ottawa authorities for ignoring a demand that Walter Damrosch and the New York Symphony orchestra--which included nine German members--be interned when they appeared in the Canadian city. The Phoenix noted with satisfaction that our "peace of 300 years remains undisturbed." The March 3 appearance of Eugene V. Debs in Ardmore prompted the Ardmoreite to observe that the eminent Socialist was a "far above average" speaker and that "however one may differ with Mr. Debs, one is bound to admire him for his sincerity." The Latimer County News-Democrat reacted similarly on March 10. The fact that Oklahoma citizens were far from unanimous in their views on foreign policy and preparedness did not deter them from service to their country and humanity in activities related to war.²

Early in January the President requested the American Chemical Society, along with other scientific agencies, to

¹Elk City News-Democrat, March 23, 1916, p. 4; Renfrew's Record, Feb. 4, 1916, p. 4.

²Muskogee Phoenix, Feb. 26, 1916, p. 4; Daily Ardmoreite, March 5, 1916, pp. 1, 8; Latimer County News-Democrat, March 10, 1916, p. 4.

recommend state representatives to assist the Naval Consulting Board "in the work of collecting data for use in organizing the manufacturing resources of the country for the public service in case of emergency." Dr. Edwin C. DeBarr, Chairman of the University of Oklahoma Chemistry Department, subsequently was appointed to both the Naval Consulting Board and the Organization for Industrial Preparedness. In the March 31 letter of appointment Navy Chief Josephus Daniels observed that "the war in Europe has taught us that industrial preparedness is the foundation rock of the national defense." Similarly, Roy Temple House, Professor German and French at the University, was selected by the Commission for the Relief of the Belgians to assist in relief activities in that war ravaged country.¹

In the midst of congressional debate over the army reorganization bill an unarmed French passenger ship, the Sussex, was torpedoed on March 24 while crossing the English channel. The submarine issue once again dominated the headlines. Relative quiet had reigned on the diplomatic front since the issuance of the "Arabic Pledge" on October 5, 1915, and the flagrant attack rudely shattered the illusions of those Americans who had come to regard the submarine problem as a closed issue. While no American lives were lost

¹Wilson to Dr. Charles W. Herty, Pres., American Chemical Society, Chapel Hill, N. C., Jan. 13, 1916; Herty to DeBarr, Feb. 12, 1916; Daniels to DeBarr, March 31, 1916, DeBarr Papers, Correspondences and Papers (1886-1950), N-Z, unclassified; Enid Events, Jan. 27, 1916, p. 1.

on the Sussex, which managed to make port, several were injured and American resentment, particularly in the East, reached new heights. In addition, German denial of responsibility for the act--the submarine commander mistakenly identified his victim as a warship--and, following as it did the discovery of the Central Powers' undercover activities of Drs. Heinrich Albert and Constantin Dumba and Captains von Papen and Boy-Ed, convinced already sensitive Americans of the complete duplicity of Germany and her allies. On the next day the Englishman, a British horse transport, was sunk with the loss of six Americans. Although highly incensed, Wilson restrained House and Lansing in their demand for an immediate severance of relations and an angry, yet fearful American public uneasily awaited the next step in the tense drama.

The reaction of the Oklahoma press reflected little of the concern shown in the East and in Official Washington. However, on March 27, three days after the Sussex sinking, the Daily Oklahoman reported the torpedoing of the Sussex and the Englishman under a two-column, three-line red heading, "Americans Are Lost With British Ships; Submarine Situation Is Complicated." The report, however, did not appear as the lead story, nor did it rate a full-page banner or pictures. The Oklahoman evidenced no particular excitement, indignation, or attitude of horrified dismay, but announced almost noncommittally that "the state department is considering

the cases with an open mind" and that responsibility "could not in any sense be considered conclusive." Reports continued on a cautious note for the next two days.¹

On March 29 the Oklahoman published its first editorial directed at submarine warfare in more than six months. Entitled, "The Submarine Question Again," the editorial expressed both irritation and disillusionment":

It is unfortunate but true that time and again, just when this nation was seemingly on the point of adjusting its differences with Germany regarding the submarine question, an untoward incident has thrown all calculations completely out of gear, making it necessary to start again almost from the beginning. The United States had lulled itself into a conviction that our last misunderstandings with Germany had been safely adjudicated when like a flash from the sky there came the torpedoing of the . . . Sussex and Englishman.

This [German assurances] all sounds well, but at once the query rises: How much farther is this to go; how long will this see-sawing be allowed to last? . . . Are mere disavowals and censurings of commanders to be considered sufficient excuses interminably? Public impatience is rapidly mounting. Excuses were complacently swallowed for a reasonably long time--but things have just about reached the stage where actual definiteness should be forced to play its part.

Red headlines the next day announced that "Uncle Sam Will Call For Showdown" and "Apologies and Assurances Will Not Be Sufficient This Time." Dilatory German response, complicated by the subsequent sinking of the Manchester Engineer and the Eagle Point, prompted an even more impatient blast on April 7. Scoring Germany's policy "to first delay and then,

¹Daily Oklahoman, March 25, 1916, p. 1; March 26, 1916, pp. 1, 6; March 27, 1916, pp. 1, 7; March 28, 1916, pp. 1, 4.

when delay no longer serves its purpose, to equivocate," the Oklahoman roundly condemned the endless "red tape" and "continuous series of jockeyings."¹

Unconfirmed reports of German denial of responsibility in the Sussex affair led to an angry denunciation from the Oklahoman. An April 11 editorial, "Sounding Brass," exclaimed: "Germany's promises no longer pass at par value in the exchange of the civilized world. . . . For its violation of treaties and pledges Germany sets up the law of self-preservation. The escaping convict employs the same logic, but the civilized world does not accept it." German explanations were labeled "Meaningless Assurances," and the Oklahoman observed that they were "not very impressive in view of recent instances of imperial duplicity." Most of the Sooner dailies carried reports on the submarine crises but none gave them as much prominence as the Oklahoman with the Republican Tulsa World a close-ranking second. The raids of Pancho Villa absorbed much of the lead space and interest in the Sooner press at this juncture and even preliminary election developments often superceded the submarine controversy. A few of the weeklies accorded the rash of torpedoings cursory mention but the majority ignored them altogether although evidencing sustained concern and interest in the Mexican and election developments. The staunchly Democratic Durant Weekly News in its March 24

¹Ibid., March 29, 1916, pp. 1, 6; March 30, 1916, p. 1; March 31, 1916, p. 1; April 1, 1916, p. 1; April 7, 1916, pp. 1, 6.

and 31 issues preoccupied itself with election rumors and completely ignored the submarine issue. At the same time the rabidly Republican Enid Events maligned Wilson's policies in Mexico with no mention of the German sinkings.¹

Secretary Lansing's cryptic note to Germany on April 18 calling for immediate cessation of unrestricted submarine sinkings or a break in diplomatic relations drew the enthusiastic approbation of the Oklahoma press. The Muskogee Phoenix, on April 20, praised the note as "a masterful analysis of the situation," observing that "it is now up to Germany." Unless Germany "back tracks, concluded the Phoenix, war apparently is inevitable," a "regrettable" step. However, the Muskogee paper contended: "The President is dead right, but right or wrong we are with him. We hope he will stand pat, come what will. Our only fear is that he may not." Employing a red banner, the Daily Oklahoman on the same day announced: "U. S. Sends Ultimatum To Germany," and printed the entire text of the Lansing demand. Significantly, on

¹Ibid., April 9, 1916, p. 1; April 10, 1916, p. 1; April 11, 1916, pp. 1, 6; April 13, 1916, pp. 1, 2; April 14, 1916, pp. 1, 2, 6. For news stories and editorials typifying comparative Sooner press coverage of the submarine, Mexican, and election issues see the Daily Ardmoreite, March 26, 1916, p. 1; March 27, 1916, pp. 1, 4; March 28, 1916, p. 4; Tulsa World, March 26, 1916, p. 1; Muskogee Phoenix, March 10, 1916, p. 1; March 11, 1916, p. 1; April 19, 1916, p. 1; April 20, 1916, pp. 1, 4; Durant Weekly News, March 17, 1916, p. 1; March 24, 1916, pp. 1, 4; March 31, 1916, pp. 1, 4; The Enid Events, March 30, 1916, pp. 1, 2; Latimer County News-Democrat, March 17, 1916, pp. 1, 4; March 31, 1916, pp. 1, 4.

this day the Oklahoman first carried beneath its masthead two quotations that appeared regularly thereafter: "Our Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be right; but our country, right or wrong. -- Stephen Decatur. "America asks nothing for herself but what she has a right to ask for humanity itself. -- Woodrow Wilson."¹

Germany's reply to the Lansing note, issued on May 4, 1916, was the "Sussex Pledge," which Thomas A. Bailey insists was "not a pledge at all," but a "long 'string'" wherewith "Wilson . . . robbed himself of freedom of action" since resumption of submarine warfare obligated him to sever relations, an act tantamount to war. The Oklahoma press hailed the diplomatic victory. The Daily Oklahoman, apparently forgetting its earlier charges of "imperial duplicity," issued a full-page red headline proclaiming, "Break Averted By German Pledge." The Tulsa World, which on May 5 had speculated on severing relations with Germany, announced the following day: "Believe Peace For Present With Teutons Is Assured." The "Sussex Pledge," while at best an uneasy truce, did control German submarine behavior in respect to American vessels until the spring of 1917. The Sooner press and public in general reflected this reaction, for in Oklahoma as in much of the West, peace and neutrality were still earnestly and almost universally desired. The devotees of peace, in

¹Muskogee Phoenix, April 20, 1916, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, April 20, 1916, pp. 1, 4.

common with most Americans including Wilson, either failed to perceive or preferred to ignore the "long 'string'" and the ominous "blank check" that Wilson and America subsequently "could not honorably recall."¹

Although the Mexican and election controversies preempted public attention throughout the summer and autumn of 1916, the war in Europe and preparedness issues gained an occasional hearing. The Daily Oklahoman on May 3 pointed to Wilson's preparedness policies with "a thrill of patriotic pride." Terming them "not the expression of a jingo, but of an American patriot; . . . the voice of America awake," the Oklahoman declared: "If the crucial hour comes, this nation may be expected to draw the sword in defense of civilization. Yet, in the language of our most exalted public servant, 'God forbid that we should be drawn into this war.'" Three weeks later the Oklahoman, viewing preparedness legislation, pronounced the army provision to be satisfactory to the "majority of its citizenship" without constituting "a menace such as the fathers had in view in admonishing against a large standing army." The unquestioned naval superiority of Great Britain, however, troubled the Oklahoman:

Thoughtful persons are more interested in the proposed increase of our navy. Our isolated position is such that, with a competent and sizeable navy, a great land force is not needed. . . . It may be expected that our government will not be derelict in the matter of securing . . . equality with . . . Great Britain.

¹Bailey, A Diplomatic History, pp. 584-85; Daily Oklahoman, May 6, 1916, p. 1; Tulsa World, May 5, 1916, pp. 1, 4; May 6, 1916, p. 1.

The Tulsa World sharply criticized those who opposed preparedness. In a lengthy editorial entitled "What Is Militarism?" the World said:

We have heard a great deal from the opponents of preparedness about the dangers of militarism, . . . that it was better for us to remain an unprotected nation than run the risk of being Prussianized . . . and that a strong army would be a standing menace to individual liberty. . . . A people imbued with democratic ideas would not submit to military domination and they could not be made to do so.¹

The unpredictable and often arrogant conduct of both the Entente and Central Powers, and the cavalier treatment accorded Wilson's earlier attempts for a negotiated peace created an unpropitious backdrop for improved relations in 1916. Consequently, Germany's peace feelers in May were coolly received. The Muskogee Phoenix, noting that the overtures were "cleverly expressed," wondered "just what Germany meant." The Phoenix cautiously reflected: "If Woodrow Wilson can bring peace from out the hideous turmoil in Europe he will indeed carve himself an immortal niche in history." On June 6 the Phoenix termed American peace talk as "pointless and untimely gabble" and contended that "the greatest aid to peace would be to gag the peace advocates for a year."²

¹Daily Oklahoman, May 3, 1916, p. 6; May 24, 1916, p. 6; Tulsa World, May 16, 1916, p. 4.

²Muskogee Phoenix, May 9, 1916, p. 4; June 8, 1916, p. 4.

The Republican Tulsa World labeled the peace rumors "a fake" and, always politically suspicious, declared: "We hate to think of a president playing politics when patriotism is needed. . . . Whatever may have been Mr. Wilson's shortcomings, he is our president and we would be ashamed to discredit him in the eyes of the world." The Osage Journal, viewing the continuing turmoil, only hoped "that the United States under the guidance of a cool, conservative head may be able to avert the horrible massacre of our young men and boys." On June 22 the Latimer County News-Democrat enthusiastically reported Bryan's chautauqua discourse, "The War and The Lesson it Teaches Us," for which over 1600 persons gathered on short notice.¹

From July to November the heated Presidential campaign largely eclipsed all other issues. Post-election reactions to peace and preparedness, however, remained essentially unchanged. Although disillusioned by failures and false rumors, Oklahomans persistently and fervently desired peace. The Daily Oklahoman reflected this attitude in a November 23 editorial:

There are indications that the end of the European war is in sight. The most hopeful sign is the peace rumors. . . . [While] not authentic, they, nevertheless, persist. . . . The people of the warring countries . . . are weary of the struggle and want peace . . . [as do] the neutrals. . . . It is by no means certain we could

¹Tulsa World, May 19, 1916, p. 4; Osage Journal, May 20, 1916, p. 4; Latimer County News-Democrat, June 22, 1916, p. 1.

maintain our neutrality much longer in the war. Germany, it seems, must realize by this time that she can't conquer the world. . . . The circumstances point to peace and the psychology of the situation suggests peace, despite the plans for a 1918 campaign.

The German peace bid on December 12 further dramatized the Oklahoma point of view as the Tulsa World published an unprecedented five-column banner headline proclaiming,

"Germany Sues For Peace; End of World War May Be in Sight."

The Oklahoman gave the development an unusual twist: "America To Join Germany in Peace Proposal." The Daily Ardmoreite, evaluating Wilson's December 18 note requesting all belligerents to state the terms under which they would consider peace and the subsequent reply of the Entente powers, cautiously, yet hopefully declared:

President Wilson has taken the first definite step . . . as "the representative of a neutral nation whose interests have been most seriously affected by the war and whose concern [is] for its early conclusion." . . . That the president has influenced the allies in stating their terms, there is hardly any question. That Europe is on the way toward peace, is almost certain, whether Germany accepts the terms offered or not.¹

While many Oklahomans reluctantly had come to accept "reasonable preparedness" by the close of 1916, any move envisaging "militarism" evoked immediate opposition. When Generals Hugh Scott and Leonard Wood urged a 3,000,000 man army, half of them in reserve, the Oklahoman objected strenuously. While granting the generals "all sincerity," the

¹Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 23, 1916, p. 6; Dec. 13, 1916, p. 1; Tulsa World, Dec. 13, 1916, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, Dec. 31, 1916, p. 4.

Oklahoman bluntly branded the plan as being "not preparedness, but militarism." Such a vast army would not be "merely a means for defense" but "a force for conquest" and would eventually lead us to "junk . . . democracy," "set up a centralized government at Washington" and "crown Roosevelt." Discounting as "fantastic" a future coalition of European and Asiatic powers against America, the Oklahoman concluded:

It is difficult to discuss patiently the spectre which these officers have conjured up. . . . If they are right, civilization is a failure and through such a bloody future as remains to it the world must be an armed camp. If the war ends in a tie, as it probably will, there will not only be physical exhaustion among all the belligerents, but there will be financial bankruptcy as well. . . . Between ultra-pacifism and rampant militarism there ought to be the via media. That ought to be America's path. (Italics mine.)¹

Oklahoma's Congressmen reflected the same lack of unanimity as the press on preparedness and other war-related issues. None of them, of course, favored the extreme preparedness advocated by Roosevelt, Gardner and Hobson. They all recognized the need for "reasonable preparedness" but disagreed sharply as to what was "reasonable." The outspoken Murray advocated extensive army, navy, and coastal defense expansion, yet denounced "militarism" and all extremists. Owen, Ferris, and Thompson, while more conservative, also saw the need for a definite preparedness program. Gore and Morgan, of course, were the closest to the pacifist ideal and the most conscious of the cost factor,

¹Daily Oklahoman, Dec. 20, 1916, p. 6.

yet Gore supported navy increases and both a moderate volunteer army. The other members, usually silent, inclined to the Gore-Morgan position. Murray and the daily press held similar views, as did the Gore-Morgan group and the rural-labor publications. The others occupied a middle ground. Certainly, like the Daily Oklahoman, they regarded extreme measures as "not preparedness, but militarism."

Whatever their feelings, Oklahomans followed the course of the war intently. Editor Thomas Woodrow, commenting on a year's lapse in the publication of his Socialist journal, announced:

This publication was started just before the war broke out, and when the war started we were receiving much encouragement. . . . But when the great excitement of the great war clouded the sky, encouragement for the publication through the mails stopped almost as completely as if we were the victims of a fraud order.¹

As the hectic and indecisive year of 1916 drew to a close Oklahomans, above all else, still desired peace and a neutral role in the great conflict. However, they had come to accept a reasonable degree of preparedness as either an unfortunate necessity or a tragic inevitability.

¹Woodrow's Magazine, I (Nov. - Dec., 1916), p. 1.

CHAPTER IX

REHEARSAL FOR WAR: THE MEXICAN BORDER EPISODE AND THE 1916 ELECTION

With the "Sussex Pledge" once again leashing the submarine, war spirit among even the more bellicose Easterners faded and the nation focused its attention on the festering Mexican problem, the election, preparedness, and domestic issues. To Oklahoma and her Southwestern neighbors the problem of economic and political stability in adjacent Mexico had aroused grave concern and sporadic irritation for a number of years. The unwillingness of President Wilson to recognize Victoriano Huerta and the subsequent supplying of arms to the opposing forces of Carranza and Villa had precipitated an explosive controversy. The Tampico and Vera Cruz incidents in 1914, the death of more than seventy American civilians in Mexico between 1913 and 1915, and Villa's trans-border "gringo" raids had subsequently provided the chief ingredients in the rapidly mounting crisis.

The Oklahoma press reported these developments consistently and in considerable detail. Both the Democrat

and Republican papers largely supported American intervention, and some favored outright annexation. Harlow's Weekly, as early as April 25, 1914, proclaimed: "Oklahomans Are Ready to Go to War." Harlow reported that "the recent turn of events has caused general comment throughout the state" and that "Oklahoma is taking its full share of interest in the war with Mexico." The article further commended Congressman Murray for his position that "intervention in Mexico was inevitable, and that the sooner it was brought about the easier and less expensive would be the task." The Oklahoma National Guard, anticipating a call for "500 men for Mexican border duty," took steps to meet the situation. Harlow's Weekly reported:

Adjutant General [Frank] Canton and Colonel Roy V. Hoffman are in touch with the entire military organization of the state and the United States war department and stand ready for the immediate mobilization of the troops of Oklahoma; they are expecting orders momentarily to do so. But one member . . . has so far asked to be discharged. On the other hand there are hundreds of proffers of service.¹

The Carranza-Villa split in late 1914 prompted the Durant Weekly News to announce: "Mexican War Is Evident." The Daily Ardmoreite in June and August of 1915 called for "peaceful annexation" of "a portion of Mexico," adding that "some map changing would be healthful to our country," and permanent peace could be gained in no other way. The less

¹Harlow's Weekly, V (April 25, 1914), p. 5.

radical Elk City News-Democrat, deploring the "sad spectacle" of the Mexicans "digging their own graves," declared: "The condition will continue . . . until the United States assumes the burden, stamps out anarchy and brigandage, and places the republic upon a substantial working basis. Kindness and loaves of bread are not enough." Later it termed Mexico "an All-American problem" which the "All-American powers" should solve. The Republican press, adding criticism of Wilson's "watchful waiting" policy, was no less impatient. The Enid Events, viewing Huerta's downfall, darkly observed: "Let no one imagine this . . . means the end of the Mexican problem." On March 10, 1915, the Tulsa World, already election-conscious, voiced its hypercritical observations on the Vera Cruz crisis. Citing "blundering diplomacy" and "public impatience" the World declared:

And so we are going to send warships again to Mexico and land marines and do the whole pacification stunt over again. . . . It has been apparent to everybody with eyes to see and with enough brains to get in out of a shower of rain, that intervention by force . . . has been and is the one solution of the state of anarchy which prevails in Mexico. . . . The time has come for a showdown . . . but the demonstration comes at rather a suspicious time ["the opening stages of a presidential campaign"]. Why not have had it a year ago?¹

Only the Socialists raised their voices in a concerted protest against the cry for intervention. Greatly disturbed

¹Durant Weekly News, Oct. 16, 1914, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, June 2, 1915, p. 4; Aug. 11, 1915, p. 4; Elk City News-Democrat, July 1, 1915, p. 4; July 8, 1915, p. 1; The Enid Events, July 23, 1914, p. 2; The Tulsa World, March 10, 1915, p. 4.

by large-scale American investments in Mexico and prompted by a genuine concern for the suffering Mexican peasants, Woodrow's Magazine prefaced its stern August protest with an earlier Wilson pronouncement: "'My ideal is an orderly and righteous government in Mexico; but my passion is for the submerged eighty-five per cent of the people of that Republic, who are now struggling toward liberty.'" Editor Woodrow posed a searching question, "THE INSTIGATORS OF WAR WITH MEXICO. WHY?":

It is reported by united press that there are three Senators who have signified to Woodrow Wilson their willingness to go and fight Mexico, viz: Senators Weeks [Massachusetts], Du Pont [Delaware], and Fall [New Mexico]. It is said they have property interests in Mexico and are anxious to take up arms to protect them. PRINCIPALLY FROM THE CONSTITUTIONALISTS [in Mexico]. They know that the constitutionalists are fighting for the restoration of their constitution of 1857, and when restored their property in Mexico will automatically become worthless and they will lose their interests. AMERICAN CAPITALISTS WILL FORCE WOODROW WILSON INTO CONFLICT WITH THE MEXICAN PEOPLE FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIBERTY AND RIGHTS. . . . He is not to blame for doing what he is forced to do. . . . The visible government is subject to the invisible government--the owners of capital.¹

Anticipating a call to border duty, the Oklahoma National Guard reported at Chandler in early August, 1915, for their annual fifteen-day summer encampment. In reporting the encampment, Harlow's Weekly reflected the general sentiment of both the militiamen and the public at large:

The guard is unusually interested this year in war developments and there is much talk of the possibility

¹Woodrow's Magazine, I (Aug., 1914), pp. 27-28. Woodrow cited Wilson from the May 25, 1914, issue of Saturday Evening Post.

of the Oklahoma regiment being called to the Texas border or for service in Mexico in the event our troubles grow more serious with the tamale nation.

Major John Alley, Professor of Government at the University, adjudged the encampment "one of the most successful ever held," attributing the increased "attention . . . to target practice" to "the precarious situation . . . growing out of the European war and especially the Mexican problem."¹

In January, 1916, Villa brigands massacred eighteen American mining engineers at Santa Ysabel, Mexico, and Oklahomans once again joined the loud outcry for forcible intervention. The Progressive Renfrew's Record, however, refused to join in the "noisy demand." Upbraiding jingo radicalism, the Alva paper declared: "If given time Mexico herself will bring order out of chaos. President Wilson's policy is all right and American adventurers should stay on their own side of the Rio Grande until the situation is more quiet." The Republican Tulsa World, pointing to American arming of the anti-Huerta forces, blamed the President for the misdeed, asserting that it was "only natural that now we should reap what Wilson has sown."²

¹"National Guard in Encampment," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Aug. 21, 1915), p. 175; Alley, "Great Improvement in Oklahoma's National Guard," ibid., IX (Sept. 11, 1915), pp. 227-28.

²Renfrew's Record (Alva), Jan. 21, 1916; Tulsa World, Jan. 20, 1916, p. 4.

On March 9 Villa's guerrillas sacked Columbus, New Mexico, killing seventeen Americans and most Oklahomans joined in the wave of resentment that swept the nation. Democrats and Republicans alike strongly supported Wilson's order to General John J. Pershing to cross into Mexico and capture Villa "dead or alive." Banner headlines and extensive front page coverage on March 10 indicated the temper of the Sooner press. The Muskogee Phoenix, thoroughly aroused, announced on March 10, "Murderous Villa Band Battle Pursuing American Troopers," and within three days published its two strongest preparedness editorials, "The Great Treason" and "What You Can Do For Preparedness." "Sooner or later," declared the Daily Ardmoreite, "this country will be involved with Mexico." The Durant Weekly News in subsequent publications published lead stories headed "Hunting for Bandit Villa" and "The Trouble in Mexico." The Latimer County News-Democrat, while professing to be "grieved" over the "sad and tragic" state of affairs, issued a classic expression of the "manifest destiny" principle:

- As far as we are individually concerned, we would like to see old man Carranza join his forces with those of his former comrade in arms and resist this attempt to punish Villa. Then we could have armed intervention and in a few years American civilization would take root . . . and . . . Mexico would blossom as a rose and the lilly of the valley. We know that this sentiment is not in keeping with the aim and desire of the administration at Washington, but we see it this way and just can't help it. Just as Jehovah said to the Children of Israel, "Go over and possess the land of Canaan," so we believe that He is expressing the same desire to the people of the United States in their relation and duty to Mexico.

This is too great a country to be eternally wasted and plundered by half civilized people. Let us go over and possess it.¹

The Tulsa World asserted that "U. S. Troops Are Eager To Clash With The Greasers," but ascribed much of the blame for the situation to Wilsonian policy. A March 10 editorial stated: "The early fall of the Carranza government if freely predicted and nothing can be foreseen but violence and anarchy. . . . Meanwhile Mr. Wilson calmly assures us that all is well." A week later the World surveyed the prospects a bit more calmly: "The Columbus incident may yet develop into a real war. . . . It is to be hoped that no such disaster may occur. Yet it is not at all out of place for us to be prepared for any eventuality and the action of congress in calling for recruits to fill up the army units is a step in the right direction." With the sinking of the Sussex on March 24 the Mexican problem disappeared from the headlines until June 20. The Enid Events sporadically joined in the severe Republican criticism of the Administration's Mexican policy, asserting that the President "could have put an end" to the "deadly" arms traffic had he cooperated with Congress.²

¹Muskogee Phoenix, March 10, 1916, p. 1; March 11, 1916, pp. 1, 4; March 13, 1916, p. 6-B; Daily Ardmoreite, March 10, 1916, p. 4; Durant Weekly News, March 17, 1916, p. 1; March 24, 1916, p. 1; Latimer County News-Democrat (Wilburton), March 17, 1916, p. 4.

²Tulsa World, March 10, 1916, pp. 1, 4; March 11, 1916, p. 1; March 12, 1916, p. 1; March 16, 1916, p. 1; March 17, 1916, pp. 1, 4; March 18, 1916, p. 1; March 21, 1916, p. 1;

Again the Socialists strongly protested the tragic course of events. The Pawhuska World-Wide War typified Socialist opposition both to war and to capitalistic exploitation as it pointed to Mexico's rich oil, gold, and silver resources:

The trouble in Mexico has been brought about by the big capitalist. . . . It is a question of dollars and cents with the big capitalists . . . and the working stiff that shoulders a gun to protect capitalism and has not demanded his own rights as a working man has no sense nor dollars [sic]. The wars that be are the fruit of capitalism. . . . If there is war with Mexico and the United States the bonehead that thinks he is dying for his country (something he hasn't got) will be dying for the Standard Oil Company and other capitalistic interests. . . . Why not let the people vote as to whether there be war or not, and the first ones that vote for war will be the first to the front. Let the capitalists protect their own wealth that they have taken from us. . . . Socialism is the only foe against war. . . . The Socialist party is fighting a battle to save your boy from the hell of war.¹

The Socialist cry, of course, was far from new and few heeded it.

Despite the Sussex incident Sooner interest in strife-torn Mexico remained at a high level. Harlow's Weekly on April 8, 1916, reported that "aside from the states bordering Mexico there is more interest in Oklahoma in the Mexican situation than in any other section of the United States."

March 22, 1916, pp. 1, 4; March 23, 1916, pp. 1, 4; March 24, 1916, pp. 1, 4; Enid Events, March 30, 1916, p. 2; May 11, 1916, p. 2; May 18, 1916, p. 2.

¹World-Wide War (Pawhuska), March 25, 1916, p. 2.

Indeed, Colonel Roy V. Hoffman, commander of the Oklahoma National Guard units, and his aides were "deligently preparing to answer promptly a confidentially expected call of the United States war department" for duty against Mexico. It was "probable," said Editor Harlow, that the Guard's personnel of 1500 would reach "the full regimental quota of 1800" and that it would take "500,000 men to clean up this situation." Ernest W. Marland, the prominent Ponca City oil man, subscribed \$1,000 of the \$7,500 needed to provide the Guard with an aeroplane. "Other proffers are numerous," said Harlow.¹

More intense interest developed in the Mexican problem again in May. Daily Oklahoman headlines on May 8 announced: "Mexicans Raid Texas Towns; Four Americans Slain." The Glen Springs raid prompted an immediate and forthright reaction. Bold-face headlines in the Durant Weekly News announced the dispatching of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico National Guard units to the Mexican border, and the Oklahoman added: "Oklahoma Guard Expects a Call." Excitement ran high, particularly in localities having National Guard units. The Stillwater Gazette, on June 16 printed two large cuts, one of the daily patrol of the militia units at El Paso,

¹"Oklahoma's Grave Concern in Mexican Trouble," Harlow's Weekly, X (April 8, 1916), pp. 24-25.

the other of Gerneral Pershing identified as "The Bandit Chaser."¹

Oklahoma's rehearsal for war was not long in coming. Harlow's Weekly announced on June 10 that according to "semi-official sources," the Sooner militia would be included in the next call for troops which could be expected "by the first of July unless a radical change takes place in the Mexican situation." State officials, anticipating the call, readied plans to "rehabilitate all companies . . . to the full quota." Muskogee Phoenix headlines on June 18 reported, "Troops Ordered To Be in Readiness For Emergencies," as the President called out the National Guard of the remaining forty-five states. The Tulsa World on June 20 excitedly proclaimed: "Ships To Mexico; Troops Mobilize; Say War Declared." The World, under a second prominent headline, further declared that "Tulsa Hears National Call For Soldiers," and reported the efforts of Mayor Alva Niles, a reserve army officer, to organize a local cavalry unit. The same issue featured large pictures of Colonel Roy V. Hoffman, Commander of the Oklahoma National Guard, and Captain Patrick J. Hurley and proudly referred to the latter as "A Tulsan" who had

¹Daily Oklahoman, May 6, 1916, p. 1; May 8, 1916, May 11, 1916, p. 1; Durant Weekly News, May 12, 1916, p. 1; Stillwater Gazette, May 12, 1916, p. 1; June 16, 1916, p. 1.

announced that "he would be glad to join the colors in active duty."¹

Patriotic fervor ran high in Tulsa. Twenty-five new recruits, largely ex-soldiers, immediately signed up as Mayor Niles, acting on orders from Hoffman, issued an urgent call for volunteers. Headlines on June 21 and 22 announced, "Tulsa Sends Sons To Defend Flag on Border," and "Tulsa Company Now Recruited; Ready For War." The World declared that "there is no patriotism greater than that which Tulsa boasts," and explained: "For the first time in many a moon Tulsa is not following the example set by Chicago, St. Louis, and other large cities in things patriotic."²

While Tulsa represented the zenith of Sooner patriotic fervor, spirit ran high in most of Oklahoma. The Durant Weekly News reported "Many Young Men Recruiting" and two mass meetings, one drawing 1500 people, where "enthusiasm was at a high pitch during the speaking." The Wewoka Democrat

¹"Imminent Call Means Militia Rehabilitation," Harlow's Weekly, X (June 10, 1916), pp. 4-5; Muskogee Phoenix, June 18, 1916, p. 1; Tulsa World, June 20, 1916, p. 1. Hurley's colorful career, including his role on the Mexican border and in World War I, is developed in Parker La Moore, "Pat" Hurley, The Story of an American (New York, 1932).

²Tulsa World, June 20, 1916, p. 1; June 21, 1916, p. 1; June 22, 1916, p. 1; June 25, 1916, p. 1. Renfrew's Record, March 22, 1916, p. 1, published the mobilization order along with a War Department resume of the status of the National Guard in each state, the comparative strength of the contending forces on the border, and a recapitulation of the Mexican crisis since 1910.

rivalled the Tulsa World in patriotic enthusiasm. Reports of mobilization activities splashed across more than one-half of the June 22 front page under the banner, "Oklahoma National Guard Called To Colors." The Wewoka company included the entire staff of Editor Luther Harrison's paper, among them his brother Forde. The Democrat proudly proclaimed:

If Oklahoma had responded as Wewoka did, 70,000 men would have been enrolled in twenty-four hours. Our depleted population look through proud tears to those who have sneered [at Seminole County's previous "unfounded lawless reputation"] and challenged the state to equal our record. And if God shall will the baptism in Mexico fire of our soldier boys, the world will see that these same boys know how to fight and know how to die for their country and their country's honor.

Subsequent issues recounted the Wewoka militia's activities through letters from his brother, Forde.¹

The Stillwater Gazette viewed developments more soberly. Observing that "war and rumors of war are in the air," the Gazette urged local merchants to hold open the jobs of the guardsmen and professed a "general feeling of . . . pity, rather than of hatred" toward the people of Mexico. When the eighty men comprising Company I departed for Fort Sill, the Gazette reflected that "some of them will not come back." In Norman, the Transcript which as late as June 19 had insisted that there was "little cause for excitement" and that the prospects that "the boys may have to go to the

¹Durant Weekly News, June 23, 1916, p. 1; Wewoka Democrat, June 22, 1916, p. 1; June 29, 1916, pp. 1, 4; "Oklahoma Militia to the Front," Harlow's Weekly, XI (July 8, 1916), p. 6.

border . . . for patriot duty . . . seem to be somewhat remote," subsequently admitted that it "Looks Critical in Mexico."¹

Recruiting proceeded rapidly in all parts of the state. Former Adjutant General Alva Niles recruited a new company at Tulsa "in record time." Bartlesville, Blackwell, Alva, Idabel, and Oklahoma City, among others, also raised companies, the latter recruiting forty-seven in one day for a second unit.² Harlow's Weekly on June 24 reported "many striking instances of patriotism" in the course of recruitment. "Several native Germans" were among those enlisting. One of them reportedly declared that, in so doing, they hoped "'to give the lie to slanders heaped upon hyphenated Americans and prove their loyalty and readiness to defend the flag.'"³

¹Stillwater Gazette, June 23, 1916, pp. 1, 2; June 30, 1916, p. 1; The Daily Transcript (Norman), June 19, 1916, p. 1; "Oklahoma's Preparedness Activities," Harlow's Weekly, X (June 24, 1916), pp. 3-4.

²Oklahoma's twelve infantry companies in 1916 were located at Antlers, Chandler, Clinton, Durant, Enid, Muskogee, Newkirk, Oklahoma City, Pawnee, Stillwater, Tulsa, and Wewoka. The companies at Antlers, Muskogee, and Guthrie previously had been disbanded. In 1916 the former two were reactivated and the latter replaced by Tulsa. Cavalry Troop A was located at Okemah, Troop B at Oklahoma City, the Engineers Corps and the Signal Corps at Norman, the Field Hospital Corps at Oklahoma City. The Signal Corps at Blackwell had been disbanded. Ibid.

³"Oklahoma's Preparedness Activities," Harlow's Weekly, X (June 24, 1916), pp. 3-4; "Progress of State Military Movements," ibid., XI (July 1, 1916), pp. 51-52; "Oklahoma Militia to the Front," ibid., XI (July 8, 1916), p. 6.

Nearly every social, economic, racial, and nationality group in Oklahoma joined the enlistment bandwagon. Many gave up positions paying "good salaries of above one hundred dollars per month to accept the soldiers fifteen per month." Numerous convicts "displayed patriotism" and a willingness "to trade the prison for the army." Indian enlistments, already significant in 1915, increased and the Latimer County News-Democrat reported the efforts of thirty-two Seminole County negroes to form a company for their race. Their petition to the United States War Department stated their desire to "go to the Mexican border and assist in repelling possible Mexican raids into the United States." Harlow's Weekly proclaimed that Oklahomans were "anxious to see service."¹

However, despite the patriotic fervor, the Oklahoma regiment in July was "nearly three hundred short of the 1765 men required for war strength" and Governor Williams, to whom the Enid Events referred as "His Own General," issued a call for an additional eight hundred volunteers. Indeed, officials hoped to increase the Guard to the maximum strength of 2,386 permitted by the new federal law taking effect on July 1. Many communities sponsored major recruitment drives on July Fourth with a publicized goal of four hundred additional volunteers. There was no officer shortage. Harlow's Weekly

¹Ibid.; Latimer County News-Democrat, June 23, 1916, p. 2.

on July 1 reported: "The governor is besieged with applications for military appointments. There are large numbers who would organize and officer volunteer troops but there is no surplus of privates."¹

Oklahomans also manifested their patriotic impulses in numerous war-related activities. Enid, McAlester, Muskogee, Oklahoma City, and Tulsa organized Red Cross chapters and launched ambitious membership drives. The twenty members of the nurses' chapter at Oklahoma City made plans both for front-line duty and care of the families of Guardsmen. By late June one hundred pounds of tobacco had been sent to soldiers already on the border, "two automobiles and two motorcycles and many other compliments had been donated, and the biplane and canteen funds augmented. At Tulsa five hundred men volunteered to train "without cost to the government other than the supplying of equipment," in a general preparedness program. Agitation developed, also, for financial assistance to the families of Guardsmen and a guarantee of their positions when mustered out. Private's pay of \$15 a month seemed certain to reduce many families to severely straitened circumstances. Initiated by the Oklahoma

¹Enid Events, June 22, 1916, p. 1; "Oklahoma's Preparedness Activities," Harlow's Weekly, X (June 24, 1916), pp. 3-4; "About Politics and Politicians," ibid., p. 11; "Progress of State Military Movements," ibid., XI (July 1, 1916), pp. 51-52; "About Politics and Politicians," ibid., pp. 53-58; "Oklahoma Militia to the Front," ibid., XI (July 8, 1916), p. 6.

Employers' Association, the move was widely supported by the press. The Enid Eagle, while believing the responsibility was one "the government ought to look after," termed the "Soldiers' Fund" "a move in the right direction and at the right time." Contributions should not be regarded as "charity" but "as an additional debt that is due these families" since the "boys had not gone to war for the purpose of earning \$15 a month." On July 1 Harlow's Weekly reported "a liberal response."¹

There were, of course, isolated instances of opposition, some of which led to violence. At Wewoka the editor of a Socialist paper, Roff Ransom, was "escorted to the edge of town by local citizens and warned that his presence . . . was no longer desired." At a farewell gathering for Company G the previous night, Ransom had been knocked down and "severely bruised" when he had "expressed the hope that 'every one who goes to Mexico will get planted there.'" Ransom's paper ceased publication. The incident received wide coverage in the Oklahoma press. The Durant Weekly News, applauding the actions of the "enraged populace" at Wewoka, wrathfully declared:

Such sentiment cannot be too deeply condemned. The man who lacks a sense of patriotism--who cannot appreciate the blessings of government, loses all right to protection under that government. The song hit, "Don't Bite the Hand That Feeds You," utters a true sentiment that every

¹Ibid. Harlow's Weekly quotes the Enid Eagle.

true American endorses. If you don't like your Uncle Sammy, go back where you came from. . . . Such sentiments as that Socialist uttered are in true keeping with the policies of that party, however, and people are not much surprised. They teach disrespect for God, government, and the family, three things upon which civilization is built, and without which man would descend to the stage of animals.

Mob violence against Mexicans living in Oklahoma occurred on July Fourth at Vinita. Enraged by the slapping of "a small American lad" by a Mexican waiter who then stood off the angry crowd with a revolver, a mob of five hundred citizens wreaked summary vengeance. With the culprit under heavy police guard, the mob descended upon the Mexican settlement, "decorated their homes with national colors, drove some from the city and compelled others to seek shelter in the county jail." Harlow termed the incident "the first demonstration against a native of Mexico . . . in Oklahoma," one "regretted by the entire state."¹

Although their patriotic activities may not have been prompted by the profit motive, Oklahomans nonetheless were conscious of the financial impact involved. As early as June 10 Harlow's Weekly commented that under the provisions of the new army bill Oklahoma would "eventually receive over one million dollars annually for military purposes." In 1916 alone \$64,000 in federal funds had been expended on the

¹Latimer County News-Democrat, June 23, 1916, p. 2; Durant Weekly News, June 23, 1916, p. 4; "Oklahoma Militia to the Front," Harlow's Weekly, XI (July 8, 1916), p. 6.

Oklahoma militia as compared with \$39,880 in state monies. These expenditures were exclusive of the cost of the Mexican border mobilization order. Again on July 1 Harlow's paper observed: "Many Oklahoma products will go to supply war ammunition in case of a war with Mexico. Oklahoma manganese, lead, zinc, and iron will be turned into government ammunition channels." The following week Editor Harlow frankly reviewed the steps being taken to insure Oklahoma its share in the anticipated war profits:

Along with the military and patriotic spirit the business acumen of Oklahoma also comes to the surface. Practically all of the iron foundries in the state have certified their willingness to the department to participate in ammunition orders. The department has signified that orders for ammunition will be placed through the United States to factories to install shell-making machinery. There are a number of factories that can be readily equipped to supply shells. Owners of smelters, refineries, lead, zinc, iron and other mines and industries in a position to contribute materials in the event of war are also making their facilities known to the department of war, and in the event it becomes necessary Oklahoma can be depended on to furnish her share of the accoutrements.

While the abbreviated Mexican episode offered only limited financial gains, Oklahoma was alerted for a greater role during World War I.¹

The Daily Oklahoman on June 20 reported "cheers and tears" as 12,000 citizens, aided by the India Temple band and

¹"Imminent Call Means Militia Rehabilitation," Harlow's Weekly, X (June 10, 1916), pp. 4-5; "Oklahoma's Preparedness Activities," ibid., X (June 24, 1916), pp. 3-4; "Progress of State's Military Movements," ibid., XI (July 1, 1916), pp. 51-52; "Oklahoma Militia to the Front," ibid., XI (July 8, 1916), p. 6.

automobile horns, gave their "boys" a rousing send-off. Four special troop trains transported the eleven companies from their temporary quarters at the Oklahoma City fair grounds to Fort Sill. Three companies had previously reported. The Oklahoman, while reporting the glamor and excitement, soberly reflected:

There were few tears among the boys in olive-drab uniforms. They laughed and joked, but the women cried with no attempt to hold their tears. Lovers made frantic demonstrations of faith. . . . It was the glamorous side of war, . . . from the soldier's viewpoint. To the great, silent crowd it meant something more than glamor.

Indeed, the influential daily on the previous day had aptly expressed the sentiments of most Oklahomans in the Mexican imbroglio, when it observed:

In the event hostilities with Mexico prove unavoidable, the state's troops are ready and willing to do their part. No one doubts it unless he doubts Oklahoma itself and the Oklahoma spirit. . . . Oklahomans are not hankering for war. They want no war, and they have taken pride in the masterful diplomacy exerted from Washington which has so earnestly tried to maintain peace. But if Mexican treachery . . . and ruthlessness shall force the administration into action . . . sons of Oklahoma will be found waving Old Glory from the ramparts. . . . Oklahomans are ready--not anxious, but ready.

A lengthier companion editorial commended Wilson and American citizens for patience that had been "worn to a frazzle," termed Carranza a "bewhiskered old hypocrite," and warned his followers that they stood "on the threshold of a reckoning" if they did not "act with a celerity new to them." "It will be regrettable if we are compelled to go to Mexico," said

the Oklahoman, "but if we go at all the visit will be productive of results."¹

A week later, as national and state sentiment mounted, the Oklahoman spoke much more sharply. Castigating the "ruthless bands" gathered under a "soiled and dishonored flag," the state's leading daily declared: "We do not like to fight, we of the greatest nation on earth; but we know how to do it when the grim necessity rises to stare us in the face and makes it imperative." The rural Wewoka Democrat far exceeded its urban colleagues in belligerency. While admitting that "it would be a blessing to both republics" if the President "could pacify Mexico and protect the border by writing diplomatic notes," the Wewoka paper insisted that Wilson was "whistling to the whirlwind" and could "threaten till the crack of doom with rhetoric." Patience exhausted, the Democrat wrathfully shouted:

Diplomacy is dead in Mexico and the time for negotiation is ended. Nothing but blood and iron will bring peace back to the Mexican people and protect our boundaries from devastation. For seven years America has suffered every insolence known to barbarous minds. . . . The knell of vengeance has already sounded and the time has struck to do or die. . . . Wilson may withdraw our forces from Chihuahua and convert our armies into cow-camp garrisons, but if he does American people will withdraw him from the White House.²

¹Daily Oklahoman, June 19, 1916, p. 4; June 20, 1916, p. 1; "Progress of State Military Movements," Harlow's Weekly, XI (July 1, 1916), pp. 51-52.

²Daily Oklahoman, June 27, 1916, p. 6; Wewoka Democrat, July 6, 1916, p. 4.

Election-year repercussions tinged the reactions of the Republican press. While aggressively supporting mobilization, the Tulsa World again suggested political motivations. Under the barbed caption, "Reaping the Whirlwind," the World declared:

It is to be regretted that the time has come . . . when it is impossible to longer evade war with the de facto [sic] government of Mexico. War is deplorable under most any circumstances, yet it is undeniable that there are worse things than war. . . . We do not want to be . . . a big bully, but when the weak demonstrate that nothing but war will satisfy their longings, we have no honorable recourse. Every loyal man . . . will be ready to do his part when duty calls, and no one should be permitted to remain under the protection of the stars and stripes who tries to hinder or discourage the wave of patriotic fervor that is sweeping the country. This event cannot avoid having a political aspect for us, coming as it does right at the opening of a presidential campaign. . . . Perhaps the precipitation of war may be expected to aid his [Wilson] candidacy because the enthusiasm of the moment may lead many to forget that present events are but the logical sequence of the course Mr. Wilson has pursued towards Mexico.

The Enid Events, which on March 30 had charged that "Wilson submitted to Carranza," a "contending rascal," followed a similar but less vicious course. On June 6 five brief comments such as this one appeared: "While the Mexicans are all armed with our guns, it is quite likely that many of them can be picked up along side the road as soon as our boys get to work." The Events reserved its caustic charges of administrative blundering in Mexico until the heat of the presidential campaign.¹

¹Tulsa World, June 23, 1916, p. 4; Enid Events, March 30, 1916, p. 2; June 6, 1916, p. 14; Oct. 26, 1916, p. 14.

The extent of opposition to intervention in Mexico, of course, is difficult to ascertain. The masses of the common people tended to remain silent in the face of more literate and vocal elements of public opinion. It is significant that in this instance, more so than in any other, the weekly press expressed itself freely, both in news reports and editorial comment, and that the majority either favored or saw no alternative to armed intervention. The Oklahoma Federationist, which in March had roundly criticized the three-year tenure of American forces on the border as an argument for greater preparedness, now gave its reluctant assent to intervention. Urging the United States to "Go As Pacifist, Not Warrior" and not to "establish a protectorate" or "do police duty for American dollars," the labor journal lamented:

War with Mexico will bring no glory to the United States. . . . It is, to use the most charitable expression, a disgraceful situation. If Uncle Sam does go into Mexico it should be in the role of a pacificator to establish a stable government of the people, and not as a warrior to add more suffering to the misguided inhabitants of that unhappy territory.¹

Even the Socialists seemed to recognize the inevitability of the situation. After fulminating so bitterly in March against American capitalist exploitation in Mexico, World-Wide War in July blamed the Mexican landlords. The editorial, "Is the Long Dreaded Upon Us?," declared:

¹Oklahoma Federationist, VIII (March 25, 1916), p. 2; (July 1, 1916), p. 2.

The recognition of Carranza was the last straw for us, that broke the camel's back (of Peace). . . . The common masses of Mexico know that they have less to fear from U. S. intervention than from their landlords and tyrannical upper class of their own country dominated by American capital. War seems inevitable, and if we cannot prevent it we must do our best to mitigate all the suffering possible.¹

The Federationist and the Socialists had not changed their basic position of opposition to war; they merely recognized what appeared inevitable and attempted to make the best of a bad situation.

The rural press was by no means unanimous in its support of intervention and several that had been quick to applaud looked anxiously to a cessation of hostilities. The Poteau News, which on June 22 published a full-page story on skirmishes between Mexican and American soldiers, ventured no editorial comment. The same singular silence characterized all of its reports on the Mexican problem. The Durant Weekly News, a recruiting enthusiast a week earlier, on June 30 reported a Carranza peace overture with the headline, "A Mexican War May Be Averted." Similarly, on June 23 the Latimer County News-Democrat announced, "Mexican Crisis Ended By a Friendly Reply." Nonetheless, the same issue reported the "ringing cheers" of "hundreds of people" who "for hours" had awaited the arrival of the New Jersey troop train, the

¹World-Wide War (Pawhuska), July 1, 1916, p. 1.

first guardsmen east of the Mississippi River assigned to Mexican duty.¹

Although Pershing's forces were not withdrawn until February, 1917, and tempers remained taut on both sides, hostilities tapered off late in July of 1916 as the first contingent of the Oklahoma militia reached San Benito, Texas, on the Mexican border. Still six hundred short of war-time strength, measles and "ferocious" mosquitoes rather than Mexicans proved the principal foe, and mosquito bars rather than guns the essential weapon. As hostilities decreased and the distance separating the militia from the homefront increased, interest in enlistment dropped sharply. Despite Adjutant General Earp's appointment of six recruiting officers, Harlow's Weekly reported on July 22 that "recruiting has been slow regardless of efforts to bring the regiment to war strength." While the enlistment drought scrapped plans for a second batallion, local preparedness training became increasingly popular.²

By September the crisis seemed over and inactivity palled on both officers and men. On September 7 Lieutenant Guy Y. Williams, on leave from the Chemistry faculty at the

¹Poteau News, June 22, 1916, p. 1; Durant Weekly News, June 30, 1916, p. 1; Latimer County News-Democrat, June 23, 1916, p. 1; July 7, 1916, p. 1.

²"Oklahoma Regiment on Border," Harlow's Weekly, XI (July 22, 1916), p. 7; "Oklahoma Military Matters," ibid.

University, informed his department chairman that "the crisis in the Mexican situation has apparently passed" and that "the feeling seems to be pretty general here that the greater part of the Guard will be ordered home sometime about Oct. 7." Explaining that "the retention of the troops . . . is merely for training," Williams sought to return to his teaching position. "After three months of it, he declared, "I have come to the conclusion that I should not waste what little knowledge of Chemistry I do have for the purpose of bossing a bunch of men." Denied his August application for an advanced mustering out, the soldier-chemist decided against resignation. Anticipating a November 15 return, Williams somewhat ruefully admitted: "This is a great experience from many standpoints, even if it does interfere rather seriously with one's business in civil life." The problems and attitude of Williams, a leader in the Norman militia movement, typified that of numerous guardmen.¹

The waning interest in the Mexican border controversy did not stem altogether from the temporary cessation in hostile activity.² Other pressing developments were clamoring

¹Williams to Dr. Edwin DeBarr, Aug. 23, 1916; Sept. 7, 1916; Oct. 5, 1916; Oct. 8, 1916, DeBarr Papers, Correspondence and Papers (1886-1950), N-Z; Folder, "Williams, Guy Y."

²Six-year enlistments, the \$15 monthly pay, financial losses, family deprivation, protracted border service, Regular Army encroachments on militia personnel, and lack of "military spirit" by late December of 1916 threatened to reduce Oklahoma enlistments far below the 2,000 needed to qualify for federal aid under the new Army Reorganization Bill. See "Oklahoma

for public attention. Chief among these was the crucial and controversial presidential election. While both major parties had been laying plans for the dramatic contest since January, such successive crises as the Gore-McLemore resolutions, the Sussex torpedoing, and the Mexican imbroglio had preempted the headlines during the January-July interim and relegated political developments to a secondary position. In addition, the continuing controversy over preparedness legislation commanded sporadic attention until mid-September.¹

Press reports of political activities were few during the early months of 1916. The Tulsa World on February 20 published a call for Republicans of that county to discuss "national, state, and local politics" four days hence. The call, termed the "opening gun in Tulsa county's part in the coming national campaign," charged that the Democratic administration had "failed to deal adequately with national honor and industrial welfare," and thereby had "weakened our

Military Matters," Harlow's Weekly, XI (July 22, 1916), p. 7; "Will Oklahoma National Guard Be Abandoned?," ibid., XI (Dec. 20, 1916), pp. 10-11. See Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1917, Chap. 37, House Bill No. 283, pp. 85-86; Senate Bill No. 269, pp. 86-87; Harry Jones to Senator Wilburn Cartwright, Feb. 1, 1917, Cartwright Papers, for subsequent efforts to relieve the low pay situation.

¹Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 223-51, provides an excellent account and a penetrating analysis of the personalities, issues, developments, and result of the 1916 presidential election. The role of Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Party is ably presented in Mowry, Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, pp. 320-66.

national prestige and threatened American progress." One of the six pledges in the "statement of principles" declared that "thorough preparedness for war is the best guarantee of an honorable peace." Others called for "the dethronement of the invisible government," "industrial justice," and a pledge of "aid to the misgoverned and tax burdened people of Oklahoma." Prominent among the numerous signers were Bird McGuire, E. E. Louderback, and Eugene Lorton, editor of the World. The Tulsa "principles" typified the Republican campaign, both in the state and elsewhere.¹

In March the President announced that he would seek reelection. The announcement, a foregone conclusion, drew from the Enid Events a cryptic comment: "President Wilson's decision to run again created just about as much interest and enthusiasm as Vice President Marshall's similar announcement." Two months later, noting Wilson concessions to Germany, England, Mexico, and Japan, the Events again delivered a barbed observation: "Yielding has become a real habit with the Wilson administration--and presently it will yield to a Republican administration." On June 1 the Enid paper published its final and most venomous pre-convention thrust. Calling attention to Bryan's "unsought counsel" urging Wilson to become a mediator in the European war as a means of gaining the support of the "peace element," the Events declared:

¹Tulsa World, Feb. 20, 1916, p. 1.

A more insulting proposition could hardly have been addressed to a man of fine instincts. But Bryan doubtless knows Wilson and knows that he is safe in making the proposal. . . . Pacifism and defense have already been shown to mean nothing to the President except as they are connected with his political fortunes. . . . The idea will appeal to Wilson. . . . If he could make peace . . . he could also present a claim for the Nobel peace prize.¹

The Republicans met in Chicago on June 8 to select Wilson's opponent. Hard put for an acceptable candidate, they finally but unwillingly settled upon Supreme Court Justice Charles Evans Hughes. A Progressive, Hughes possessed many admirable qualities but was severely handicapped by a hybrid platform. Such planks, among others, as "adequate" land and naval forces, protection of American rights "by land and sea," "straight and honest neutrality," and non-interference in Mexico were not easy to reconcile, in Oklahoma or elsewhere. The Republican press in Oklahoma, while not overenthusiastic for Hughes, gave considerable attention to convention proceedings.²

¹Enid Events, March 9, 1916, p. 2; May 11, 1916, p. 10; June 1, 1916, p. 2.

²Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 230-32. Link regards Hughes as the Republicans' "best hope," noting "outwardly, at least, . . . many resemblances to Wilson." Among these Link cites "integrity, independence, great power of leadership, and, above all, intellectual depth." The platform "carefully avoided any denunciation of hyphenism and the extreme German-American element," hence Hughes was regarded as "the German-American candidate," an unfortunate circumstance. Ibid., p. 232, n. 24, in particular, summarized the important planks in the Republican platform, citing the Republican Campaign Text-Book (New York, 1916), pp. 48-52. For typical press comments see the Stillwater Gazette, June 16, 1916, p. 1; Enid Events, June 15, 1916, p. 10; Daily Ardmoreite, June 11, 1916, pp. 1, 4. The definitive biography of Hughes in Merlo J. Pusey, Charles Evans Hughes (2 vols., New York, 1951).

The task of the Democrats, convening in St. Louis on June 11, was not nearly so difficult. With "Americanism" and patriotic demonstrations prescribed and stirring speeches delivered by Keynoter Martin H. Glynn, ex-Governor of New York, and Bryan, Wilson was nominated by "one mighty acclamation." "Americanism, Preparedness, Peace and Prosperity," became the party slogan; "he kept us out of war," the battle cry. Tams Bixby, editor of the Muskogee Phoenix, provided a vivid, although partially disapproving, account of convention proceedings:

Unless something new transpires to change the tune the democratic campaign is to be made to the rhythm of Governor Glynn's keynote music, "He has kept us out of war." On "America First" and preparedness the two conventions are a stand off. My prediction is that the republicans will . . . make the tariff the main issue. . . . The American flag is even more in evidence at St. Louis than at Chicago. The democrats have come to the conclusion that the republicans have played a monopoly of the flag as a political asset long enough and they want in on the flag stuff.

Bixby pronounced the balcony exhibit of a "bevy of beautiful home-grown girls" as "one of the best things" provided by the Democratic management. The Democratic press in Oklahoma loudly applauded both candidate and platform.¹

The Daily Oklahoman on May 17 and 19 published editorials evaluating the platforms of the two major parties.

¹Muskogee Phoenix, June 16, 1916, p. 4; Daily Ardmoreite, June 16, 1916, p. 1; Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 232-35. Link maintains that a "passion for peace . . . consumed the delegates and deafened their ears to any other appeal."

Editor R. E. Stafford, who had been a member of the platform committee at the St. Louis convention, lauded the "notable lack of bombastic phrasology, . . . and glittering generalities, . . . the refreshing tangibility, . . . and the clearcut, straight-from-the-shoulder terminology." Stafford then emphasized how the document "modestly but proudly . . . told what has been accomplished by the patriotism and astuteness of Mr. Wilson; his official family and a democratic congress." Among the accomplishments enumerated were "the maintenance of peace with the world while yielding no vestige of national honor." "Men draped about with such democratic declarations," declared the editor, "shall taste no drug of defeat." Equality in length only characterized Stafford's assessment of the Republican platform:

Reactionaryism bristles from every plank of the platform. In every line there is that against which the progressives declaimed in 1912. . . . As a whole it is a platform on which neither Roosevelt nor Hughes could consistently stand. It reads as if made to order for Elihu Root or Boies Penrose.¹

Editor Sidney Suggs of the Daily Ardmoreite provided a much more temperate evaluation. Entitled, "Red Blood of Republicanism Is Slowly Ebbing Away," the Ardmoreite editor asserted:

Progressivism has torn republicanism asunder. . . . That old party is no longer a formidable force in federal affairs. . . . It has been poisoned by its own sins and

¹Daily Oklahoman, June 17, 1916, p. 6; June 19, 1916, p. 6; Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, p. 252.

has sickened and died. Justice Hughes is a quiet, conservative man of great learning and of a judical temperament. He will make a poor candidate. . . . A great army of first voters all over the land will not want to join a party in its dotage. . . . Republicanism has faded. . . . Democracy is united. . . . There will be no bolters. . . . The old republican party . . . will lose because many of the progressives prefer democracy to old time republicanism. . . . It will be a losing fight because as the colonies needed George Washington to preserve their identity as a nation, so we need a Woodrow Wilson to win even a greater victory in preserving our peace.

The role and impact of the German-American element both embarrassed and disturbed the Tulsa World. Noting that the group was "very bitterly opposed to Mr. Wilson and will presumably take the alternative of supporting Mr. Hughes," the Tulsa paper accused the Democrats of "desperate means" in their plea "that all loyal Americans should rally to the support of Wilson." The World defensively and indignantly asserted:

Mr. Hughes . . . is just as thoroughly an American as Wilson. . . . We are not taking sides with the hyphenates against Wilson. There are other reasons in plenty why he should not be re-elected. The Hughes campaign is not a challenge of Wilson's patriotism, nor even necessarily of his sincerity, but it is a challenge of his statesmanship.

The majority of the weekly press, less inclined to comment, followed the example of the Osage Journal which published a two-column picture of its candidate, Wilson, and the party slogan: "Americanism, Preparedness, Peace and Prosperity."¹

¹Daily Ardmoreite, June 11, 1916, p. 4; Tulsa World, June 22, 1916, p. 4; Osage Journal, June 22, 1916, p. 1.

Meanwhile the Socialists had not been idle. Indeed, the party had initiated plans for the 1916 campaign immediately after its encouraging showing in the 1914 election. Harlow's Weekly in September, 1915, reported that "by far the most important political campaign in the history of the state has been inaugurated by the socialist party this year." Some 205 "very largely attended" two and three-day summer encampments had been conducted and party membership had reached "about 15,000," an all-time high. The state Socialist convention convened in Oklahoma City on December 28, 1915, adopting as its "banner battle cry" the slogan, "Oklahoma for Socialism in 1916." Secretary H. M. Sinclair's report to the 451 accredited delegates and socialist visitors revealed 9,667 dues paid local memberships, a gain of 824 over 1914 and fourth rank among all the states.¹

While the platform adopted included no direct statement in opposition to war and preparedness, such a position was implicit in Article I. This article reaffirmed, as it had in the 1912 and 1914 platforms, Oklahoma Socialist "allegiance to the principles of international Socialism, as enunciated in the platform and program of the American Socialist party." The planks in the national platform strongly opposing war and preparedness included a demand for a popular referendum prior

¹"Socialism A Menace to Present Political Order," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Sept. 25, 1915), pp. 258-59; World-Wide War, Jan. 15, 1916, pp. 1, 2.

to a declaration of war except in the case of invasion, and for abandonment of the Monroe Doctrine because its enforcement might lead to war.¹

World-Wide War on January 15 published a full and enthusiastic account of the convention which frankly directed its appeal "to the masses of labor and men of small business." To the "banner battle cry" it appended the comment, "and this is no vain boasting." The report, like the platform, however, stressed state issues and made no direct mention of the war. Insisting that "with a vigorous campaign in the last election we could have easily doubled our vote," the Pawhuska paper declared: "We have much assurance of carrying the state this year, if each comrade will do his duty." The January 21 suicide of J. O. Welday, the party's state chairman and editor of the Oklahoma edition of the Appeal to Reason, damaged the Socialist cause considerably. Welday's death left the operation of the party largely in the hands of H. M. Sinclair, the state secretary, and Patrick S. Nagle, editor of The Tenant Farmer.²

¹Socialist Party of Oklahoma, Platform and Campaign Book, 1916, Library, Oklahoma Historical Society. Pickens, "Oklahoma Socialism, 1900-1918," Appendix I, pp. 94-104, reprints the entire state platform. Holsinger, "Socialism in the U. S.," pp. 101-102, cites the Socialist Party Platform, 1916, for the six relevant planks in the national platform.

²World-Wide War, Jan. 15, 1916, pp. 1, 2; Jan. 22, 1916, p. 1; Latimer County News-Democrat, Jan. 21, 1916, p. 1. World-Wide War, ibid., adjudged Welday to be "a young man of ability and culture . . . destined to be a strong personality in the future history of the Socialists of the State." The Wilburton paper, ibid., termed him "a man of considerable

In February World-Wide War called upon all Socialists to actively join in the fight against "infernally corrupt party bosses and old political theories that have cursed the world for ages and which are now growing worse by war." "Be men," the Pawhuska editor admonished, "Stand for something." In March, Eugene V. Debs toured the state in behalf of the Socialist cause. At Wilburton he addressed "one of the largest audiences" to gather there "in a long time." The editor of the Latimer County News-Democrat reported that "the biggest Socialist in the country made a splendid address," which included "a vivid and dramatic denunciation of war." Sidney Suggs of the Ardmoreite commented similarly on Debs' Ardmore appearance. At the same time, Patrick S. Nagle, perhaps Oklahoma's most effective exponent of Socialism, added his voice to that of Debs in a denunciation of war. Advocating direct legislation as a deterrent to the Democrat-supported registration law and the literacy test, Nagle declared: "Direct legislation tends to stability . . . by helping to eliminate war--there will be few wars when the common people vote them."¹

ability"; Harlow's Weekly, as "one of the brightest minds in politics in Oklahoma." "Socialism a Menace to Present Political Order," Harlow's Weekly, IX (Sept. 25, 1915), p. 258.

¹World-Wide War, Feb. 26, 1916, p. 1; Latimer County News-Democrat, March 10, 1916, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, March 5, 1916, p. 1; "The Election Controversy From Four Viewpoints," Harlow's Weekly, X (April 8, 1916), p. 15.

The non-Socialist press centered its attack largely on the domestic items in the Socialist platform. However, the Tulsa World, while admitting there was "some justification" to Socialist predictions of "sweeping the state" in 1916, declared: "In the face of the Mexican excitement it is doubtful if the Socialists can even hold their usual vote on a platform of peace at any price." While leaders in both the Republican and Democratic parties in Oklahoma generally viewed the Socialists as a party of protest to tenantry and other indigenous domestic problems, a significantly increasing number by 1916 began to consider it in its broader environs. Republican State Senator John Golobie, who formerly had held exclusively to the "protest" view, admitted in September of 1916 that "a few intellectuals follow it because of its world theories." Attorney General S. Prince Freeling, a Democrat, declared in August that "Socialism is not merely a political philosophy; it is a broadly founded philosophy . . . with emphasis on a number of maladjustments in modern society [including war]." The Democratic State Committee, while insisting that tenantry produced most of the state's Socialists, admitted that the "theoretically founded socialist" did exist in Oklahoma.¹

¹Tulsa World, March 24, 1916, p. 4. Golobie is quoted in "Current Events and Comments," Harlow's Weekly, XI (Sept. 27, 1916), pp. 3-4; Freeling in ibid., XI (Aug. 19, 1916), pp. 3-4; the Okla. Democratic State Comm. in ibid., pp. 4-5. For other attacks on the Socialist candidates, principles, and platform

Victor E. Harlow, editor of Harlow's Weekly, was the most outspoken advocate of this view. On September 27 Harlow declared:

The difficulty in this state is precisely that Democrats and Republicans alike look upon socialism as a party of protest alone. They utterly fail to realize the revolutionary purposes which lie at the foundation of this government, and await only a favorable opportunity to be revealed, the thorough going determination of its leaders, who will balk at neither methods nor means to accomplish these purposes; their abiding distrust of existing institutions and their eagerness to destroy them. The votes upon which they rely to secure power are, it is true, largely votes of protest, but the leaders, the men who now direct the party policies and who have already formulated their program if the party ever secures power, are as thoroughly, as frankly, as avowedly, revolutionists as their brothers of Russia today or the communists of Paris seventy years ago.¹

Clearly then, conservative Oklahomans opposed Socialism because of its ideology which was considered inimical to American ideals and democracy, and inspired revolution and violence. The strenuous Socialist opposition to American entry into the war, the draft, and most aspects of the war effort only served to immeasurably heighten and dramatize the schism.

Both Wilson and Hughes wooed the voters in the Middle and Far West, but with vastly different results. Hughes'

see The Indian Journal (Eufaula), Jan. 23, 1916, p. 4; July 14, 1916, p. 4; Enid Events, May 11, 1916, p. 10; Daily Ardmoreite, Nov. 5, 1916, p. 4; Harlow's Weekly, X (April 29, 1916), pp. 9-12; X (June 10, 1916), pp. 9-11; XI (Sept. 6, 1916), pp. 3-9; XI (Sept. 27, 1916), p. 3; XI (Oct. 18, 1916), pp. 3-5.

¹"Current Events and Comments," Harlow's Weekly, XI (Sept. 27, 1916), pp. 4-5.

extended August-September tour featured "petty criticisms" of the administration's failures, particularly in Mexico, and gross, though unintended, blunders such as the "snub" of Hiram Johnson and the picket line episode in California. Wilson's October tour, on the other hand, was a triumphant recital of Democrat-inspired progressive reform, prosperity, peace, and the success of the Mexican policy. While neither candidate reached Oklahoma, the speeches gauged to influence the isolationist and pacifist-inclined Midwest had a profound effect upon the Sooner electorate. While Professor James R. Scales describes the 1916 election in Oklahoma as "unusually quiet," Sooner Democrats worked zealously for Wilson, both in and outside the state. The Williams administration "was indefatigable in advancing the President's reelection," a not too difficult task since Wilson "had become very popular" with all Democratic factions in the state and his program of progressive legislation had been "especially pleasing."¹

Although Senator Gore had clashed sharply with the President on preparedness and foreign policy issues throughout much of 1916, he nonetheless campaigned assiduously for Wilson's re-election. Gore, like Williams, had not attended the National Convention, and declared:

¹Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma," pp. 187-88; Williams to Wilson, June 17, 1916, Williams Papers, No. 64288. Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, p. 330, describe the 1916 election as "uneventful so far as Oklahoma was concerned."

I do not desire to go as a delegate to the St. Louis Convention. The honors conferred upon me by the democracy of Oklahoma equal my aspiration and surpass my deserts. I should feel myself as ungrateful and greedy as a monopolist if I should seek to corner still more favors.

While the Senator's motives in refusing to attend may have indicated a disinclination to support the President, his post-convention record was notable indeed. Traveling widely across the nation, the Senator campaigned vigorously with "peace and progressivism as his major themes." He applauded the domestic achievements of the Democrats and stressed the "blessings of peace due to President Wilson's wise leadership."¹

In an effort to capture the crucial vote in California, conceded to be "a stronghold of progressivism," the National Democratic Speaker's Committee in late October sent the fluent Oklahoman to stump the Pacific Coast state. Utilizing "innocuous sarcasm and sly humor," Gore hammered home the idea that "the Democratic party was the progressive party by pointing to its legislative accomplishments" during the preceding three and one-half years. Senator Owen, too, campaigned continuously in Oklahoma for "the Wilson politics and their perpetuation" following the September 7 adjournment of Congress. Owen's most significant speech was delivered in Oklahoma City on October 18. Seeking the vote of the

¹Gore to W. N. Redwine, April 4, 1916, Redwine Papers; Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 170-71. The latter quote is cited from the Hopkinsville (Ky.) Kentuckian, Oct. 2, 1916.

minority political elements, the Senator lauded the "progressive" candidates, platform, and achievements of the Democrats. He then declared that all "true Progressives" in the Progressive party "must vote Democratic" to be consistent with their ideals. Since the Socialists could hardly support the "stand pat" Hughes, Owen urged them to vote for Wilson since "they know there is no chance to elect their own candidate." Owen then summed up the notable achievements of the Wilson administration:

Mr. Wilson has maintained with honor and dignity the international rights of America and by negotiations led the German Kaiser himself to recognize our rights upon the sea and our rights as neutrals. We are in a condition of profound peace and abounding prosperity. . . . "Let well enough alone" is a good American doctrine. Support Woodrow Wilson and his progressive associates who have given you peace and prosperity.

Since there was no gubernatorial race in Oklahoma in 1916, the majority of the party's prominent leaders joined in the national campaign effort. Harlow's Weekly reported that 3,600 Democratic speeches had been made in Oklahoma "with one week still to go." Speaker of the House Champ Clark stumped Oklahoma, as did other nationally prominent party leaders.¹

Sooner Republicans, while outnumbered, were by no means idle. Led by Congressman Dick T. Morgan who campaigned

¹Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 170-71; "About Politics and Politicians," Harlow's Weekly, XI (Nov. 1, 1916), p. 7; Daily Oklahoman, Oct. 18, 1916, p. 1; Hines, Alfalfa Bill, p. 247.

both for Hughes and in his own behalf, the G.O.P. supported the ticket enthusiastically. Not given to political bombast, Morgan advanced a straightforward "account . . . of his stewardship" and the merits of Hughes and the party platform. All three parties flooded the state with literature. The Republicans, too, brought in out-of-state speakers to lend prestige to their campaign. The interest of the National Committee in Oklahoma was reflected in the September 24 speech of Senator Theodore E. Burton of Ohio. Speaking at Tulsa, the citadel of Sooner Republicanism, the Ohio Senator declared:

The eyes of the nation are on this state in the coming election. We are hoping to carry Oklahoma and make a Republican state of it and if that can be done you may be assured of a sweeping victory for Charles E. Hughes in November.

Harlow's Weekly reported the Republicans to "equal . . . if indeed . . . not to exceed" the Democrats in publicity.¹

Except for a greater play on personalities, the reaction of the Oklahoma press to campaign developments varied little in the final weeks of the campaign. The Tulsa World and the Enid Events continued to lead the attack on Wilson. The World on July 30 scored "the spectacle . . . of the president, with the 'big stick' in reach of his hand," persisting in the use of "pacifism and persuasion" in the Mexican affair when "forcible methods" were the "only

¹Enid Events, Oct. 26, 1916, p. 1; World-Wide War, Sept. 30, 1916, p. 1; "About Politics and Politicians," Harlow's Weekly, XI (Nov. 1, 1916), p. 7.

justifiable" solution. August 8 editorials derided the President's sudden shift from anti-preparedness--"the Bryan-Ford idea"--to preparedness. Even though Bryan had been made the "'goat' for Wilson's diplomatic mistakes," declared the World, "the odium has stuck to the president just the same." A second account maintained that Wilson had "changed his attitude on so many questions with such startling frequency" that he had "lost public confidence" and was "fighting desperately" to retain a "point of vantage at the public feed trough." "The star of Woodrow Wilson," proclaimed the World, "is descendant."¹

The Enid Events joined the Republican onslaught, hitting hard on such issues as Mexico, peace, and the national debt. "No Democratic orator voluntarily says Mexico," jeered the Enid paper, "our Mexican policy is bankrupt. . . . The Wilson administration wrecked Mexico as the result of a fantastic and impossible dream." "Our policy of fussy interference" incurred hate rather than respect and the "punitive expedition" cost \$300,000,000 and "punished nobody." Attacking the Democrat's slogan, "he kept us out of war," the Events demanded "a bill of particulars." After deciding that "if we have been kept out of war, Wilson had nothing to do with it," the editorial pointed to the \$79 million national deficit for the first quarter of the fiscal year and exclaimed:

¹Tulsa World, July 30, 1916, p. 4; Aug. 24, 1916, p. 4.

"'He kept us out of war'--maybe. But he got us into debt most assuredly." "He Kept Us Out Of What War?" hooted The Muskogee Cimeter, a Negro Republican paper. The Oklahoma Farmer campaigned strongly for Hughes. Arraigning the Democrats on four counts, (1) "vacillating foreign policy," (2) "blunders" in Mexico, (3) waste in administration, including creation of "over 30,000 additional offices," and (4) betrayal of the cause of arbitration in sponsoring the Adamson Act. Intimating an early cessation in European hostilities, the Farmer warned:

The importance of the election this year cannot be exaggerated. The world is facing one adjustment that must come as soon as the European war is ended. . . . The Republican party stands for protection and preparedness. . . . Mr. Hughes is an advocate of the budget system, is against pork barrel methods . . . and stands for the principle of arbitration.¹

In developing its position in the final month preceding the election, the Daily Oklahoman, after examining the "iron hand" foreign policy statements of Hughes and the interventionist declarations of Roosevelt, declared:

Clearly the president is right in declaring that if Mr. Hughes means what he says he means war. . . . Mr. Hughes, as the colonel's candidate, will take similar drastic action in the event of another dispute with Germany. . . . So that is the proposition before us. By voting for Mr. Hughes November 7 we vote for war--for war against Germany and for war against Mexico. By voting for Mr. Wilson we vote for a continuance of the foreign policies which have kept us out of the European maelstrom and which have saved us from the infamy of

¹Enid Events, Oct. 26, 1916, p. 4; Muskogee Cimeter, Sept. 19, 1916, p. 1; Oklahoma Farmer, XXVI (Sept. 25, 1916), p. 10. See also Muskogee Cimeter, Aug. 12, 1916, pp. 2, 3; Sept. 23, 1916, p. 2.

attacking Mexico at the behest of the money interests. That is our choice in November--war or peace.

Organized labor in Oklahoma, hailing the Adamson Act and similar beneficial legislation, strongly supported the President. The Oklahoma Federationist made its position unmistakably clear in a September 9 editorial and again two weeks later when the front-page story, "Hughes' Anti-Labor Record Is Known By Pres. Gompers," appeared.¹

There were, of course, divided counsels within the ranks of all the parties in Oklahoma. State Senator Wilburn C. Cartwright was severely castigated early in 1916 for his "undemocratic action" in having supported Socialist-inspired legislation. Fellow Democrat C. E. B. Cutler considered this "a criticism against President Wilson and the democratic party. . . . When you transgress the laws of the Democratic party, you should be held to answer for it." Cartwright's temporary disenchantment with his party was further reflected in the attitude of his personal associates. One of these, Lucie Jones, wrote:

I don't like the way Wilson has managed this War business; he wasn't neutral from the very first. I am not "for Germany" but I think we have as much against Eng. [land] as we have against Germany. But, of course, I'm for America, Right or Wrong, as the Germans say about Germany--and furthermore, I don't like to argue, and I really don't care whether anybody is a Democrat,

¹Daily Oklahoman, Oct. 2, 1916, p. 4; Oklahoma Federationist, IX (Sept. 16, 1916), p. 2; (Sept. 23, 1916), p. 1.

or a Rep. [ublican] or even a Socialist. . . . And I don't believe you do either.¹

More serious rifts appeared in the Socialist organization. World-Wide War complained that "Socialism's greatest obstacle now is not the old parties but the weak and vassilating [sic] elements that call themselves socialists." George E. Wilson, the lone Socialist State Senator, disagreed openly with the party over its dictation to a local Socialist sheriff on a strike issue. Both Wilson and Thomas W. Woodrow, editor of Woodrow's Magazine, actively opposed H. H. Stallard as the candidate for the United States Congress from the Seventh District. The Laverne Light, an influential Socialist paper in Harper County adjoining the Panhandle, renounced its Socialist connections and assumed a non-partisan position on political matters. The Progressives, with the national party disbanded, balanced between traditional Republican allegiance and the lure of Wilson's progressive "New Freedom" legislation.²

Party declarations notwithstanding, the results were far from assured as Oklahomans went to the polls on November 7. "Oklahoma Doubtful" admitted World-Wide War; "Landslide For

¹C. E. B. Cutler, Coalgate, Okla., to Cartwright, Jan. 31, 1916; Lucie Jones to Cartwright [n.d., but in 1916 area of the file], Cartwright Papers, General Correspondence, File, "Before 1920."

²World-Wide War, Sept. 30, 1916, p. 1; Harlow's Weekly, XI (Sept. 27, 1916), p. 4; XI (Nov. 1, 1916), p. 8; XI (Nov. 8, 1916), p. 8 [quotes the Laverne Light]; XI (Dec. 27, 1916), p. 10.

Hughes" predicted the Enid Events on October 26; "Hughes' Election Appears Absolutely Certain," announced the Tulsa World on election day. Republican State Chairman Arthur Geissler claimed Oklahoma for Hughes by 10,000 votes. Although a boxed feature reported, "Wilson Sure He'll Be Re-Elected," the Daily Oklahoman headline on November 7 read: "Apprehension of Election Result Openly Admitted." "It would be foolish to try to fool ourselves," the Daily Ardmoreite asserted on October 30, "we do know that we have the republicans scared to within an inch of their lives and we will admit that there is just a little doubt over on our side." Fearing the "barrels of money" of "big business" and an attempt "to coerce the labor vote," Editor Suggs urged redoubled efforts for a record vote. "Oklahoma people are going to vote right if they get to the polls," he declared, "the peace and prosperity of the nation is certainly worth a week's work on the part of every citizen in Oklahoma. . . . Democracy expects every man to do his duty." In the end, Wilson carried Oklahoma by a convincing margin of 148,113 to 97,233 popular votes.¹

The President owed his narrow re-election to many factors. The initial women's vote, significant labor, Progressive and Socialist support, and a dispersion of the

¹World-Wide War, Sept. 30, 1916, p. 1; Enid Events, Oct. 26, 1916, p. 1; Tulsa World, Nov. 7, 1916, p. 1; Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 7, 1916, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, Oct. 30, 1916, p. 4; E. E. Robinson, The Presidential Vote, p. 19.

German-American bloc were all significant. Above all, the predominant support of the peace-conscious Middle and Far West and the "Solid South" turned the tide. Oklahomans declared that Gore's campaign efforts in California had insured Wilson's re-election. Undoubtedly the veteran campaigner influenced some voters and the margin had been close. Gore later declared that he had "received more credit than I deserved in 1916 for carrying California for Wilson," although at the time he had been quite willing to accept the accolades. His biographer thinks Gore deserves "some credit" for the Wilson victory. More than likely the purported "snub" of Hiram Johnson and the inadvertant picket line incident had a greater influence. E. E. Robinson points to Wilson's re-election as "the clearest indication so far presented" where a party triumphed "by concentrating effort in counties where the margin of victory is slight." Oklahoma and California were among the eight states listed; six of them in the West.¹

Oklahoma Democrats eagerly joined in the often tumultuous celebrations of the party's continued hold on the White House. The Daily Ardmoreite on November 10 carried headlines which proclaimed, "Tense Situation Broken With Flash on the California Result." The Latimer County News-Democrat

¹Gore to John Easley, Nov. 23, 1943, Gore Papers; Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 172-73; E. E. Robinson, The Presidential Vote, p. 19; Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 247-51.

splashed the huge headline, "Wilson Wins!," across its entire front page. Fourteen roosters, each crowing "Victory!," and an exultant two-column banner, "Glory to God in the Highest; We Licked 'em; Peace, Plenty, Justice, Good Will To All Men," dominated the front page of the Poteau News. Two days later the Ardmoreite announced plans for "the most mammoth celebration ever held in the city." Declaiming that "the waving grain fields of California locked arms with the cotton fields of the South," the Ardmoreite told of bands, fireworks, a parade, and a black-coffined funeral for Hughes. Republican comments were minimal. The Tulsa World reported the final result as the second-ranked story on November 10 and two days later editorialized, "No Popular Verdict." On November 17 the Stillwater Gazette cryptically announced, "Wilson Has It." The Enid Events remained silent.¹

Oklahoma's popular support for Wilson varied little from the national pattern. The Republican and Socialist vote demonstrated a sharper differentiation than the Democratic. Wilson captured sixty-nine of the seventy-seven Oklahoma counties, and Hughes' margin in the remaining eight north and northwest counties was small. The President received 3.84 per cent more Sooner votes in 1916 than in 1912. Republican and Socialist strength in 1916 varied little from

¹Daily Ardmoreite, Nov. 10, 1916, p. 1; Nov. 12, 1916, p. 1; Latimer County News-Democrat, Nov. 10, 1916, p. 1; Poteau News, Nov. 9, 1916, p. 1; Tulsa World, Nov. 10, 1916, p. 1; Nov. 12, 1916, p. 4; Stillwater Gazette, Nov. 17, 1916, p. 1.

1912. Based on the 1912 and 1916 presidential contests and the 1914 governors' race the following dispersion pertains:

	1912		1914	1916	
Political Party	Okla.	U.S.	Okla.	Okla.	U.S.
Democrat	46.84	41.82	39.65	50.67	49.28
Republican	35.69	23.17	37.80	33.27	46.07
Socialist	16.61	5.97	20.77	15.44	3.16
Progressive	---	27.45	1.61	.55	---
Others	.86	1.59	0.83	.07	1.49

While the national shift of the popular vote to the Democratic column was significant, Wilson still remained a minority president. E. E. Robinson terms the election "a novel phenomenon in party voting" due to "an aroused public interest in the campaign." This, indeed, it was. "Peace" and "progressivism" had won the election; "prosperity" had helped, and "preparedness" had not been, at least, a serious stumbling block.¹

President Wilson ran stronger than the local ticket in Oklahoma. The Sooner Republican Minority in the House

¹E. E. Robinson, The Presidential Vote, pp. 17-19, 299-305, 392; Senate Journal, Sixth Oklahoma Legislature, 1917, pp. 20-22; Directory of the State of Oklahoma, 1953, pp. 90-91; Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma," p. 187. The eight Oklahoma counties giving Hughes small majorities of from 23 to 569 votes were: Blaine, Ellis, Garfield, Kay, Kingfisher, Lincoln, Logan, and Major. The Socialist in each case held the balance of power. Robinson, *ibid.*, pp. 299-305, records the specific totals. See Chapter II of this study for a development and analysis of the elections of 1912 and 1914.

increased to two as T. A. (Bert) Chandler of Vinita defeated Democratic Congressman James S. Davenport by the narrow margin of 269 votes in the First District. In District Eight, continuously Republican until 1932, the veteran Dick T. Morgan overcame his Democratic challenger by 2,875 votes. All the other Democratic incumbents were returned except "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, a two-term veteran, who had been defeated in the Fourth District primary by Tom D. McKeown. However, only Carter and Ferris managed clear majorities, 10,796 and 10,770 respectively. In four contests the Socialists held the balance of power and in District Seven Socialist H. H. Stallard outdistanced his Republican rival by 1,100 votes.¹

Murray's surprising and narrow defeat undoubtedly could have been averted had the outspoken veteran soft-pedalled his convictions on preparedness, war, and political integrity. During his two terms in the House Murray had become increasingly independent in his political conduct and in March and April of 1916 he had openly opposed the President's foreign policy, both in Europe and in Mexico. Japan, too, he regarded as a serious threat. Murray had come to the conclusion that there was "nothing to justify the belief in permanent and universal peace" and that America would be drawn into the war in Europe. Consequently, although opposed to militarism,

¹Directory of the State of Oklahoma, 1953, pp. 91-92; Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma," pp. 187-88.

conscription, and a large standing army, he had strongly advocated "a reasonable national preparedness." This, he felt, entailed a large navy, military training in schools, and subsidized munitions plants. Preparedness, therefore, became a major campaign issue although the state Democratic organization had "begged him to sing low on the issue," and endorse the Wilson slogan, "He kept us out of war." To this Murray declared: "I do not fear either the loss of votes or defeat, but for my country and posterity I do fear to be wrong. . . . We must face the issue."¹

To many Oklahomans, preparedness and war were synonymous terms, hence they incorrectly regarded Murray as pro-war. In addition, Murray had been critical of the Williams administration, declaring it a failure much like that of the former Republican president, Taft. Also, Murray had incurred the wrath of Williams at the 1912 National Democratic Convention when he had successfully opposed the latter's plank requiring that all federal appointees have the prior endorsement of their party primary. Hence, the Governor, to whom "party regularity was a cardinal principle," threw the active support of his administration behind McKeown who gave blanket

¹See Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, March 25, 1916, pp. 636-40; April 4, 1916, pp. 698-705, for the two speeches, in particular, where Murray stated his views. Chapter VIII of this study develops Murray's position. Hines, Alfalfa Bill, pp. 243-47, documents Murray's 1916 re-election campaign.

approval to Wilson's policies and opposed intervention in Europe. Despite such formidable opposition and the loss of much of the violently anti-war tenant-farm vote, "Alfalfa Bill" was defeated by only 279 votes. Ironically, McKeown's first vote in the House was in support of the declaration of war. To this Murray commented: "He did right. It was the only thing he could do in good conscience."¹

The Democrats continued their overwhelming domination of the state legislature. Although the percentage of Democrats remained the same as in 1914, 86 per cent in the Senate and 77 per cent in the House, a marked change occurred in the opposition. While the Senate retained its five Republicans and one Socialist, the five Socialists elected to the House in 1914 were defeated and the Republican membership increased to twenty-five. These Socialist defeats and the serious decline in the party's voting strength on all levels proved the most unexpected aspect of the 1916 election. Only 41,283 of the 247,427 votes cast in Oklahoma went to the Socialists, 11,420 and 3,907 less than their 1914 and 1912 totals, respectively. Certainly an appreciable portion of the Socialist vote in Oklahoma defected to Wilson in 1916.

¹Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, p. 252; Hines, Alfalfa Bill, pp. 243-47; Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma," pp. 179, 187-88; Shannon, Socialist Party of America, p. 107; Virginia Pope, "The Green Corn Rebellion: A Case Study in Newspaper Self-Censorship" (unpublished Master's Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater, 1940), p. 14; Directory of the State of Oklahoma, 1953, p. 93.

According to Ameringer:

Many of them [Socialists] voted for Woodrow Wilson, who ran on the slogan "He kept us out of war." I didn't blame them for voting for Wilson. Neither they nor the American people at large wanted this country mixed up in the slaughter fest three thousand miles across the pond. After all, the co-operative commonwealth was still a few year's off, while war was pounding at the gates.

David Shannon holds similar views, contending that the majority of the Socialists and other farmers of the share-cropping region "were emphatically antiwar . . . [and] thought they had voted for peace when they helped to elect Woodrow Wilson, whom they called 'Big Slick,'"¹

Papers in areas of Socialist strength voiced unconcealed satisfaction at the major Socialist decline on both national and local levels. The Wewoka Democrat exulted: "Hell and Lima Is All That Is Left of the Socialist Party. Every Democrat Elected." Many precincts voted Democratic for the first time since statehood. The Poteau News reported "all county Democrats elected" except one and that "the Socialists voted the republican ticket in a number of places entirely ignoring their own ticket." At Ardmore the Socialists consistently outvoted the Republicans although the Democrats swept the field. H. H. Stallard, "the moving

¹Directory of the State of Oklahoma, 1953, pp. 133, 145-46; ibid., 1955, p. 233; Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, p. 309; Shannon, Socialist Party of America, p. 107. A few Sooner Socialist leaders made charges of election chicanery. See H. M. Sinclair, Making Oklahoma Safe For The Democratic Party, or How the Williams Machine Stole the Election of 1916 (Oklahoma City, 1917).

spirit of socialism" in strongly Socialist District Seven was decisively defeated in his bid for Congress.¹

The Elk City News-Democrat, expecting "'a close shave,'" reported a Democratic "'walk-a-way.'" "The Socialists say they have not lost many votes, but they did not gain," said the News-Democrat, "it is known that the Republicans cast their votes with the Democrats." The Daily Transcript at Norman reported a "clean sweep" of Cleveland County for the Democrats with Socialist strength reduced to fifteen per cent.² The staunchly Republican Tulsa World, embarrassedly announced a margin of 649 votes for Wilson who captured almost one-half of the total Tulsa County presidential vote. All other offices went to Republicans. The Daily Oklahoman saw in Wilson's re-election the overthrow of "a precedent almost a century old.":

The Oklahoman profoundly believes that not only this nation but the world's civilization required the election of Wilson. . . . In the field of foreign affairs, red with madness, black with horror, there is a master part to be played, and America must play it. . . . Under Woodrow Wilson's guidance the thoughtful American can look to the future with faith.³

¹Wewoka Democrat, June 23, 1916, p. 4; Nov. 9, 1916, p. 1; Poteau News, Nov. 9, 1916, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, Nov. 12, 1916, pp. 1, 6; "About Politics and Politicians," Harlow's Weekly, XI (Dec. 27, 1916), p. 10.

²Elk City News-Democrat, Nov. 9, 1916, p. 1; The Daily Transcript, Nov. 8, 1916, p. 1. Socialist vote in these counties: LeFlore, 12%; Carter, 18%; Tulsa, 9%.

³Tulsa World, Nov. 10, 1916, p. 1; Latimer County News-Democrat, June 23, 1916, p. 2; Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 11, 1916, p. 6.

Wilson peace talk, increasing prosperity, deteriorating Socialist leadership and party morale, increasing Democratic progressivism on the national level, and a growing disenchantment among the general public over Socialist opposition to commonly accepted American practices and traditions all contributed to the decline of Socialism in Oklahoma. Sooner Socialists, while discouraged, did not admit defeat. They had received seventeen per cent of the state's total vote and this, while a four per cent decrease over the 1914 highwater mark, was still far above the national percentage. While it took the war and the Green Corn Rebellion to deliver the death blow, the Sooner Socialist vine unmistakably had begun to wither by 1916.

The Mexican crisis and the election of 1916 were closely associated with the problems of foreign policy with which Oklahomans were so vitally concerned in 1915 and 1916. Both subtly yet significantly conditioned Oklahomans and their Southwestern neighbors for an increasingly active role following American entry into World War I. Indeed, the border episode with its regional impact caused Sooners to react much more strongly when the Zimmermann note came to light. Oklahomans had never been more united and unanimous on an issue involving war and foreign involvement than in the Mexican episode. In fact, the border vigil had aroused the rural areas for the first time in any major way. For the

Sooners, then, the march to Mexico had been in truth a salutary rehearsal for war.

What Wilson's re-election portended remained to be seen. As William E. Dodd observed, "it is the South and the West united," and the "emphatic mandate," says Link, was "for progressivism and peace." Contemporary observers, excepting William Allen White, unanimously agreed that the peace issue had been a paramount election factor.¹ Certainly Oklahoma Republicans, Socialists, and Progressives had joined in voting for Wilson for that reason. Four facts, at least, were quite evident in Oklahoma as a result of the 1916 election. Wilson was the people's choice--albeit slight; he had considerable support from the membership of all the political parties; the Socialists had gone into a decline from which they were never to recover; and the Progressive party, bereft of a national organization and a singular cause, was permanently dead.

¹Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 250-51, includes the Dodd to House, Nov. 10, 1916, citation from the House Papers.

CHAPTER X

THE STORM CLOUDS GATHER: CRISES IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1917

To most casual observers, in Oklahoma and throughout America, the year 1917 dawned bright with promise. Peace, prosperity, and progressivism, accentuated in the President's re-election, dominated the domestic scene. The war in Europe, of course, continued to present problems, but American involvement seemed unlikely. In reality, however, war developments in 1916 had boded ill for the continuance of a rather inconsistent American neutrality. The great German spring offensive at Verdun and that of the Allies on the Somme in the summer and autumn of 1916 had failed, and both antagonists sought desperately for a means to break the deadlock and terminate the bloody and exhausting conflict. Indeed, Anglo-American relations were never more critical than in the period from November, 1916, through January, 1917, as the British attempted to gain control of all neutral shipping through the poorly-camouflaged "bunkering agreement" and a lengthening list of arbitrary economic controls. In addition, British resentment of American and German peace

moves led to heated diplomatic exchanges on November 24, 1916, and January 18, 1917.¹

Meanwhile, the Germans countered British economic strangulation policies with greatly increased submarine, surface vessel, and mine depredations, some of which bordered on violation of the "Sussex pledge." Two of the five American ships attacked during the October 20-December 14 interim were sunk but there were no casualties. However, more than twenty-six Americans lost their lives on four British vessels. These the Germans variously claimed to be travelling outside their regular course, improperly identified, or operating as troop or horse transports, and hence auxiliary warships. Indeed, during the five-month period ending in January, 1917, German sea depredations averaged 350,000 tons a month. Since Germany had committed no clear violation of the "Sussex pledge," Washington made no official objection, although it became increasingly evident that an all-out attack involving

¹Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 252-82, provides the most commendable account of recent scholarship dealing with developments in the months immediately prior to American entry into the war. Briefer useful accounts appear in Bailey, A Diplomatic History, pp. 590-95. The German and American peace notes appeared on December 12 and 18, 1916, respectively. Wilson had drafted his note without prior knowledge of the German move. The "sorely displeased" Allies charged "German-American collusion" while Wilson cited "intolerable conditions of neutrality." Link, pp. 252-53; Bailey, p. 590.

unrestricted submarine warfare and a further serious threat to American neutral rights was in the offing.¹

Convinced that only cessation of hostilities would guarantee peace and safety for America, Wilson on December 18 and January 22 once again resumed the role of a peacemaker. The coolly-received December note to all the belligerents requesting a statement of their war objectives received only a limited and cautious response from the Sooner press and public. Fearing that Wilson's efforts would again be frustrated, the attitude of most was reflected in the Daily Ardmoreite's observation that the note represented "the first definite step" and that it was "almost certain" that Europe was "on the way to peace." The Tulsa World displayed even less optimism in editorials appearing on January 11 and 13. The first observed that "if we want peace we must fight for it" while the second declared:

It is necessary that we should have the means at hand to make war before we can have any hope of preserving any peace. . . . Either mankind must put a stop to war or civilization will be lost. There appears to be but two

¹The five American ships and date of attack were: Lanao, Oct. 28 (sunk); Columbian, Nov. 7 (sunk); Colena, Nov. 26; St. Helen's, Dec. 10; Rebecca Palmer, Dec. 14. The four British vessels, date sunk, and American casualties were: Sabota, Oct. 20, 1; Marina, Oct. 28, 8; Arabia, Nov. 6; Russian, Dec. 14, 17. Official documents list 57 casualties on the Arabia including an undetermined number of Americans. 65 Cong., 1 Sess., April 5, 1917, p. 395. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916, Supplement (Washington, 1929), pp. 298-300, 308-28, include the official correspondence concerning these and other sinkings in the last three months of 1916.

ways to stop war, by "a league of nations for that purpose, or the domination of the world by one government."

To accomplish this, the World contended, "would be the greatest glory that could possibly come to the American name" although it evinced no surprise that Wilson's peace move had failed. While the effort was both "commendable and logical," "neither side had been conclusively whipped . . . to get into a frame of mind to consider sacrificing their purposes." "One good thing has been accomplished," said the World, "the United States has placed itself in a position to become some day the world's mediator and the peace maker of the century."¹

Despite its own preparedness convictions, the Daily Oklahoman, on January 19, directed a heavy broadside at the navy league for advocating "the biggest navy in the world, bigger even than Great Britain's." Reminding Oklahomans of "the terrific momentum which American militarism has already attained," the Oklahoman heatedly exclaimed:

Now comes the companion-piece of this madness--a navy bigger than the biggest. And the end is not yet. . . . Propaganda is doing its work. We are not yet persuaded as a nation that we must conquer the world, but the conviction is fast spreading that we must go halfway. . . . If we toil and spend and strain for war, we shall have war. And there is no shorter or more direct road right into the midst of war than the policy of the biggest navy in the world.²

¹Daily Ardmoreite, Dec. 31, 1916, p. 4; Tulsa World, Jan. 11, 1917, p. 2; Jan. 13, 1917, p. 4.

²Daily Oklahoman, Jan. 19, 1917, p. 6.

Wilson's January 22 Senate speech calling for "peace without victory," a "peace among equals," a League of Nations and a universal extension of the Monroe Doctrine was, in reality, a stirring plea directed to a world-wide audience. While the President spoke "for the silent mass of mankind everywhere," his plea received a favorable but far from universal and unrestrainedly enthusiastic response from the Oklahoma press. The Daily Oklahoman, given to banner headlines, provided a less generous three-column, three-line red caption, "President Wilson Appeals for World-Wide Adoption of the Monroe Doctrine." On January 26, the Latimer County News-Democrat prominently featured the address under the headline, "World Stirred By Wilson's Speech." The majority of the weeklies, however, supplied far less generous consideration and many ignored it altogether. The Tulsa World generally reflected Republican reaction in a January 27 editorial. While it termed the plan "a step in the right direction" and theoretically "very near perfect," the World without rancor wondered as to its workability.¹

The Oklahoma State Legislature strongly endorsed Wilson's speech. Four motivations prompted the House resolution: (1) the "appalling bloodshed of the human family," (2) an earnest desire for "a lasting peace . . . to

¹Daily Oklahoman, Jan. 28, 1917, p. 1; Latimer County News-Democrat, Jan. 26, 1917, p. 1; Tulsa World, Jan. 27, 1917, p. 4. For Wilson's speech see Baker and Dodd (eds.), Public Papers of Wilson, II, pp. 407-414.

assure the world that no horrors of war shall overwhelm it again," (3) "the United States can not withhold its participation to guarantee life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness throughout the world" and, (4) approbation of the President's "policy for world-wide adoption of the Monroe doctrine." The resolution continued:

We publicly express our confidence in President Woodrow Wilson in the action he has taken for the adoption of a world-wide Monroe Doctrine. . . . We indorse his support of a league of nations to preserve the peace of the world, and urge Congress to uphold his hands seeking the adoption of such a worthy measure.

The House adopted the resolution on January 29, the Senate four days later. Copies were sent to the President and each member of the Oklahoma congressional delegation. In submitting the document to Senator Owen, C. C. Childers, the House Chief Clerk, observed that the resolution "clearly indicates that the Oklahoma boys endorse the stand our President takes on the war situation."¹

Germany's answer to "peace without victory," the proclamation of unrestricted submarine warfare, came on January 31, 1917, and the war moved one step closer to America. Wilson's peace gesture did not prompt the radical German pronouncement. Indeed, the decision had been made on January 8 as the most feasible calculated risk by which

¹H. Con. Res. No. 18, Sixth Oklahoma Legislature; Childers to Owen, Feb. 14, 1917, reprinted in Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 2 Sess., Feb. 21, 1917, p. 3781. Murray submitted the same resolution to the House on Feb. 19, Carter on Feb. 22. See ibid., pp. 3562, 3959.

England could be defeated. Zimmermann's Mexican proposal, as yet undisclosed, constituted another facet of the carefully-developed German plan. The Sooner press broke the staggering news on the following day as the German submarines initiated their grim and relentless stalking of the seas. The large dailies without exception provided prominent coverage.

"Germany Begins Ruthless Sea War to Starve Out England" proclaimed the Daily Oklahoman in red headlines. "Break With Germany to Follow Her 'Campaign of Ruthlessness'" and "U. S. and Germany Again on Verge of Breaking" announced the Daily Ardmoreite and the Tulsa World, respectively. Most of the dailies printed the text of the official German note and on the following day editorialized at great length, the Oklahoman and the World, in particular.¹

The daily press with rare exception reluctantly recognized the inevitability of war although there was no clamor for immediate hostilities. The Daily Oklahoman frankly assessed the temper of the American majority:

It does not seem possible for President Wilson to negotiate much longer with Germany. He might personally muster up the necessary patience to resume the task and the faith, even, to believe a satisfactory agreement might yet be reached. But the president's duty is not personal. It is official. He is the spokesman of the American people, and the American people's patience is

¹Daily Oklahoman, Feb. 1, 1917, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, Feb. 1, 1917, p. 1; Tulsa World, Feb. 1, 1917, p. 1.

exhausted, their faith in Germany's willingness or ability to keep her word is gone. The people's judgment seemingly must prevail now. If it does, Bernstorff must go, Gerard must be recalled, and then if Germany wants war she can have it at the price of a torpedo. . . . In the Sussex pledge . . . President Wilson . . . forcefully declined to have Germany's regard for our rights conditioned upon the conduct of Great Britain or any other nation. That was an ultimatum. Germany has respected it after a fashion, but only as long as she felt it was to her interest to do so. . . . The trouble with Germany is that she has completely lost her moral perceptions. She is unable to understand an obligation. . . . She is a moral bankrupt. (*Italics mine.*)

The Tulsa World soberly viewed the prospects for war and peace.

Prefacing its comments, "Facing the Dilemma," the World gravely observed:

The announcement of Germany . . . presents the greatest crisis for us that has come since the beginning of the war. . . . The immediate question is what are we going to do about it. If we accept the German dictum without protest we are simply submitting tamely to . . . humiliation. . . . We have already tasted humiliation and have borne it rather than lose our repute as ambassadors of world peace. It will not be hard to stand a little more. But if, on the other hand, we insist that American rights be respected anywhere and everywhere, we are embarking on a sea of trouble whose farther shore we cannot see. . . . We are not going to offer him [Wilson] any advice, neither are we going to criticise his decision in the face of such a dilemma.

The Daily Ardmoreite, more forthright, insisted that since Germany had "again broken her word" and "defied the United States" there was "but one course left," namely, to sever relations. Such disregard, both for "moral obligations" and "obligations to neutrals," does not merit "friendly consideration," declared the Ardmoreite, "it is

now time for the final ultimatum to go forward with promptness."¹

The weekly papers, between publication dates, had little opportunity to express themselves on the German announcement. Indeed, in most cases the actual break with Germany occurred prior to the subsequent publication date and there were more momentous developments to consider. The Enid Events, on February 1, headlined its lead story, "Submarine to Spare None Within Designated Zones; Americans Warned Away." Severe condemnation of Wilson's Mexican policy and more restrained criticism of the "peace without victory" plea, however, set the tone of the editorial page. The Stillwater Gazette announced, "Germany Wars," and then pointedly asked, "What Will Wilson Do?" A few, like the Medford Patriot Star, said nothing.²

On February 3, after much personal agonizing and protracted conferences with Colonel House, the Cabinet, and Democratic Senators, the President appeared before a joint session of Congress to announce the break in relations with Germany. The momentous decision received the almost unanimous support of the Sooner daily press. Red headlines chronicled

¹Daily Oklahoman, Feb. 2, 1917, p. 6; Tulsa World, Feb. 2, 1917, p. 4; Daily Ardmoreite, Feb. 2, 1917, p. 4.

²Enid Events, Feb. 1, 1917, pp. 1, 8; Stillwater Gazette, Feb. 2, 1917, p. 1.

developments in the Daily Oklahoman. "U. S. To Challenge German Ruthlessness," proclaimed the Oklahoman on February 2; "'Break!' Senators Tell Wilson," the following day; "U. S. Ship Sunk Unwarned," two days later. The simultaneous sinking of the Housatonic emphasized the deadly intent of the German sea onslaught. "United States Severs Relations With Germany and Actual War Now Threatens," shouted the thoroughly aroused Tulsa World as it devoted the entire front page on February 4 to the momentous development. The Muskogee Times-Democrat concurred, its February 3 banner proclaiming, "U. S. Has Broken With Germany; Nothing but Miracle Can Now Prevent War."¹

Although most weekly papers had gone to press the day prior to the break, subsequent issues evidenced a similar albeit less sensational and unanimous reaction. "Relations Severed With Germany," proclaimed the Antlers American on February 8; "U. S. on the Verge of War With Germany" the Latimer County News-Democrat exclaimed excitedly, devoting three full columns, a picture of Wilson, and a boxed feature, "Crisis News in a Nutshell," to the portentous development. The Osage Journal and the Poteau News each published four front-page accounts of the German coup, none of them incendiary in nature, however. The Edmond Sun, an infrequent observer

¹Daily Oklahoman, Feb. 2, 1917, p. 1; Feb. 3, 1917, p. 1; Feb. 4, 1917, p. 1; Tulsa World, Feb. 4, 1917, p. 1; Muskogee Times-Democrat, Feb. 3, 1917, p. 1. See also Feb. 2, 1917, p. 1, in the latter paper.

on war issues, limited its report to a page six "boilerplate" account. A sizeable minority, however, including the Elk City News-Democrat and the Cimarron News at Boise City and the more northerly Medford Patriot Star and the Beggs Independent, made no mention of the grave issue.¹

Immediate editorial comments were usually cautious and qualified. The Tulsa World on the day following the break labeled its unprecedented page-one editorial, "A Welcome End to Uncertainty." While terming the German action as "inevitable" and "a challenge and an affront to America" which had been "forced upon us," the World optimistically asserted:

War with Germany is not necessarily a result of this act. . . . The drastic submarine warfare . . . may be safely regarded as a step looking toward final peace. Germany, of course, cannot be expected to fight the whole world; but by compelling the United States and other neutral nations to take a pronounced stand either for or against the central powers and involving all the nations of the earth in this conflict, she has taken a long step toward its settlement. We predict that early measures will be proposed with that end in view. . . . In fact, the whole situation looks more favorable now than it has at any time since the war began. And concerning the business and industrial interest of the United States, this break with Germany is to be welcomed rather than deplored. . . . The harrowing uncertainty . . . is now removed. . . . The nightmare is over. We are awake now and ready for the future with clear eyes and strong hearts.

Five days later the World referred to the situation as a "war scare" and was pleased "that all quibbling and delays" in

¹Antlers American, Feb. 8, 1917, p. 1; Latimer County News-Democrat, Feb. 9, 1917, p. 1; Osage Journal, Feb. 8, 1917, p. 1; Poteau News, Feb. 8, 1917, p. 1; Edmond Sun, Feb. 8, 1917, p. 6.

securing preparedness had ended and that "the man who knocks" would henceforth "be set down as an enemy of the country."¹

The Enid News, on February 4, chastised the German government for an action that was both "ruthless" and "hopeless." Calling upon Oklahomans to remain "calm and self reserved" and to "be ready to support any move that our president, who has this awful burden on his heart, may suggest," the News concluded: "We pray God that this nation will not have to join and be a part in this awful war . . . [and that] the end of the war will not be distant." On the following day the Daily Ardmoreite denounced Germany's move as a "serious mistake" arising from "Prussian bull-headedness." Quoting von Bernstorff's observation that "'there was nothing else left for the United States to do,'" the Ardmoreite challenged the Kaiser to call off his sea-raiders "if Germany wants peace with this country as she has so often declared."²

As the initial week of speculation concerning the break drew to a close Sooner reactions took on a new and significant character pregnant with import for the future. On February 8 three editorials appeared, each typifying a significant step in the conditioning process for subsequent wartime behavior. The element of patriotism, expressed in

¹Tulsa World, Feb. 4, 1917, pp. 1, 3; Feb. 8, 1917, p. 4.

²Enid News, Feb. 4, 1917, p. 2; Daily Ardmoreite, Feb. 5, 1917, p. 4.

terms of a development distantly related to the Oklahoma scene, and a glimmering of distrust of local German-Americans appeared in the Antlers American. Declaring that "the breach with Germany was inevitable" and forecasting "serious consequences," the Antlers paper issued a stentorian call for unqualified patriotism in all quarters. Editor J. H. Reigner, deeply stirred, exclaimed:

The action of the president . . . constitutes a summons to every loyal American citizen. . . . Whatever measure of sacrifice . . . may be required must be yielded whole heartedly and with that fervor of patriotism which the American people have always shown in such crises [and] . . . as becomes a great nation determined to maintain its honor at all hazards. Pushmataha county, like every community in the United States, has many citizens of Teutonic birth or lineage. Let us express the hope that no racial or national prejudice may be aroused in the days that are to come. That they will do their duty to their country, painful though it be, cannot be doubted. They will stand by the flag of the country, and there will be no halting on the part of the loyal citizens of Oklahoma if the summons to the colors is sounded.

The Poteau News, professing even greater faith in its German-American citizens, emphatically declared:

We positively see no occasion for longwinded articles assuring the people that the German-Americans will be loyal. There is no necessity for urging those fellows for they are as loyal Americans as anybody, and when the test comes, if it comes, they will give a good account of themselves. To talk about them not being loyal is the merest kind of mere rot and an insult to their manhood. Let the men from the Fatherland alone.¹

In the disappearance of political partisanship on all matters of foreign policy and war-related issues, the

¹Antlers American, Feb. 8, 1917, p. 2; Poteau News, Feb. 8, 1917, p. 2.

Republican Enid Events took the initiative. After a final jibe that Wilson's foreign policy "was adverse to ultimate peace and the actual best interests of this nation" and "certain to seriously involve us sooner or later," the Events admitted that "the break was certain to be forced as a last resort" and proceeded to define its future editorial policy. Speaking clearly and sincerely, Editor Everett Purcell announced:

The time to correct the Wilson foreign policy passed on November 8th and the people of this nation must now stand or fall by the decision promulgated at that time--so far as world-war conclusions are concerned. . . . Those of us who differ . . . must now submerge those differences in a common bond of National unity and Patriotism--facing our national destiny calmly and fearlessly, without heat, prejudice or passion. There is no partisanship where Americanism is concerned. (*Italics mine.*)¹

The partisan press often fell from grace, but the trend, at least, had been established.

The Latimer County News-Democrat reflected an additional area of concern in its editorial, "The Japanese Peril."² The fear that Japan might attack an unprotected America should war with Germany materialize, an anxiety voiced by Congressman Murray as early as 1916, did not become as universally prevalent in Oklahoma and the West, however, as German strategists had anticipated. That each of these

¹Enid Events, Feb. 8, 1917, p. 2.

²Latimer County News-Democrat, Feb. 9, 1917, p. 2.

developments should have emanated from the weekly press in areas accounted as rural is indeed noteworthy, for heretofore these regions had evidenced no sustained interest in the war and largely opposed extensive preparedness and American involvement.

The virus of sustained and fervently-expressed patriotism spread rapidly to almost every segment of the Oklahoma press. "Stand By President," admonished the Muskogee Times-Democrat in a February 5 front page editorial that prominently displayed the nation's two chief emblems, an eagle and the flag. Two days later a second flag-embellished article encouraged Oklahomans to "Display the Flag!" The Daily Oklahoman, considering Bryan's "war-or-peace referendum" on February 6, termed the suggestion "sincere" but "untimely" and "an unpopular cause." "We've got to have some faith in our theory and form of government," insisted the Oklahoman, "our notion is that congress can be trusted to act as the honor of the country dictates in an hour like this--trusted implicitly."¹

Two days later blaring headlines announced the sinking of the English liner California and the Oklahoman darkly observed: "Sinking May Be Outrage That Will Drive U. S. to War." On the following day a huge colored flag dominated the

¹Muskogee Times-Democrat, Feb. 5, 1917, p. 1; Feb. 7, 1917, p. 1; Daily Oklahoman, Feb. 6, 1917, p. 6.

front page of the Oklahoman and in subsequent issues appeared beneath the paper's masthead and above the front-page name plate. These became standard procedures as the state's largest and most influential daily aggressively assumed patriotic leadership for the first time. Other papers, too, reflected the imminency of war and a corresponding patriotic impulse. The Stillwater Gazette, employing the title, "Navy Expects War," published a letter from a local crewman on a Hawaii-stationed American submarine which stated:

The future doesn't look very good for the United States does it? . . . All liberty is stripped for United States sailors. . . . Well it would disappoint me now if they didn't do something, and it doesn't look like I was going to get disappointed, either [sic].

"Sinking of Steamer Laconia Was an Overt Act," declared a Daily Ardmoreite banner on February 27 as every untoward incident became a casus belli. Eight Americans lost their lives on the British vessel.¹

Editorials revealed a similar state of high excitement and fervent patriotism. "Unfurl the Flag" decreed the Oklahoman and then unabashedly admitted:

For all its brutality there is something about war, or the prospect of war, that sets the pulses tingling. Under the lulling influence of peace, patriotism becomes perfunctory. That may be a sorry confession . . . that, under the veneer, we are still primitive. . . . Because we are on the verge of war today the love of country is

¹Daily Oklahoman, Feb. 8, 1917, p. 1; Feb. 9, 1917, p. 1; Feb. 12, 1917, p. 1; Feb. 13, 1917, p. 4; Leo Beach to Mrs. William McGrain, reprinted in the Stillwater Gazette, Feb. 23, 1917, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, Feb. 27, 1917, p. 1.

surging through every American heart in swifter, redder currents. . . . Old Glory ought to be floating over every business roof in America, and . . . should have a place in every home. . . . It is, at this time, something of a prayer and a pledge.

"'We are pressed out of measure,' runs a line in II Corinthians: 1-8," declaimed the Muskogee Times-Democrat, "it is a pressure upon the patience, upon the very soul of the nation. . . .

The spirit of true Americanism is born again--as 'we are pressed out of measure.'" Portents of war appeared on almost every page of the Osage Journal on February 15 as the editor lauded "The Wilson Doctrine" and pronounced the nation "On the Verge of War." "Enemies In the Rear," shouted the Republican Tulsa World two weeks later as it accused the pacifists of attacking the nation behind its back by opposing the administration's preparedness and diplomatic measures. Extreme epithets such as "violent blatherskites," "seditious outcries," "ignorant egotism," and "hysterical demonstrations" marked the World's initial violent tirade.¹

Even the more reluctant elements in the Oklahoma press and public came to the unhappy conclusion during February that America could not avoid war. The Oklahoma Federationist, heretofore strongly anti-war and anti-preparedness, clarified the position, at least, of organized labor in two lengthy editorials. With the laborer's future a paramount concern,

¹Daily Oklahoman, Feb. 10, 1917, p. 6; Muskogee Times-Democrat, Feb. 14, 1917, p. 4; Osage Journal, Feb. 15, 1917, pp. 2, 3; Tulsa World, Feb. 27, 1917, p. 4.

the Federationist soberly survey the bleak prospects:

It is too late to ask whether the breaking of diplomatic relations was justified or not. Let us hope there will be no necessity for more drastic steps to be taken. . . . Organized labor is as patriotic as any other group of citizens . . . [and] abhors wars. . . . Neither does it favor peace at the sacrifice of the ideals of democracy, justice and freedom. It does demand the right to be heard and considered in all policies that may lead to war as well as to . . . peace. After all it is the worker who . . . must bear the brunt of battle. . . . Congress should first consult the people . . . [who] should decide for themselves what constitutes an "overt act" against their rights without being guided by counsel from any of the belligerent nations, or the mouthings of our "war gang" here at home. It is unfortunate that the militarist now uses this momentous crisis to force universal compulsory military training and service on a free people. Organized labor must and will resent this . . . to the utmost. Compulsory industrial conscription is likewise unwarranted. . . . Any attempt to interfere with existing labor laws . . . should call forth . . . uncompromising opposition. (Italics mine.)¹

Twelve days later the Federationist called upon labor's foreign and native elements to exercise "fortitude, patience and self-control" in their personal relations and warned that "this is indeed a momentous crisis for labor." Within two weeks the labor paper considerably modified its tone, admitting that "this war has shaken the world of all of us." While still arraigning war as "damnable stupid," "unjustifiable and cruel and debasing," and refusing to be a "war shouter," the Federationist nonetheless concluded:

America did not make this war. . . . That does not mean that America will not fight. America . . . has been assailed by a brutal autocratic nation, mad with greed and insane with the idea of power over others. . . . War

¹Oklahoma Federationist, IX (Feb. 17, 1917), p. 2.

is brutal and ugly; it is unjustifiable as a means of settling human disputes, . . . but America did not choose the method. . . . America could not do anything with honor except to throw her physical might against the autocratic marauder. . . . America has been compelled to go into this kind of struggle in order to make peace possible, in order to make safe the institutions that you love and that we as a nation are pledged to uphold.¹

The rural press was far less explicit and unanimous. Certainly a goodly number concurred with the Enid News when it recommended that "if Germany shows a disposition to try to avert war" the United States should "meet that nation half way." Although the rural element had never been too vocal and was painfully conscious of expected party and national loyalty, the Enid paper undoubtedly reflected the thinking of the preponderant majority when it observed:

The great majority of the people of the United States do not want war with Germany or any other nation, and the course adopted by President Wilson of patience with Mexico and the foreign nations has been strongly endorsed. . . . Many of the far seeing people . . . have come to the conclusion that . . . nothing can be accomplished by war that could not better be accomplished by diplomacy.

The Oklahoma Farmer, while carefully avoiding open opposition, expressed evident reluctance at the seeming certain prospect that the United States would be drawn into the war. Fear that the munitions industry would precipitate war to gain huge profits continued to be a central theme in the rural press. Citing a contemplated "billion dollars" in federal contracts,

¹Ibid., IX (Feb. 29, 1917), p. 4.

the Enid Events charged that "the munitions makers will go to any lengths to bring about the 'necessity' for such . . . contracts" and decried the "'munition makers' chorus."¹

Even the most active Socialist publication admitted on February 10 that "War Seems Unavoidable." Observing that "the just must suffer for the crimes of the unjust" and that only "the Day of Christ's crucifixion" overshadowed the import of the break with Germany, World-Wide War reviewed the crisis under the unique title, "Why Cry Peace on Sea Bottom . . . When There Is No Peace." While admitting that "this war has been the world's greatest calamity, a veritable hell as all war is," the Pawhuska paper insisted that the war should not "be ended until the instigators pay every farthing for human life and property destroyed" and that there should be no temporary armistice. The Socialist publication then issued a most startling dictum:

President Wilson we are with you to the last ditch for humanity's sake if this is your only aim, let's help humanity to fight it out now, with the sword if necessary. Then help all nations, us included, to beat our swords into pruning hooks and spears into plow shares. And for this aim alone may Almighty God sustain the so called neutral arm to win and cease their arming.²

World-Wide War, of course, did not speak for the hard core of

¹Enid News, Feb. 11, 1917, p. 2; The Oklahoma Farmer, XXVII (Feb. 25, 1917), p. 16; Enid Events, Feb. 22, 1917, p. 2.

²World-Wide War, Feb. 10, 1917, p. 1; Pickens, "Oklahoma Socialism, 1900-1918," pp. 74-76; Shannon, Socialist Party of America, pp. 98-102.

Oklahoma Socialism. It represented that segment of the party which refused to oppose the war once it had been declared and, along with such national figures as John Spargo, Charles Edward Russell, and A. M. Simons, became dedicated "war patriots." Die-hard Sooner Socialists, however, representing the majority element, continued their unwavering resistance which culminated in a formal resolution of opposition in June and the untimely demise of the party.

Oklahoma officialdom acted speedily and patriotically in the face of the diplomatic rupture. Governor Williams issued an immediate statement assuring the citizenry that law and order would prevail and that there would be no intimidation of the German element. He further called for unquestioning support of the President. The proclamation read:

Not a single person in the state of Oklahoma not one industry in the state need fear molestation as a result of the break with Germany. When the time comes that it is incumbent upon me to act, . . . I shall be prepared. It is enough now that we stand obedient to the wish of the nation as it shall be voiced by our president--be he right or wrong. The heart and sinew of the state is his to command in this hour of national travail.

Republican Representatives Glenn Condon and J. B. Campbell precipitated "one of the most remarkable demonstrations in the history of Oklahoma legislatures." Campbell sent to the desk of Speaker Paul Nesbitt a packaged American flag and, upon completion of the roll call, Condon called for the national anthem, stating that "in view of the fact that this

nation is facing a crisis that may be the gravest hour in American history, we Representatives of Oklahoma should set an example for the State and Nation." The Enid Events--in Campbell's constituency--reported a fervent response "from the oldest member to the youngest page" in which the senators joined as they "ran from their wing in the building" and that "wild cheering followed." The Tulsa World--Condon was a Tulsan--also featured the "unique demonstration" of Republican-inspired patriotism. Demonstrations of loyalty were not limited to white leaders. Winfield Scott Brown of Muskogee, prominent Negro attorney and a Spanish-American war lieutenant, sought permission from Governor Williams to organize a colored regiment. Brown, who expected a presidential call for volunteers "within the next twenty-four hours," declared that he could "raise a regiment . . . within ten days and have them ready for active service within 60 days."¹

The break with Berlin took on an even grimmer and more sinister character as news of the shocking Zimmermann note dispatched to the German ambassador to Mexico on January 19 ended all doubts as to the grim seriousness of the German onslaught. While President Wilson had been informed of the British-intercepted document on February 25, the sensational expose first reached the Oklahoma public on

¹Osage Journal, Feb. 8, 1917, p. 1; Tulsa World, Feb. 6, 1917, p. 1; Enid Events, Feb. 6, 1917, p. 1; Muskogee Times-Democrat, Feb. 7, 1917, p. 1.

March 1. Blaring headlines splashed across the front pages of almost every Sooner daily. "Germans Plot Mexican-Japanese War on U. S.," trumpeted the Daily Oklahoman; "German Plot to Combine Mexico and Japan for War Is Revealed," shouted the Tulsa World; "Report of Intrigue Against America Today," announced the more sedate Daily Ardmoreite. The Muskogee Times-Democrat and the Tulsa Democrat utilized multiple headlines. "All America Is Aroused by German Plot to Line Up Japan and Mexico Against U. S.; Next Step May Drive Us Into War," excitedly proclaimed the Times-Democrat banner while a five column spread, "Washington Is Stirred to Depths," and mid-page headlines, "Japan Professes Its Friendship" and "Uncle Sam Gets Ready for War," dominated the entire front page. "Berlin Duplicity is Frustrated," read the first of three Tulsa Democrat banners, succeeded by three lead stories entitled, "Says Plot Is So [Wilson]," "Japan Denies Intent to War," and "3 Mex. Went After Arms!." Only a few dailies, such as Norman's Daily Transcript, ignored the development.¹

The weekly papers, significantly, did not share the universal concern of the daily press despite the serious threat to the Southwest contained in the Zimmermann proposal. The Latimer County News-Democrat, which a month earlier had expressed fear of "The Japanese Peril," accorded the expose

¹Daily Oklahoman, March 1, 1917, p. 1; Tulsa World, March 1, 1917, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, March 1, 1917, p. 1; Muskogee Times-Democrat, March 1, 1917, p. 1; Tulsa Democrat, March 1, 1917, p. 1.

third ranking under a one-column head, "Germany, Mexico and Japan May War on U. S." The sinking of the British Laconia with eight American fatalities received preferential treatment. The Antlers American matter-of-factly reported, "Germany Plans Alliance With Japan and Mexico." Both withheld editorial comment. The Oklahoma Federationist limited coverage to a page six "boilerplate" article. The Wewoka Democrat declared that "war between the United States and Germany now appears not only probable but inevitable" but based its comments on the submarine peril rather than the Zimmermann note.¹ Indeed, many weeklies, among them such war-conscious papers as the Poteau News and the Osage Journal, as well as the consistently war-mute western publications, remained silent.

Despite long-standing resentment toward Mexico, the deployment of the Sooner militia on the border, and the prospect of an adjacent boundary, the Zimmermann note did not excite an extreme reaction in Oklahoma. However, while the anger and the patriotic outburst engendered by the January 31 announcement and the diplomatic rupture far exceeded reactions to the Zimmermann proposal, a tremendous wave of resentment against Germany and Mexico swept over Oklahoma. While Oklahomans expressed little fear that the fantastic proposal

¹Latimer County News-Democrat, Feb. 9, 1917, pp. 1, 2; March 2, 1917, p. 1; Antlers American, March 1, 1917, p. 1; Oklahoma Federationist, IX (March 9, 1917), p. 6; Wewoka Democrat, March 1, 1917, p. 1.

could ever be consummated, it confirmed unfounded suspicions that Germany had entertained sinister designs on the United States from the outset and deepened distrust of Mexico and Japan. The Daily Oklahoman reflected this point of view on March 1 when it published the deciphered note under the heading, "This Reveals the Plot."¹

Editorial expression further demonstrated that the ill-starred Zimmermann intrigue convinced many Oklahomans, albeit reluctantly, that war was inevitable. The Tulsa Democrat immediately adopted this view. Six of its seven editorials on March 1 considered war issues, one of them announcing, "German Perfidy is Revealed." Accusing Germany of "pretending friendliness" while it formented an "astounding" and "gigantic plot" "to unite Mexico and Japan in a war against the United States," the Tulsa paper lambasted the anti-preparedness bloc in Congress and frankly admitted a growing suspicion of the nation's foreign element. Mincing no words, the Democrat declared:

While this danger has been threatening, congress has been held back by a few politicians. It may come to the point where America will have to arise in its might and swat its heretofore respected congress. Be it known that if the necessity arises, this can be done. . . . This country has the wealth, the men, and the ability to go across the water and wipe the German nation off the face of the earth. It has been held back long enough by mouthing pacifists, and the politicians in congress. . . . Preparedness must come now, without a moment's hesitation. . . . The council of defense bids us hold out the glad

¹Daily Oklahoman, March 1, 1917, p. 1.

hand to all foreigners now in the United States, and there is no objection . . . if we know at the same time what those foreigners are doing--if we are certain they are not a part of the wide spread German spy system.

Two days later the Tulsa paper expressed the belief that "something has been gained" in that "the cheap politicians in congress have been convinced that the Zimmermann letter is authentic" and "in the face of . . . public opinion" have "given up hope of forcing an extra session of congress" and will "place in the president's hands the power to protect Americans."¹

The Daily Oklahoman concurred the next day declaring, "Prepared or Perish." Asserting that the act "will surprise nobody who is competent of judging character by acts," the Oklahoman termed it "the real finality" in the long history of German scheming. After accusing Republicans La Follette and Mann, and Democrats Bryan, Stone, and Oscar Callaway of Texas of obstructionist tactics, the Oklahoman concluded:

Germany is a national desperado set out upon a career of kill and conquer. . . . That Germany hates us is a fact no man can longer pretend to deny. . . . We must get ready. Militarily and industrially we must get ready. The imperial German government's discovered treachery is an ultimatum to us--prepare or perish.

On the same day the Oklahoman noted the serious illness of Senator Gore, reporting the fear of some that "he will never

¹Tulsa Democrat, March 1, 1917, p. 4; March 3, 1917, p. 4.

get up."¹ Gore's illness, a phlebitis, thus removed Oklahoma's most prominent war opponent from the scene during the critical months from January through April.

"Give Us An American," exclaimed the same paper the following day as it applauded the Senate censure of its Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, Stone. Stone had opposed the granting of emergency powers to the President and accused him of "playing politics" in the coincidental release of the Zimmermann note. Recalling the Missourian's defense of the Lusitania sinking and his charge of a conspiracy on the part of the nation's leading newspapers to precipitate war, the Oklahoman branded Stone as "a pro-German sympathizer":

Instead of being an ardent American patriot Senator Stone appears in the role of a pro-German sympathizer. Democrats and republicans, all Americans everywhere, should follow the senate's lead with a national volley of renunciation. In this hour the greatest virtue, either in public or private life, is loyalty to the United States. For chairman of the senate's foreign relations committee let us have an American.

The Daily Ardmoreite belabored both "our intemperate congressmen" and "corner store whittlers" for "vaporish, incendiary speech" opposing naval preparedness. Comparing the "absurdity, the untruth, the malice . . . and . . . lack of patriotism" of such "indignant outbursts" with the "capable, careful, conscientious, God-fearing, humanitarian conduct" of Wilson, the Ardmoreite declared:

¹Daily Oklahoman, March 2, 1917, pp. 1, 6; March 3, 1917, p. 6.

If the President is obliged to plunge this nation into the world war, we feel down in the depths of our hearts that he is right. If he steers us away from the shoals and guides us unhurt through the storm we know, then, he is right. We are with him in whatsoever course he undertakes, because we know that love of country and humanity reign in his heart.¹

The Tulsa World insisted that it was "Time For Action"-- against both Germany and Mexico. The Republican paper professed "no surprise" at the German intrigue, maintaining that "every observant citizen has for a long time felt it in his bones." Said the World:

There is no longer any doubt but what the time has come for action. The best way to defeat Germany's purpose is to take time by the forelock and put Mexico in such shape that she will be unable to carry out her part of the plan. Without her connivance the rest of the plan falls of its own weight. . . . We have had plenty of good excuse already to take her by the scruff of the neck and chastise her soundly.

Succumbing to partisanship, the World suspected "carefully planned theatricalism." "The state department," charged the World, "has long been in possession of this information about Mexico and has kept still," divulging the information "at the last moment" to frustrate congressional opposition to Wilson's demand for carte blanche control. The World nonetheless concluded: "Yet in spite of all this double dealing on the part of the administration, it is the plain duty of every citizen to back up the president. . . . On to Mexico!"²

¹Ibid., March 3, 1917, p. 6; Daily Ardmoreite, March 2, 1917, p. 4.

²Tulsa World, March 2, 1917, p. 4.

At the same time, a companion editorial curtly informed the British press that the question of entering the war was "Our Own Business." Reminding the British of their "heartless shortcomings" in Greece and South Africa, the World offered no apology for the fact that "we do not get hysterical about poor Belgium, Serbia and Rumania.":

We . . . are determined to go to war, if fight we must, over nothing short of a direct offense against America. . . . We are suffering because of Germany's policy, but as long as she keeps hands off of American people and property there is no "overt act." . . . When the real "overt act" happens, if it ever does, we expect to fight . . . good and hard, but until then we must attend to our own business and watch.

Eight days later the World bluntly accused Germany of a "general campaign . . . alienating all the Latin-American countries from their northern affiliations and working up a militant diversion at our back door." Citing Cuba, Venezuela, and Colombia in particular, Editor Lorton declared that while the move "was not honorable," at least it "opened American eyes" to German duplicity.¹

Despite the proposed dissection of the Southwest, the weekly press with rare exception refrained from editorial comment on the Zimmerman note.² The strange silence could

¹Ibid.; March 10, 1917, p. 4.

²This observation is based on an examination of Oklahoma weekly newspapers. Only one of these papers published editorials relating to the Zimmermann Note and only a few provided extensive front page coverage. All of the leading weeklies located in the newspaper collections of the Oklahoma Historical Society were examined as well as a representative sampling of the lesser publications. Samplings were selected

mean but one thing; the rural elements in Oklahoma did not regard the bizarre proposal as significant enough to warrant hostile action against either Germany or Mexico. Indeed, no recent war development received less consideration. A number of weekly papers had commented on the break with Germany but only a few gave even cursory mention to the proposed German-Mexican alliance. Not even those admitting the distinct possibility of war, such as the Antlers American, the Wewoka Democrat, and the Latimer County News-Democrat, appeared overly concerned at the growing spirit of militarism.¹

Only the Socialist World-Wide War, recently converted to the necessity of American intervention, idealistically called for an immediate declaration of war. Pleading the cause of "civilization, humanity, and God," the Socialist paper urged:

The last campaign was fot [sic] out on issues of national Americanism, and integrity, and force, if necessary to protect the lives and property on the God-ordained freedom of the seas. . . . We have as much obligation 2000 miles away as in our streets. . . . It is not a question of belief in war, but duty to protect those mentally and physically unable to protect themselves, and stop such war for the sake of civilization and humane christianity. . . . Millions of lives and billions of

on the basis of geographical location, occupational areas, political affiliation, and other criteria such as racial, nationality, and religious groups.

¹Antlers American, March 1, 1917, p. 1; Wewoka Democrat, March 1, 1917, p. 1; Latimer County News-Democrat, March 2, 1917, p. 1; The Oklahoma Farmer, XXVII (March 10, 1917), p. 10.

property could have been saved to the world had all nations recognized this humanitarian duty when Belgium was invaded, and certainly as soon as the Lusitania was sunk. . . . We favor making it impossible for another such war to be waged, and for this aim alone should now take up arms to end war in the shortest possible time, and then all disarm, except an international police force. . . . This alone is true patriotism, alone can honor civilization, humanity, and God.

Surprisingly enough, the Japanese threat, largely ignored by the major dailies, disturbed the weekly press. The Latimer County News-Democrat, asserting that "most Americans believe that some day Uncle Sam will have to cross swords with the Jap," speculated as to whether the rising Oriental power had "a secret understanding with Germany" and would shift her allegiance from the Allies to the Central Powers and attack the United States. While confident that "we could eventually overcome this great island empire," the Wilburton paper believed that Japan "could take the Philippine and Hawaiian Islands in a few weeks and bombard the Pacific Coast." The Enid News, evaluating Japanese assurances as to the integrity of China, skeptically observed:

It remains to be seen whether Japan, in her new posture as the Uncle Sam of Asia, will be . . . fair with her . . . Asiatic Monroe doctrine. . . . We hope so. The premier's words however, sound fairer than Japan's specific demands on China. We want an equal chance in the newly developing markets of China. . . . That, rather than the California land problem or the fate of the Philippines, is likely to be our Japanese problem of the future.

Despite its sinister threat to the Southwest, the Zimmermann note was no casus belli in the Sooner mind. Edward E. Dale, a contemporary Oklahoma authority, contends that "Oklahomans

didn't take it too seriously" and both the reactions and the lack of reactions of the press and public officials support this conclusion. Nonetheless, it was another weight upon the already overburdened back of public patience and opinion. Oklahomans were not an exception to Arthur Link's observation that "a more nearly united America had moved one step nearer the brink."¹

While Oklahomans and Americans everywhere speculated as to the consequences of the diplomatic rupture and the Zimmermann proposal, the terrifying success of the German submarine onslaught precipitated still another American crisis. As the undersea raiders frightened more and more Americans shipping from the seas and export consignments piled up on the piers, the cry for the arming and protection of merchant ships was more urgently renewed. Despite heavy Cabinet pressure, Wilson resisted such a move until faced with the Republican decision to filibuster the vital appropriations bills to force a special session and the disclosure of the Zimmermann note. Consequently, on March 26, he sought Congressional authorization "to supply our merchant ships with defensive arms," to "employ any other instrumentalities or methods that may be necessary and adequate to protect our

¹World-Wide War, March 10, 1917, p. 1; Latimer County News-Democrat, Feb. 9, 1917, p. 2; Enid News, March 7, 1917, p. 2; Dale interview, Aug. 23, 1956; Bailey, A Diplomatic History, p. 592.

ships and our people in their legitimate and peaceful pursuits on the seas," and "sufficient credit" to expedite the requests.¹

Only the major Oklahoma dailies reported Wilson's unwarlike speech. The Daily Ardmoreite liberally quoted the President, emphasizing his peaceful intent rather than the controversial requests: "I am not now proposing or contemplating war or any steps that may lead to it. . . . War can only come by the wilful acts and aggression of others." "Congress, of course, will grant it," predicted the Daily Oklahoman the next day, terming the action, "Our Answer to Germany." The editorial expressed disappointment that Congress had not "arisen as one man and given an affirmation by acclamation." The Oklahoman indignantly charged "partisan politics" in the contemplated Republican filibuster:

We have in effect pulled down our flag, withdrawn from the waterways of commerce and surrendered to Germany. This condition, unthinkable were it not a fact, is absolutely unendurable. The flag must be unfurled, American ships must ride the high seas, protected and defended by American guns and American valor. Germany has not declared war upon us, but Germany is waging war upon us. No option is left us, no time for deliberation remains. It is an hour for patriotism, not prudence. Republican senators who hesitate about signing a blank check should, rather, refuse to sign an American's death warrant. In the name of Kultur Germany challenges. In the name of Christianity let us reply. We must answer war with war.

"Not Partisanship, But Good Government," retorted the Republican Enid Events. "The president is the servant and not the master

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 2 Sess., Feb. 26, 1917, pp. 4272-73.

of the American people, and all loyal citizens will aid him in rendering the best service possible. We shall not, however, transform him into a dictator and ourselves into subjects, merely because one of his tasks is that of dealing with foreign relations." The Tulsa World, on the other hand, had urged Republicans not to block the Armed Ship Bill as early as February 21.¹

Congress acted promptly following Wilson's request. Chairman Flood of the House Foreign Affairs Committee the same day introduced H. R. 21052, "authorizing the President of the United States to supply merchant ships, the property of citizens of the United States and bearing American registry, with defensive arms" including a \$100 million appropriation. Only a few extreme noninterventionists objected. Ferris and Morgan strongly supported the measure; Thompson, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, registered qualified approval. Ferris charged that the opposition had "undoubtedly gone awry in their better judgment" and called for "red blooded" patriotism rather than partisanship:

If American commerce and . . . lives are entitled to be left alone, they are entitled to be protected . . . by furnishing them guns to protect themselves. . . . This is just a repetition . . . of the McLemore resolution fiasco. . . . An open sea and unmolested commerce are essential to our citizenship in every walk of life. . . . This is no time to cavil, quibble, and quarrel about words.

¹Ibid.; Daily Ardmoreite, Feb. 26, 1917, p. 1; Daily Oklahoman, Feb. 27, 1917, p. 6; Enid Events, March 1, 1917, p. 2; Tulsa World, Feb. 21, 1917, p. 4.

It is time to stand behind the President and uphold his hands. . . . He will keep us out of war . . . and preserve the Nation's self-respect.

Republican Dick T. Morgan, noting circumstances "beyond our power to control," also urged unqualified support:

This bill is not a declaration of war. It is not directed specifically to any particular nation. . . . It is not a question of property, . . . money, . . . trade, commerce or business. It is a question of national honor. . . . But we cannot buy peace with honor. . . . We must at whatever cost, and against all nations, protect our people in all their rights, at home and abroad, on land and sea. Objections have been raised to conferring power upon the President. . . . Congress should share with him the responsibilities of this hour. . . . Duty, justice, patriotism, and humanity point the way.¹

Thompson also strongly opposed war and recognized the necessity of defending merchant shipping. However, he felt that ships carrying cargoes of arms and munitions consigned to belligerents should be denied this protection. Thompson and others on the Foreign Relations Committee had unsuccessfully offered such an amendment, arguing that "belligerents against which such arms . . . are intended to be used have a right to capture the same in transit on the high seas" and the United States, in protecting such traffic, "would commit an unneutral act--an act of war." Thompson declared:

The President will not permit the clearance of ships armed . . . by the Government carrying arms and ammunition consigned to the belligerents. . . . The American people do not want to become involved in the European war . . . but they are unwilling to surrender their undoubted right to carry on their peaceful and lawful pursuits on the

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 2 Sess., Feb. 26, 1917, p. 4368; March 1, 1917, pp. 4667, 4679.

high seas. . . . I am not hostile to an adequate program of preparedness. . . . We should have an Army and a Navy of sufficient strength . . . to protect us from . . . aggression . . . and maintain . . . peace and security. . . . I am glad the press in Oklahoma has maintained its reason and has not been carried away by the Moloch of war. The jingoes and the metropolitan press have manufactured a scare and the militarists have taken advantage of it.

The House registered overwhelming 403 to 14 approval on March 1 after only three hours of debate. Oklahoma's eight Representatives all supported the measure. Significantly, all but two of the fourteen negative votes were from the Middle and Far West. Ten Republicans, three Democrats, and the lone Socialist, Meyer London of New York, joined in the dissent.¹ Unquestionably Oklahoma's Congressmen still remained staunchly opposed to militarism and American entry into the conflict but had reluctantly concluded that the Nation's citizens and trade must be protected everywhere, even at the risk of war.

The Senate, delayed by consideration of the Naval Appropriations Bill and La Follette's obstructionist tactics, began consideration of its own Ship Arming Bill (S. 8322) on March 1. S. 8322 was incorporated into the House-approved H. R. 21052 the next day. The basic issue, of course, was not the arming of merchantmen but Wilson's request for authority to use "any other instrumentalities and methods."

¹Ibid., March 1, 1917, pp. 4636, 4640-92; Appendix, March 3, 1917, pp. 801-806. The ten Republicans opposing were: Benedict, Calif.; Carey, Cooper, Nelson, and Stafford, Wisc.; Davis and Lindbergh, Minn.; Helgeson, N. Dak.; Wilson, Ill.; and Porter, Penn. The three Democrats: Decker and Shackelford, Mo.; and Sherwood, Ohio.

This most Republicans and the noninterventionist Democrats strongly opposed. The ensuing three-day filibuster by twelve La Follette-led noninterventionists of both parties, which continued until the adjournment of the Senate on March 4, was one of the most bitter and tumultuous in Senate history. Senator Owen strongly supported the measure. Owen declared that "a public exigency of the highest importance" required, that international law justified, and the "great body" of Oklahomans approved both the arming of merchant ships and the "reasonable request" granting extraordinary emergency powers to the President:

In my judgment it would be a great national calamity if the people . . . and the Congress . . . should refuse to hold up the hands of the Chief Executive . . . under these painful circumstances. . . . This conflict will only terminate by the triumph of the strongest arms. . . . WE MUST CONSIDER THE FUTURE. . . . If war comes by virtue of sustaining our neutral rights, I shall be reconciled in the belief that at least the United States had at last thrown her great powers on the side of democracy. . . and liberty and justice and mercy and humanity.¹

When the success of the filibuster seemed assured, Owen joined in the statement signed by seventy-five Senators of both parties declaring: "We desire this statement entered in the RECORD to establish the fact that the Senate favors the legislation and would pass it if a vote could be had." Nine Senators, including Gore, were listed as ill, unavailable,

¹Ibid., Feb. 27, 1917, pp. 4399-4400; March 1, 1917, pp. 4565-66, 4618; March 2, 1917, pp. 4719-81; March 3, 1917, pp. 4858-917; March 4, 1917, pp. 4988-5020.

or out of town. Gore, unconscious and desperately ill, was not even aware of the bitter Senate filibuster. However, in the light of his 1916 resolution and subsequent reactions, he undoubtedly would have opposed the armed ship resolution. Wilson, when informed of the adjournment and the successful filibuster as he awaited the inaugural ceremonies, indignantly declared: "A little group of wilful men, representing no opinion but their own, have rendered the great government of the United States helpless and contemptible."¹

The major Oklahoma dailies followed the progress of the bill intently. March 2 headlines in the Daily Oklahoman announced, "House Passes Armed Ship Bill." Perturbed by the ensuing Senate filibuster, the Oklahoman on March 5 angrily reported, "Armed Neutrality Bill Fails" and published a photograph of La Follette captioned, "Man Who Killed Neutrality Bill." The Oklahoman continued its assault on the "Wilfull Twelve" the following day. Eleven were prominently identified, the majority under the headline, "Seven Senators Who Backed La Follette in Killing Armed Neutrality Bill." Editorial blasts on March 2, 3, and 6 revealed the state of mind of the

¹Ibid., March 4, 1917, pp. 4988-5020, 5031. The New York Times, March 5, 1917, p. 1, and the Daily Oklahoman, March 6, 1917, p. 6, among many others, quoted Wilson's "outburst". The seven Republican filibusterers included: Clapp, Minn.; Cummins and Kinyon, Iowa; Gronna, N. Dak.; La Follette, Wisc.; Norris, Nebr.; and Works, Calif.; the five Democrats: Kirby, Ark.; Lane, Oreg.; O'Gorman, N. Y.; Stone, Mo.; and Vardaman, Miss. By sections: Midwest, 8; Far West, 2; South, 1; East, 1.

thoroughly aroused Oklahoma City paper. Arraigning the filibusterers as "The Timid Twelve" and flaying "Saffron Stone" of Missouri in particular, the Oklahoman, on March 6, fumed:

No particular courage or bravery is behind the act of twelve senators in thwarting the will of the president, congress and the nation. These self-appointed saviors of the country admit it was their timidity, their fear that the president had committed the United States to war that caused them to plot the most foolish filibuster in history. . . . The proposed cloture rule should be established immediately. The Oklahoman is glad that it does not have to hold up to national scorn either member of the senate from Oklahoma. . . . These gentlemen, instead of holding the nation back from the precipice of war, pushed us a step nearer to the chasm. Berlin is chuckling today. The president of the United States is impotent. . . . The United States has been shamed before the world. We must expect fresh insults from the Teutonic tyrant. . . . The Timid Twelve is too mild. Will someone please brand them properly with a printable epithet, or should we say--epitaph?¹

The Oklahoman, slow to accept preparedness and stern diplomatic measures, now had gone to war.

Other Democratic dailies expressed similar sentiments. The Daily Ardmoreite, on March 5, published two condemnatory editorials entitled, "Who They Are" and "'Passing of the Wilful.'" The Ardmoreite had "little to say," observing that the recalcitrants "have made their choice. They have refused to hear the call of their people. . . . Their constituents will pass judgment upon them." However, the next day, the

¹Daily Oklahoman, March 2, 1917, pp. 1, 6; March 3, 1917, pp. 1, 6; March 4, 1917, p. 1; March 5, 1917, p. 1; March 6, 1917, pp. 1, 6.

Ardmoreite charged that Congress had "presented a pretty spectacle, . . . humiliated the nation, . . . procrastinated . . . and just fizzled out . . . in the face of extreme danger. . . ." while it "prattled and pouted with no more intelligence than a group of irresponsible kindergarten children." Hailing the adjournment of Congress so that the President and his "earnest, patriotic cabinet" might take over, the Ardmoreite proclaimed: "We must stand behind the president for he represents our country, and it is 'our country, right or wrong.'" "Would Make Their Country Helpless and Contemptible," indicted Renfrew's Record, as it pilloried the "wilful" for "all their fellow countrymen to see."¹

The Republican press displayed a more restrained attitude. The Tulsa World, in March 9 and 19 editorials, admitted that the filibusterers were "foolhardly" and "mistaken" and that, despite "their undoubted courage," there was "little room for anybody to sympathize with them in their plight." However, the World refused to regard them as "rank traitors" or as having been "subsidized by German influence or fearful of the German vote." The Tulsa paper agreed that the arming of merchantmen was necessary and "the will of an overwhelming majority" but it opposed granting emergency powers to the President. These views were not new to the

¹Daily Ardmoreite, March 5, 1917, p. 4; March 6, 1917, p. 6; Renfrew's Record, March 9, 1917, p. 4.

World. On February 26 it had deprecated "dragnet authority" for the Chief Executive. "It is neither patriotic nor wise for Republicans in congress to hinder the president and his plans for taking care of the foreign situation," admitted Editor Lorton, "but is it not a great risk to trust one man with such absolute power?" Two days later, however, the World, supporting the armed ship proposal, criticized the "fiction of splendid isolationism" and "half-hearted antagonism of Germany." The Republican daily declared:

We have gone just far enough to incur German wrath. It is bad policy to hesitate and fall short of making friends with the other enemies of our enemy. . . . It is all right to avoid entangling alliances, but we have gotten into a place where we must either make alliances or else develop a military power strong enough to bid defiance to any and all powers.¹

Despite its continuing demand for forthright diplomacy and preparation, the World, on March 7, recommended "Keeping Our Heads." "Because we are in a controversy with Germany that almost inevitably will lead to war," it cautioned, "there is no reason why we should indiscriminately condemn everything German." The Republican daily also reported the sequel to the filibuster fiasco. A banner on March 9 announced, "Lansing and Gregory Tell President He Has Authority to Arm Ships Against U-Boats," including a sub-heading, "Needs No Order From Congress." Headlines the next day proclaimed,

¹Tulsa World, Feb. 26, 1917, p. 4; Feb. 28, 1917, p. 4; March 9, 1917, p. 4; March 19, 1917, p. 4.

"President Orders American Ships Armed and Calls Congress into Special Session," while a companion editorial pessimistically predicted, "Only a Glimmer of Hope."¹

The Oklahoma State Legislature joined in the crucifixion of the "wilful twelve." Six Democratic Senators, representing every section of the state except the west and northwest, submitted a resolution on March 6 deploring the fact that American lives were "wickedly menaced by the ruthless submarine policy" and that "our foreign commerce has been or will be . . . destroyed unless the President is given power to arm our merchant ships and use other such instrumentalities as he may find necessary." The resolution then declared:

In this national crisis the Oklahoma Legislature, on behalf of the people of the State, renew their expressions of confidence in the President and solemnly denounce the action of those United States Senators who wilfully and stubbornly . . . did thwart the public will and humiliate the nation in a critical hour before the people of the world.

The House, which had simultaneously adopted a similar resolution including praise of Senator Owen for "his support of the president" and efforts to secure cloture, approved the Senate measure two days later. Copies were sent to the President and members of the Oklahoma National Delegation. The Republican Tulsa World commended both the resolutions and Owen.²

¹Ibid., March 7, 1917, p. 4; March 9, 1917, p. 1; March 10, 1917, pp. 1, 4.

²Senate Journal, Sixth Oklahoma Legislature, 1917, S. Con. Res. No. 25, March 6, 1917, pp. 1219-20, 1260; House Journal, ibid., March 8, 1917, p. 1348; Tulsa World, March 7, 1917, p. 1.

As in the case of the Zimmermann note, the rural press remained silent. The degree to which disinterest, confusion, and opposition entered into this journalistic vacuum cannot be precisely determined. However, in the pattern of reaction quite consistently maintained since the onset of war, the three elements would apply in reverse order. There is no sound basis to doubt this conclusion. The rural and labor elements strongly opposed war. They believed Americans should stay out of the war zone and off the ships of belligerents. They opposed loans to the belligerents and entangling alliances. By the same token they opposed the arming of merchantmen. Opposing these developments so strongly advocated by the administration and the national press--and an increasing element of their own dailies--yet desiring to be accounted loyal and recognizing the minor impact of their small voice; they kept silent. Confusion no doubt existed but not disinterest. The strong and immediate reaction to the break with Germany precluded such a conclusion. The majority of Oklahoma's citizens still opposed American intervention. However, more and more had become apprehensive that the voice of the common people would not prevail over the increasing outcry of the national press, the Eastern seaboard, the Administration, and foreign pressures from both armed camps.¹

¹Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 275, supports this contention and line of reasoning on the national level: "The public opinion of a great nation during a period of crisis and stimulated hysteria cannot be measured with any precision, for the great mass of people have no means of

The final hectic months of the Sixty-Fourth Congress found the huge preparedness appropriations a harassment almost as severe and perplexing as the armed ship controversy. Tax-conscious Oklahoma Congressmen, representing a young, developing state, figured prominently in the prolonged debates on these important measures. The "Revenue Bill" (H.R. 20573), "to provide increased revenue to defray expenses for the Army and Navy and the extension of fortifications," totalled some \$910 million, a staggering figure in 1917. Introduced on January 27, the bill received the 213 to 196 approval of the House on February 1. Only Morgan, the lone Republican, opposed the measure although Davenport failed to vote. Ferris and Morgan figured prominently in the largely partisan debate centering on administration extravagance and tariff policy. Ferris admitted that he and many other Democrats felt the preparedness program to be "too large" but that he would support the measure out of necessity. Republicans, too, he charged, were often guilty of extravagance in the same area:

No man can truthfully say that the sentiment for preparedness and increased appropriations was brought

expressing their sentiments, while spokesmen for organized groups are necessarily minorities. From such evidence as is available, however, one might hazard the guess that even as late as April 1, 1917, the great majority of people were still firmly for peace." The reactions of the Oklahoma Federationist, and such state organizations as the Federation of Labor and the Farmers' Union reflect such a climate of opinion in Oklahoma.

about . . . by the Democratic party. . . . We have a salient duty to provide sufficient revenue. To do otherwise . . . smacks of dishonor, . . . partisan politics, . . . [and] prank playing, for which the American people will never stand.

Morgan, in a surprisingly spirited rejoinder, announced that he and other Republicans would oppose passage "as a protest against the abandonment of the policy of protection" and then lashed out at the Administration:

The Republican Party is not opposed to the taxation of wealth. . . . It believes that the rich rather than the poor should bear the chief burden of Government. . . . The Democratic Party . . . utterly fails to comprehend the great burden of taxation that is now resting upon the people. . . . There never was a time, . . . even in the stress of war, when our people were so heavily taxed.

The Senate, after a month of strenuous debate, accepted the much-amended measure on February 28 by a 47 to 33 majority. Neither Gore nor Owen participated, either in discussion or the final vote. Both Houses accepted a compromise version on March 1 and Wilson approved the measure on March 3, one day prior to adjournment.¹

The unprecedented \$663 million Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 20632) introduced on January 30 elicited strenuous opposition from both parties. Nonetheless, the House approved it by a convincing 353 to 23 margin two weeks later. Only

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 2 Sess., Jan. 27, 1917, p. 2145, passim; Jan. 31, 1917, pp. 2314-56; Feb. 1, 1917, pp. 2409-42; Feb. 2, 1917, p. 2465; Feb. 28, 1917, pp. 4468-524; March 4, 1917, p. 5032. H.R. 20573 became Public Law No. 377.

Thompson, a Democrat, opposed the measure although Ferris and Davenport did not vote. Thompson's vigorous opposition was intensified by a New York letter addressed to "Dishonorable J. B. Thompson" which inquired "how much money you received from German agents to dishonor your country." The outraged Oklahoman denounced his attacker--who had signed the note, "Public Opinion," as "one of the self-styled patriots from Wall Street," "a pusillanimous cur," a "polecat," and a "contemptable and cowardly . . . and idiotic individual." After tracing army and navy expenditures from 1897 through 1917, Thompson described the bill as "extravagant," both in amount and because it did "not provide ships for immediate use," and hence of no value in the threatening war. Severely censuring the navy preparedness element, Thompson expostulated:

They are clamoring as loudly now as then [1916] that we are unprepared. This war spirit, like the appetites, grows more fierce, the more you feed it. It is time some thought were taken of the taxpayer. . . . I shall vote for what I think is the best interest of my country.

Hastings, alluding to tax favoritism, upbraided the "munitions manufacturers" and "the big corporations."¹

Facing adjournment, the Senate passed the measure on March 2 after two weeks of debate. Harried conferees worked out the necessary compromises in record time and the bill

¹Ibid., Jan. 30, 1917, p. 2294-96, passim; Feb. 13, 1917, pp. 3217-40; Appendix, March 3, 1917, pp. 801-806.

reached Wilson for approval on March 3, a matter of hours before adjournment. Senator Owen supported the measure, unsuccessfully urging an amendment providing that half the submarines being authorized be built on the Pacific Coast. Owen, mindful of the "Japanese peril," declared:

I favor this amendment, . . . not for the sake of any local interest, but for the sake of the United States and the protection of her littoral of nearly 2,000 miles upon which there are the best harbors in the world. . . . I believe that the Pacific coast ought to be sufficiently developed so that it would be prepared, through its own people and . . . equipment, to protect that coast if necessary against any aggression from abroad.¹

The Oklahoma delegation raised even less objection to the modest \$247 million Army Appropriation Bill introduced on February 6 and enacted on May 12 following armed ship filibuster and amendment complications.²

As subsequent events proved, only a single crisis separated the nation from the catastrophe of war in mid-March of 1917. Actually, the die had been cast on February 1 when the Germans declared unrestricted submarine warfare and Wilson severed relations. While most Oklahomans regarded the Zimmermann note as fantastic, its disclosure a month later emphasized Germany's determination to fight on, even at the

¹Ibid., Feb. 14, 1917, p. 3265; passim; March 1, 1917, p. 4630; March 4, 1917, pp. 4988, 5032-33. H.R. 20732 became Public Law No. 391.

²Ibid., Feb. 6, 1917, pp. 2717, 2726; passim; March 2, 1917, p. 4744. For H.R. 13: 65 Cong., 1 Sess., April 2, 1917, p. 122: passim. H.R. 13, which replaced H.R. 20783, became Public Law No. 11.

risk of American involvement. As a result, the daily press and many urban Oklahomans reluctantly concluded that war was inevitable.

While the weekly papers, labor, and agriculture continued to adhere doggedly to strict neutrality and peace, even they gave ground grudgingly as German intrigue intensified the cry for national unity, patriotism, and preparedness. Even the Socialists split, the left wing minority demanding intervention in the name of "civilization, humanity, and God." Distrust of German-Americans mushroomed. On the armed ship and preparedness appropriation issues, Sooner Congressmen reflected rather than led state sentiment as Ferris and Owen typified the urban-Administration point of view and Morgan and Gore the conservative position. No one in Oklahoma wanted war but except for labor and rural elements the majority feared it was inevitable.

CHAPTER XI

THE FATEFUL DAYS: WAR COMES TO AMERICA

The final crisis precipitating the war came on March 18 as German submarines sank three American merchantmen without warning and with heavy casualties. The "overt act" for which the President had been waiting apprehensively had occurred and the simultaneous overthrow of Czarist autocracy removed still another deterrent to Entente alliance for America. A distraught Wilson, who on March 9 had authorized the arming of merchant ships and a special session of Congress for April 16, immediately--March 19--advanced the convening to April 2 and agonizingly weighed the issues for war and peace.

The Oklahoma daily press made the transition from a diminishing hope for peace to an aggressive demand for war with startling rapidity. "Only a Glimmer of Hope," editorialized the Republican Tulsa World on March 10, declaring "an actual declaration of war" to be "past our understanding" although "certainly not desired." The World called for "a patriotism inspired by love" and "no bitterness . . .

toward the German people," further observing the next day that "the root of it all lies in personal greed." "The choice of war or peace rests with Germany," asserted the Daily Oklahoman on March 12, as it ridiculed "German Duplicity" and "the amiable fiction that the two nations are at peace." The Oklahoman regarded the April 16 convening of Congress as "obviously another step nearer war" and Americans as being "with the president--for whatever fate." The obviously reluctant Muskogee Times-Democrat prefaced its observations with the phrase, "if the United States ever gets drawn into war [*italics mine*]." However, it admitted that even though "the United States is long suffering," if "you begin to order Uncle Sam around too far you run up against the fundamental American temperament." America is for peace; America abhors war," asserted the Muskogee paper the next day, "but America is not afraid."¹

"We are . . . true lovers of peace," insisted the Enid News a Republican weekly, "quite willing to overlook a lot of bad manners on the part of any other nation." Criticizing the Administration for continuing "to cherish the hope of peace" while it "moved toward war," the News hopefully observed that "Washington hunches are . . . often wrong" and warned of snap judgment while "living under the hair-trigger

¹Tulsa World, March 10, 1917, p. 4; March 11, 1917, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, March 12, 1917, p. 4; Muskogee Times-Democrat, March 1, 1917, p. 4; March 3, 1917, p. 4.

of expectancy." "War between the United States and Germany now appears not only probable but inevitable," gloomily prophesied the rural Wewoka Democrat. An unmistakable desire for peace was still evident in the Oklahoma press; fervently so in the case of the rural weekly publications.¹

Within ten days the majority of the Sooner press had girded itself for war. The Daily Oklahoman, in the vanguard, bluntly stated its position in a March 22 editorial, "A Declaration of War":

In advancing the . . . call for congress . . . from April 16 to April 2, President Wilson leaves little room for conjecture as to his intention. It means war. The American people are prepared for that position. War has been inevitable ever since Germany's declaration of her ruthless submarine policy. . . . A state of war has existed. Germany has been and is waging war on us. The latest outrage--the sinking of the three American ships--silences even the casuistries of the pacifists. . . . Our duty is unmistakable. . . . There isn't room in the world for the Hohenzollerns and liberty. As to which is . . . destined to survive there is no question. . . . Americans unhesitatingly prefer death to life under the conditions . . . imposed by this descendent of Attila. (Italics mine.)²

While the Tulsa World lead editorial on May 20 preached, "No Hymn of Hate," and insisted that "rational Americans" hated "Prussianism" and not the German people, its May 24 banner excitedly proclaimed, "Aggressive Warfare Against Germany Determined Only Course Open For America." "We Mean Business,"

¹Enid News, March 11, 1917, p. 2; Wewoka Democrat, March 1, 1917, p. 1.

²Daily Oklahoman, March 22, 1917, p. 6.

editorialized the World two days later, regretting the fact that the nation had "been a long time waking up." "If there is no honorable escape from war--and we believe there is none--" reasoned the World, "let us be thoro [sic] and enthusiastic while we are in the business. Peace will come that much sooner and last that much longer." "No 'Overt Act' Needed," blustered the Tulsa paper on March 31, "we are dealing with an enemy that never waits for an overt act. . . . The whole people of the United States, in spite of the big noise made by a few pacifists and traitors, have made up their minds that a fight with Germany is unavoidable." The leading Republican daily, like its Democratic counterpart, had indeed gone to war.¹

The reaction of the Oklahoman and the World typified majority daily press opinion in Oklahoma although many expressed themselves more restrainedly. The great rallying cries were patriotism, "stand by the President," and "Germany has forced us into war." As the eyes of all mankind focused on April 2 and the President's message to Congress, the Muskogee Times-Democrat on March 31 gravely speculated on "What the Voice of America Would Say to the World":

In his hands rest our destinies as a nation. His decision . . . is the most momentous that a human being ever made. If the American people could speak with one articulate voice there can be little doubt what the message would be. Above the maundering of the pacifists and the whines of the slackers, it would ring a declaration of war upon Germany. . . . As the conservator of democracy,

¹Tulsa World, March 20, 1917, p. 4; March 24, 1917, p. 1; March 26, 1917, p. 4; March 31, 1917, p. 4.

America would preach a crusade against autocracy. . . . It would sound the death knell of the German and Austrian empires and the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg dynasties [each a "maniacal monstor"]. It would proclaim the coming of a new era in which there will be no more kings and no more wars.

Terming the crisis "the gravest situation since the Civil War," the Daily Ardmoreite dispassionately reflected:

The country is aware that Germany has violated all of the rights of American citizens upon the high seas. . . . Few are of the opinion that there has not been sufficient infringement of American rights to warrant the declaration that war exists, and many are firm in the belief that war should be declared. . . . Congress tomorrow will be watched with more than ordinary interest. The public has demanded that petty politics be laid aside and that Congress line itself up behind Mr. Wilson.¹

The Tulsa Democrat, took exception to the claim of the Memphis News-Scimitar and other Southern newspapers that the South had "the purest Americanism" and that "the north and the west shirk their duty.'" While admitting that there were fewer foreign-born in the South, the Tulsa paper denied the charge that mobilization of the militia in some midwestern states to guard vital installations represented "something ominous." The Democrat, conscious of the northern heritage of its own constituents and I. W. W. activities in the local oil fields, issued a pointed rebuke:

The subject of north and south . . . should be left out of the discussion. . . . The work of enlisting . . . has barely begun. . . . It is not apparent yet that the north and west are shirking their duty. . . . Munitions plants and factories of all kinds must be protected and

¹Muskogee Times-Democrat, March 31, 1917, p. 4; Daily Ardmoreite, April 1, 1917, p. 4.

it would be done in the South had these states any plants that required guarding. Oklahoma is as loyal as any state in the union, but the great oil refineries are being protected at the cost of the owners. It would be no reflection to have them guarded by representatives of the government.

To the question, "do the newspapers of Oklahoma reflect the sentiment of their readers and the public generally?", the Tulsa paper proudly proclaimed that it was "Standing By the President":

The newspapers of Oklahoma are declaring their allegiance to their country and they are making repeated statements that the people of this state are patriotic. They have even declared it to be the belief of the people . . . that war now exists. Such statements have been made repeatedly in the Democrat and many letters have been received from over the state commending this newspaper for the stand that has been taken. There is every reason to believe that the large majority of the citizens of Oklahoma view it in this light.

While the Democrat assertions seemingly ignored the silence of the weekly papers on the necessity of war, it did reflect the position of the daily press, the state administration, and increasing numbers of the metropolitan population.¹

Led by Senator Owen, Oklahoma's public officials strongly supported the President's actions and counseled war. In a March 23 statement to the Tulsa World the Senator stated his views:

War is deplorable. Tame submission to continued injustice is worse. Cowardice in a nation or an individual is despicable. . . . America, as the greatest of all organized democracies, should perform its duty to mankind and take the necessary steps to do it effectively. I believe this to be the will of the overwhelming majority

¹Tulsa Democrat, March 31, 1917, p. 4.

of American people and the people of Oklahoma. Representing them, I shall vote to sustain the president and take the steps necessary to maintain the dignity and the honor of America. . . . The result will be to establish world-wide democracy, world-wide liberty, world-wide happiness.

Owen further proceeded to sound out the state's political and industrial leaders "as to what congress ought to do as regards Germany--whether it should declare war . . . [and] if Oklahoma will approve what the president advises." Desiring to refute pro-German press allegations that "western opinion opposes a declaration of war," Owen felt it was "important for the president to know the truth as his action will be greatly influenced by the opinion of western people."¹

The daily press, almost unanimously pro-war, viewed the poll as unnecessary, insisting that they had already demonstrated that Oklahomans recognized the existence of war and would "stand by the President":

In a way, Oklahoma has already anticipated Senator Owen's inquiry. The mass meeting which will be held in this city Sunday afternoon [April 1] will deliver what may be called a representative expression of Oklahoma's sentiment. . . . It is logical to believe that the people of Oklahoma are as patriotic as their legislature. . . . When the legislature a short time ago declared its confidence in the president, it expressed, not only the personal sentiment of the members but the sentiment of this whole state. . . . Every citizen . . . who reads the papers . . . knows that a state of war does exist. . . . The silence of congress cannot alter the fact.

¹Tulsa World, March 24, 1917, p. 1; Daily Oklahoman, March 26, 1917, p. 1; March 30, 1917, p. 6.

As for the pro-German papers, it is another piece of their characteristic presumption to say what the opinion of western people is. The pro-German papers . . . have upheld the kaiser in every outrage against this country. They have denounced the president . . . and lauded the twelve kaiser senators [Armed Ship filibuster]. . . . Neither President Wilson nor the congress should seek counsel in the pro-German papers. The pro-American papers are the papers that are expressing the people's sentiment. The Oklahoman undertakes to say that the people of Oklahoma will stand by the president.

The Tulsa Democrat, pointing to the "repeated statements" of the Sooner press "that the people of this state are patriotic," labeled Owen's inquiry "almost superfluous":

Surely he understands that the newspapers would not dare to misrepresent the people. There has been no indication that the people of Oklahoma are clamoring for war . . . but they do not desire to shrink from their plain duty. . . . Senator Owen can rest assured that the people of Oklahoma will stand by President Wilson and that they have confidence in Senator Owen himself. . . . They owe no allegiance to the kaiser of Germany.¹

Both papers roundly criticized the pacifist attempts of Judge Frank Dale of Guthrie, who sought to arrange mass meetings at Cherokee and elsewhere "to protest against any action by Congress that might lead to war." In telegrams to civic leaders Dale contended that "an effort is on foot to make Congress believe people want war," and called for "immediate action to get the true sentiment of your town and wire Congress at once." The Oklahoman headed its disapproving report, "Peace Meetings Called Anti-U.S.," while the

¹Daily Oklahoman, March 30, 1917, p. 6; Tulsa Democrat, March 31, 1917, p. 4.

Democrat proudly reported that "not a single meeting of that nature has been called." State Senator Walter Ferguson, in declining Judge Dale's request to organize the Cherokee protest meeting, termed such gatherings "superficial," "misrepresentative," "ill advised" and conducive to "more harm than good." "I am sure that the citizens of this section of the state desire peace, in the superficial meaning of the term," Ferguson asserted, "but I am also equally certain that they do not desire to compromise peace with national honor nor future security." Ferguson recommended instead "a mass meeting the night before congress convened expressing the fullest confidence in the national government."¹

As Congress prepared to convene in special session a wave of patriotic fervor gripped the daily press and the urban centers in Oklahoma provided a vigorous if not entirely representative response to Senator Owen's query. "The Nation Is in Peril," "Let Us Show Our Colors," trumpeted headlines in The Daily Transcript. The Norman paper, completely abandoning its previous ultra-cautious policy, announced an April 3 patriotic meeting exhorting, "let everybody be there." Over 1,000 "enthusiastic" citizens

¹Muskogee Times-Democrat, March 29, 1917, p. 1; Daily Oklahoman, March 26, 1917, p. 1; Tulsa Democrat, March 31, 1917, p. 4. Judge Dale, on May 13, 1915, had complimented the Oklahoman on its "conservative position" concerning the Lusitania sinking and its disapproval of Americans who took undue risks and jeopardized national peace and neutrality. See Chap. V.

gathered and by a rising vote adopted a resolution declaring that "a state of war exists" and pledging "loyal support, in word and deed, to President Wilson, to the Congress . . . and to our common country." "The meeting was a fine one," boasted the Transcript, "and put Norman in line with the balance of the country in its earnest desire that the war should be fought to a finish."¹

While a Muskogee Times-Democrat banner proclaimed "Wave of Patriotism Sweeping the Country," a prominent caption preceding the nameplate demanded, "Isn't It About Time For a Patriotic Awakening In Muskogee?" Two Muskogee women produced a new patriotic song, "Where All Men Are Kings." School children were ordered to stand at salute and sing the national anthem as Congress convened, a practice in which many other Oklahoma schools joined. Patriotic lectures and readings from the Declaration of Independence were also common in many schools. Indeed, such instructions had been issued at Oklahoma City as early as March 8 and at Tulsa on March 10. In addition, Tulsa school officials had endorsed drill for all high school boys above sixteen, the latter reportedly being "eager and ready." At the same time, a statute approved by the Sixth Legislature providing for "military training, athletic training, and physical

¹The Daily Transcript, March 31, 1917, p. 1; April 4, 1917, p. 1; Daily Oklahoman, April 2, 1917, p. 2.

examinations" in Oklahoma high schools provided an additional conditioning for war. Physical unfitness in the National Guard when federalized for Mexican border duty in 1916 and the aggressive sponsorship of Governor Williams prompted the measure.¹

War developments preempted the entire front page of the Tulsa Democrat as headlines blared: "Every Hope of Averting War Is Vain Leaders Say" and, "Tulsa Glad to Inform Country of Patriotism." Germans were admonished, "be loyal." The Democrat's intra-city rival, the Republican World, published a virtual war issue on Sunday, April 1. Headlines proclaimed, "Wave of War Spirit Sweeps Over America," and "Patriotism Will Run Wild Today." The Mayor's proclamation declared the day to be "Tulsa's testimonial to the great cause of loyalty, patriotism, and honor," and urged mass support. "Stand by the president," exhorted the mayor, "let freedom reign." A band, a choir of four hundred voices and a mass meeting at the Tabernacle where "Jew and Gentile, Protestant and Catholic will join . . . with Americanism the theme of the day" featured the Tulsa display. There was "silent respect" but "no cheering . . . or wild demonstrations," reported the World the next day as 5,000 gathered to

¹Muskogee Times-Democrat, March 31, 1917, p. 1; Daily Oklahoman, March 8, 1917, p. 1; April 2, 1917, p. 2; Tulsa Democrat, March 31, 1917, p. 1; Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1917, p. 454; Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, pp. 257-58.

unanimously adopt resolutions supporting the Administration "in whatever action they may deem necessary for the defense of the fundamental principles of our government and the maintenance of American rights." The resolutions declared: "We have desired peace. We have prayed for peace, but in these circumstances there cannot be peace with honor." Three editorials bore the stirring titles, "No Half-Way Measures," "We Must Lead," and "Behind the Lines."¹

Only Oklahoma City's patriotic outburst exceeded the Tulsa demonstration. On April 1 the Daily Oklahoman announced, "Loyalty Meeting Will Tell Where We Stand" and exhorted, "bring a flag." On the following day red headlines proudly proclaimed, "'We Are Ready for War,' Oklahoma Answers," as 40,000 people viewed the gigantic parade and 6,000 attended the mass meeting. Governor Williams and National Guard units participated. "'We are not guilty of this war,'" shouted the State's Attorney General, S. Prince Freeling; "'this is the greatest expression of American temperament I have ever seen,'" exclaimed National Guard Commander Roy Hoffman as "a thousand hands were flung into the air" when asked "how many would heed the call for soldiers." "'Through nights of agony, I have tried to learn the truth that I might speak it to you today,'" declared Judge C. B. Stuart, whose

¹Tulsa Democrat, March 31, 1917, p. 1; April 1, 1917, pp. 1, 4-C; Tulsa World, April 1, 1917, p. 1; April 2, 1917, pp. 1, 4.

resolution later prevailed. The prepared resolution, concluding, "we detest war, but we are for our . . . government, . . . wherever they lead us," was defeated as 6,000 citizens "from every station and calling . . . shouted a stentorian 'aye'" in support of Judge Stuart's more forceful "impromptu" substitution:

RESOLVED: That the senators and representatives of Oklahoma be instructed to say to the president and to the congress that the time for temporizing is done and that the time for action is here; and that what . . . [is done] to further that action will meet the patriotic approval of every man and woman in Oklahoma.

"It was the greatest public meeting ever held in Oklahoma, both in numbers and intensity," observed A. V. Leecraft, chairman of the event, and the Oklahoman concurred in a front page editorial, "The West's Answer to the President," terming the occasion "a glorious day."¹ While there were variations as to type and degree, the patriotic demonstrations in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Muskogee, and Norman typified reactions in the state's major cities. Oklahoma's daily press and urban centers were ready to support the war.

The major church bodies in the state also rallied in support of the President. In a Palm Sunday sermon delivered in Oklahoma City, Father Theophile Meerschaert, Bishop of the Oklahoma See, called upon all Catholics to pray "that the president may be guided in the right path." "He, like Christ

¹Daily Oklahoman, April 1, 1917, p. 1; April 2, 1917, p. 1.

in that long ago, is now confronted with grave trials," said the Bishop, "our prayers can help him. . . . It is for you and your country that he chooses the step he takes."

Dean F. J. Bate of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral drew a similar analogy, gravely observing that "this country may be called to tread the bitter path . . . to a Garden of Gethsemane, even up to a Calvary for the land and people. . . . Men of lofty patriotism and high purpose will approach . . . this cross with dignity." In developing the text, "Can American Patriotism Exist Without Militarism," Rev. James E. Pershing, a Congregationalist, declared:

We must vindicate the rights of the American people and . . . uphold international law. President Wilson has been patient and suffered insult upon insult in order to preserve peace. He can do no more now--the next step is war--a war not of his own making, but one he has been unable to prevent.

So long as the other powers maintained large military and naval forces, the cleric contended, America was "forced to do so in self defense."¹

In Tulsa the Revs. C. W. Kerr, a Presbyterian, and C. V. Kling, an Episcopalian, initiated the adoption of the April 1 resolution calling for war. At the same time the evangelist Lincoln McConnell "drew wild cheers" when he shouted: "The United States should have declared war on

¹Ibid., April 2, 1917, p. 2.

Germany when the German emperor's troops first invaded Belgium."¹ Others, such as James Griffitts, the Ramona Quaker, Louis Gregory, a Christian Scientist, and most Mennonites and Dunkers opposed the move toward war on religious grounds but they were a decided minority. Most of them, however, willingly served as Chaplains or Red Cross workers. Others became conscientious objectors.²

Nor was the call to war solely a Caucasian cry. The Muskogee Cimeter, a Negro publication, featured a front page editorial on March 31 entitled, "Patriotism in the Negro." "Even the voice of the Negro has been raised in patriotic speech," declared the Cimeter, "and it indicates that there will be patriotic action in case of war." The paper then proudly quoted a prominent Negro patriot: "'No Negro has ever insulted the flag. . . . No man can point to a single instance of our disloyalty. . . . I am a republican, but a Wilson republican. What he commands me to do I shall do.'"

¹Tulsa World, April 2, 1917, p. 1. Only the Quakers, Mennonites, and Dunkers who comprised 1.3 per cent of Oklahoma's total church populace officially held views opposing war.

²The J. A. Griffitts Papers reflect the pacifist views of the Quakers, Mennonites, and Dunkers. Two issues, in particular, of the Moody Bible Institute publication, The Christian Workers Magazine, XVII (March, 1917), pp. 557-58; XVII (April, 1917), pp. 629-33, seem to have greatly influenced Griffitts in his views on war. Gregory and two Mennonite ministers, friends of Dick T. Morgan, enlisted his aid as they sought chaplaincy and Red Cross appointments. See Morgan to Mrs. Morgan, April 4, 6, 7, 8, 1917; Aug. 30, 1918, Morgan Papers.

Prominent Negro leaders in Oklahoma, such as Winfield Scott Brown of Muskogee, redoubled their efforts to secure permission to organize a colored regiment. Indian leaders, too, including Gabe E. Parker, Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, indicated their support of the President and a readiness to participate which a subsequent Enid News headline, "'Injuns' Are Ready To Fight," reflected.¹

Despite the patriotic fervor of the urban press and populace and the evident imminency of war, no concerted movement toward acceptance of American involvement--and even less toward espousal--developed among the labor and rural elements in the hectic days preceding the convening of Congress. The Oklahoma Federationist inferred a qualified but reluctant approval on March 24, publishing in entirety "Labor's Declaration on War Service." This national declaration, sponsored by Samuel Gompers, declared:

In this solemn hour of our nations life, it is our earnest hope that our republic may be safeguarded in its unswerving desire for peace. . . . But, despite all our endeavors and hopes, should our country be drawn into the maelstrom . . . [we] offer our service to our country in every field of activity . . . and we call upon our fellow workers and fellow citizens in the holy name of labor, justice, freedom and humanity to . . . patriotically give like service.

The Federationist referred to the statement as "American labor's position in peace or war" but refrained from further comment.

¹Muskogee Cimeter, March 31, 1917, p. 1; Muskogee Times-Democrat, Feb. 7, 1917, p. 1; Dale interview, Aug. 23, 1956; Daily Oklahoman, April 7, 1917, p. 2; Enid News, Aug. 10, 1917, p. 1.

In like manner, restraint characterized the reaction of the Pontotoc County Farmer. While it did not openly support the move toward war, the Ada paper severely censured most pacifists as "narrow," "prejudiced," "arrogant," and deceitful. "These fellows," the Farmer observed, "are bitterly opposed to war if the command is given in English, but if given in Deutsch it's all right, and comes from Himmel."¹

Except for the towns with National Guard companies and a scattering of eastern and centrally located communities, the rural areas continued to display a marked reticence toward war. The anticipated remobilization of the National Guard, of course, brought the war very close to communities such as Wewoka, Stillwater, Antlers, and Enid. March 29 headlines in the Wewoka Democrat predicted, "Wewoka Guard Likely to Go," and reported accelerated recruitment activities to reach "war strength" in the "matter of days" that remained before "the boys will again put on the khaki." The call came three days later as the Daily Oklahoman and other Sooner dailies proclaimed, "Oklahoma Guard Again Called for Federal Duty," and Adjutant General Earp called for wide-scale patriotism and enlistments:

Oklahoma should show a willingness to serve and stand by the President with a full regiment. . . . We now have about 830 men in the Oklahoma guard. The minimum strength is 921; the maximum 2,002. We should mobilize

¹Oklahoma Federationist, IX (March 24, 1917), p. 1; Pontotoc County Farmer (Ada), March 29, 1917, p. 8.

with not less than 1600. Act today. . . . The pride of the state is at stake.¹

Whether the mobilization order and the convening of Congress or the actual declaration of war prompted the initial conversion of the first appreciable segment of the rural element to support American intervention is difficult to determine. The weekly papers went to press on March 29 and 30 and all of these epochal developments occurred prior to the succeeding issue. However, the Daily Oklahoman on April 1 carried verbatim accounts of enlistments and patriotic activities reported by the local presses in these communities on April 5 or 6. Further, in communities such as Poteau, Seminole, Mangum, and Weatherford the patriotic gatherings occurred on Sunday, April 1, reportedly "in response to Senator Owen's request for a mass meeting of citizens." Wewoka reported "a great wave of enthusiasm," and "fifteen new recruits" signed on April 1. A "packed house" of "patriotic loyal citizens" at Poteau, bearing flags and singing songs, responded similarly:

Many volunteered their services in case troops were needed. . . . Every one insisted that as long as there was a "state of war existing," a declaration of war should be proclaimed. . . . We join all Oklahoma and the rest of patriotic America in saying to the president that we are behind him.

At Mangum, in the southwestern area, only "half the citizens

¹Wewoka Democrat, March 29, 1917, p. 1; April 5, 1917, p. 7; Daily Oklahoman, April 1, 1917, p. 1; April 2, 1917, p. 2.

who tried to attend" gained admittance as resolutions were adopted "indorsing all the actions of the president and assuring him that Mangum people are ready with service, property and lives in case he sees fit to meet Germany's actions with war." Agitation to organize a company of light artillery produced thirty-six Sunday enlistments. The "patriotic meeting" at Seminole elicited a similar response.¹

The initial appearance of rural support for war was by no means a majority reaction. A number of communities and individuals expressed opposition ranging from violent to restrained, while large numbers maintained an eloquent silence. At Weatherford a secret ballot produced "an overwhelming vote against a declaration of war . . . and also against the proclamation of a state of war." German-dominated Korn cast a unanimous ballot of 430 against a war declaration. Both communities, however "pledged unanimously loyal support to the president in case congress should declare war." On April 2 an anonymous El Reno letter to Governor Williams, noteworthy for its powerful indictment rather than its literary inadequacies, typified the extremist position:

Can't you send word to Washington and save a country from giving Billions to find \$1. Or millions of souls to revenge a few beyond our help. Commercial or political bodys views is not "The Peoples" views. War is Americas suicide. . . . War is a curse even if win. There may be war agitators making their million to create war--right in Washington--just as in the Old . . . Days after Civil War. . . .

¹Ibid.; Poteau News, April 5, 1917, p. 1.

We are walking into a net--planned and agitated by a few political grafters and anarchists. Are leaders blind. People who gather at these great patriotic meetings are not all for war, far from it--go hoping we will not sacrifice millions and Billions for sake of a few--beyond our controle. . . . War will disgrace the administration forever. We were not neutral. . . . Love, Light and truth will prevent war. So it is not Love Light and Truth to slaughter our boys to answer question of exigency. Only in case of invasion. Prepare so we will not be invaded and not invade any other country is our only Right. [signed] An Okla Citizen [P.S.] We have faith in you.¹

Two days later J. M. Baund of Ryan, a southwestern Oklahoma community, voiced equally outspoken objection. Referring to a super-patriotic editorial in the Daily Oklahoman, Baund delivered a stern--albeit ungrammatical--challenge:

You say Oklahoma gave its pledge. Whoo gave that pledge nobody but a lot of cowards that would hollar war and say for some other man to get into the army you get your gun and go . . . yourselves don't say for the young men of Oklahoma to get their gun. I can tell you the young men are not going into the army . . . and they can't be made to go. . . . The working class of young men will . . . have to much sense to be pushed into anything like that.

Anglophobe-inspired opposition also appeared. J. C. McCarty of El Reno complained that "Great Britain is the chief violator of our rights" and queried, "Why not try to be neutral?" Other Irish-Americans, such as Gerald Fennell of Oklahoma City, took violent exception to McCarty's views.²

¹Daily Oklahoman, April 2, 1917, p. 2; "An Okla Citizen" to Williams, April 2, 1917, Williams Papers, No. 76100.

²Daily Oklahoman, April 3, 1917, p. 6; Baund to editor, April 4, 1917; McCarty to editor, both letters published in the Daily Oklahoman, April 7, 1917, pp. 1, 6;

Oklahoma's Congressmen received numerous petitions opposing American entry into the war. Representative Hastings presented the petition of "G. H. Avery and others" from Muskogee "against this war with Germany." Senator Owen announced that, while the majority of the "very large number of telegrams from Oklahoma" indicated strong support for the President and American rights "by whatever means are necessary," there were "a few . . . indicating that some of the people desire to avoid war and would go to almost any length to prevent it." Nor did the declaration of war stifle such expression. On April 16 Owen reported considerable opposition in certain communities but insisted that these people "do not fully understand." Two days later Dick T. Morgan informed the House that "many of . . . his constituents were opposed to war and believed that war with . . . Germany was unnecessary." In June several citizens of Hitchita in east central Oklahoma channeled a request through Representative Hastings asking "for peace under all circumstances." In September "sundry citizens" of Beaver County in Morgan's northwestern district memorialized Congress "praying for an honorable and early peace."¹

Fennell to editor, March 30, 1917, printed in the Daily Oklahoman, April 8, 1917, p. 14-B.

¹Cong. Record, 65 Cong., 1 Sess., April 3, 1917, p. 154; April 4, 1917, p. 186; April 16, 1917, p. 714; June 11, 1917, p. 3485; Sept. 17, 1917, p. 6714; Appendix, April 18, 1917, p. 86.

The existence of opposition was further reflected in the expressions of outrage of those supporting the war. H. J. Hightower of Elgin, a rural southwestern community, contacted Governor Williams on April 10, asking to whom "insulting insinuations and denunciations of our national congress and President . . . in declaring that a state of war existed . . . should . . . be reported? . . ." Editor Andrew A. Veatch of the Caney Democrat in Atoka County, seeking a Council of Defense appointment, reminded Adjutant General Earp "how after the war began I took my six shooter and drove two men who were agitating against the Government, out of this town." Veatch's letterhead proclaimed: "Preaches the Gospel of Democracy and Raises Hell with the Socialists." The climate of opinion among the common folk of Oklahoma lent support to Arthur S. Link's belief that "the great mass of people, . . . even as late as April 1, 1917, . . . were still firmly for peace." This "popular desire for peace" included "hostility to a war resolution."¹

On April 2 Congress assembled to consider the momentous question of war or peace, and at eight-thirty in the evening

¹Hightower to Williams, April 10, 1917; Veatch to Williams, July 2, 1917, Williams Papers, Nos. 76493, 80651; Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 275. Link bases this "generalization" on "thousands of letters, telegrams, and petitions from people in all walks of life and all sections of the country." The volume and "depth" of this evidence "profoundly impressed" him although he recognized "how deceptive such evidence can be."

the President issued the fateful call to war. Branding Germany's trade and submarine depredations as "warfare against mankind," Wilson charged that German autocracy had already levied war on the United States and that "the world must be made safe for democracy." Warning the nation of the "months of fiery trial ahead of us," the President gravely admitted that "it is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people . . . into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace." The "long ordeal of neutrality" had ended.¹

Oklahoma officialdom and the daily press echoed "the deafening thunder of applause" that greeted the President's message. "Wilson Asks State of War," screamed the Daily Oklahoman's red banner on April 3 while a huge box termed the concurrent sinking of the American Aztec, "The Act of War." The entire front page related the stirring development as a single story while the editorial page exhorted, "Get Your Gun." "It's War for U.S.," proclaimed the Tulsa World's huge banner while lead editorials announced, "The People Mean

¹Three telegrams, Scott Ferris to Gov. Williams, April 2, 1917, 12:34 P.M. and 10:55 P.M. and Ferris to C. C. Hammonds, April 5, 1917, Williams Papers, Nos. 76082, 76083, 76217; and a letter, Dick T. Morgan to Mrs. Morgan, April 2, 1917, Morgan Papers, Family and Personal Correspondence, April, 1917, vividly portray the drama and tension of the opening session as observed by two of Oklahoma's foremost Congressmen. For the Wilson speech see Baker and Dodd, The Wilson Public Papers, War and Peace, I, pp. 6-16.

Business," and "Not Unmixed Evil." Tulsa is "thoroughly [sic] aroused," asserted the World, there is "universal endorsement by all classes." Good can come out of the horror of war, insisted Editor Lorton, citing the "breaking down of old prejudices," and a greater "degree of unison." "What's Become of the Boasted Fighting Spirit of the "West," chided the Muskogee Times-Democrat on April 2 while the next day it complained, "Congress Moves Slowly."¹ The rural press, however, was not nearly so enthusiastic or unanimous.

Oklahoma's Congressmen promptly and vigorously supported the President's war speech. Senator Owen, on April 3, pledged both his personal support and that of the great majority of his constituents. Scott Ferris announced: "We are in war up to our necks. . . . I think the people of Oklahoma will expect me . . . to help uphold the hands of President Wilson." A half hour after Wilson's address, Republican Dick T. Morgan expressed his views:

The President asked Congress to declare war on Germany, and Congress will no doubt do it. So as I anticipated, we will have war with Germany. As much as I detest war, I expect to vote for the declaration, and this will of course be by far the most important vote I have cast. . . . Where all this will lead to, no one can predict, but we can only hope for the best.

Newly-elected Tom D. McKeown, who had espoused non-intervention

¹Daily Oklahoman, April 3, 1917, pp. 1, 6; Tulsa World, April 3, 1917, pp. 1, 4; Muskogee Times-Democrat, April 2, 1917, p. 1; April 3, 1917, p. 1. See also Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 281-82.

in his defeat of the veteran Bill Murray, declared: "Personally I hate war and love peace. But . . . the only question for me to determine is whether or not I shall support the President." Governor Williams, "every inch a fighting man," aggressively affirmed and reaffirmed his unqualified support. "I am unequivocally supporting the President," he informed the National Security League, "every citizen should give him his active and patriotic support in this crisis." Williams immediately assumed personal control of the Oklahoma war effort, resisting heavy pressure to call a special session of the State legislature.¹

Numerous resolutions endorsing the President's war policies and pledging full-scale support reached Oklahoma's Congressmen. Among these were representatives from Bryan, Hughes, Seminole, Wagoner, and Woodward Counties and towns like Checotah, Coweta, Durant, Enid, and Sallisaw. Professional, religious, and fraternal organizations also responded, among them the Oklahoma State Bar Association, the Collinsville Business Men's League, the Methodist Men's Bible Class at Ada, and the Elks Lodge at Coalgate and at Chickasha. Five

¹Cong. Record, 65 Cong., 1 Sess., April 3, 1917, p. 154; Appendix, April 5, 1917, pp. 30-31; Ferris to C. C. Hammonds, April 5, 1917, Williams Papers, No. 76217; Morgan to Mrs. Morgan, April 2, 1917, Morgan Papers; Williams to the National Security League, Chicago, April 25, 1917; Williams to W. O. Fleming, Bennington, Okla., April 25, 1917, Williams Papers, Nos. 77330, 77323; Dale and Morrison, R. L. Williams, pp. 256-71.

thousand Woodward County citizens pledged "the last drop of our blood, the last penny of our wealth," while Seminole County dramatically declared: "We are with Wilson. . . . If war comes Seminole County will go Irish." Even the outspoken inveterate objector, Campbell Russell, declared: "Our participation in this war could not honorably be delayed."¹

Editorial opinion reflected a mounting patriotism and acceptance of war as the daily press impatiently awaited the action of Congress. The Daily Ardmoreite, on April 3, lauded Wilson's address as "a new Magna Charta--a new Declaration of Independence," and the next day declared the United States "'the big brother' to all oppressed people." "Germany is a madman," declared the Tulsa Democrat, berating "the accursed kaiser." "There is a tremendous fighting spirit when once it is aroused," asserted the Democrat the next day and then derisively asked, "Where Is Bryan Hiding?" "Let It Be the People's War," urged the Muskogee Times-Democrat, advocating conscription and "no half way measures." "America Is Ready," declaimed the Daily Oklahoman, pronouncing the nation "ready to pay . . . whatever price the red days' needs exact" so that "Prussianism" might "be crushed out, root and branch."

¹Cong. Record, 65 Cong., 1 Sess., April 17, 1917, p. 741; April 18, 1917, p. 815; May 9, 1917, p. 2044; May 10, 1917, p. 2081; May 12, 1917, p. 2237; Appendix, April 5, 1917, p. 30; April 18, 1917, p. 86; Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Oklahoma State Bar Association, pp. 9-10 [copy in the Ross Hume Papers]; Daily Oklahoman, April 7, 1917, p. 2; Campbell Russell to the Editor, Oklahoma News [n.d. except "1917"].

The Tulsa World belligerently viewed conscientious objectors as "a menace" and "an enemy behind the lines" and pacifists as "latterday 'copperheads.'"¹

Joint resolutions declaring a state of war were submitted to both Houses in the opening session and only the objection of La Follette delayed Senate consideration and approval on the following day. The Wisconsin Senator and George Norris of Nebraska, blaming England, "gold," and the "war-mad press" for America's plight, led the bitter but unavailing fight of the extreme noninterventionists against the resolution. Owen, who had announced his unqualified support of war on the previous day, took no part in the stormy debate during which the opposition was accused of "treason" or conduct "which grazes the edge of treason." On April 16, however, he justified both his vote and the war at great length, declaring war entry preferable to "cowardly submission to tyranny." At the same time he submitted S. Res. 34 urging Americans "to serve the country with the highest patriotic spirit and zeal." The declaration of war secured overwhelming eighty-two to six approval with Senator Gore among the eight abstentions. James A. Reed of Missouri rather than Owen announced the blind Senator's absence "on account of

¹Daily Ardmoreite, April 3, 1917, p. 4; April 4, 1917, p. 4; Tulsa Democrat, April 3, 1917, p. 4; April 4, 1917, p. 4; Muskogee Times-Democrat, April 4, 1917, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, April 4, 1917, pp. 1, 6; Tulsa World, April 2, 1917, p. 4.

serious illness."¹

The House initiated debate of H. J. Res. 24 on April 4 amidst even sterner Western opposition. Oklahoma's eight Representatives all supported the measure although only Ferris and McKeown took part in the spirited debate. All the others except Carter and Chandler explained their views in post-declaration speeches. Ferris, on April 5, outlined sixteen causes for the war which, he contended, only "scratched the surface of the far-reaching crimes committed against us.":

We go to war this day with the German Empire because for two and a half years she has wantonly committed acts of war against us, . . . because we desire to preserve . . . our Republic as a haven for the oppressed for all the people of the earth. . . . This unjust and inhuman war [has been] ruthlessly thrust upon us. . . . Our Republic has never been a military nation . . . [but] the time has come for patriotism of the truest sort to assert itself. . . . This resolution . . . is the only honorable course consistent with every teaching we know, with every idea of liberty and freedom that we enjoy.

McKeown, in his maiden speech, declared that the "pioneer people" of Oklahoma "love peace." He sternly rebuked those

¹Cong. Record, 65 Cong., 1 Sess., April 2, 1917, pp. 104, 129; April 3, 1917, p. 155; April 4, 1917, pp. 200-61; April 16, 1917, pp. 711, 714-22. S. J. Res. 1 read by title: "Declaring that a state of war exists between the Imperial German Government and the Government and people of the United States, and making provisions to fight the same." For the entire bill see p. 155. Gronna of N. Dak.; La Follette, Wisc.; Norris, Nebr.; Stone, Mo.; Lane, Oreg.; and Vardaman, Miss.; opposed passage. The first three were Republicans, the latter three Democrats, the first four Midwesterners, and all six "Wilful Twelve" participants. Owen introduced S. J. Res. 9 calling for "an international peace conference at The Hague immediately after the close of the present war" the same day he voted for war. Ibid., p. 197.

"thoughtless, though noisy persons" who contended "that the people of Oklahoma and other interior States are less patriotic than other States of the Union":

Whether England has committed wrongs against us upon the seas is not an issue here. But . . . the loss of American lives and property by the ruthless methods of the Imperial German Government in violation of the sacred sovereignties of international law . . . is. . . . A state of war has been thrust upon us; and this being true, I have no other alternative but to vote for the resolution.

Republican Dick T. Morgan did not publicly express his pro-war position until April 18 although letters to his wife on April 2 and 4 indicated this reluctant decision. "We are to meet in the morning [April 5] at 10 o'clock to consider the War resolution," he wrote, "there seems to be no doubt about it passing by a big vote." The 373 to 50 approval bore out his prediction as war for America became a reality.¹

Banner headlines broke the grim news on the same day.

"War Is On; Ships Taken," proclaimed the Enid Daily Eagle,

¹Morgan to Mrs. Morgan, April 2, 1917; April 4, 1917, Morgan Papers; Cong. Record, 65 Cong., 1 Sess., April 4, 1917, p. 299; April 5, 1917, pp. 392-94. Pp. 305-413 record the entire House debate, the final vote, and Presidential approval. S. J. Res. 1 replaced H. J. Res. 24 and became Public Resolution No. 1. Analysis of the fifty opposing votes shows: Midwest, 41; Far West, 4; South, 4; East, 1 (Socialist); Republicans, 32; Democrat, 16; Socialist, 1; Prohibitionist, 1; Wisc., 9; Ill., 6; Minn., 4; Mo., 4; Nebr., Iowa, Calif., 3 each. For post-declaration speeches reviewing the war's causes and citing personal support of American entry see the following: Thompson, June 19, 1917, pp. 3861-65; Hastings, Sept. 10, 1917, pp. 6913-23; Ferris, Sept. 14, 1917, pp. 7160-65; McClintic, Sept. 21, 1917, pp. 7279-86; in Appendix: Morgan, April 18, 1917, p. 86; Hastings, May 22, 1917, pp. 231-33.

as war developments preempted page one. "War Is Declared; U-Boats Off Texas; Thousands March to Martial Music Here," shouted the Muskogee Times-Democrat. A near-hysterical lead story, "The Wildest Demonstration ever known in Muskogee Starts As War Begins; Flags Flying Everywhere," began:

America!!!

Muskogee is American!!!!

The entire population of Muskogee marching through the business district waving flags, singing country loving songs Friday afternoon [April 6] proved it beyond a doubt. If there is anyone in the city who doesn't love America, he couldn't be found. . . .

However, a less prominent story reported: "Co. F. Needs 65 More Men Quick." Indeed, the Times-Democrat already had declared war on April 4, admonishing: "Men of Oklahoma: Your Country Needs You! Enlist Now!" "Death Struggle With Germany," declaimed the Tulsa World as it denounced the pacifists and the six anti-war Senators for "Encouraging the Enemy." "This is the last inning for the pacifists," thundered the World, "we had Tories in 1776, we had Copperheads in 1861, and we have La Follette in 1917." The Daily Oklahoman and the Daily Ardmoreite in a calmer vein likewise censured the "overweening vanity" and the "pitiable . . . stubbornness" of "Mr. La Follette Et Al."¹ To most of the daily press the formal declaration was a mere formality; they had gone to war on April 1.

¹Enid Daily Eagle, April 6, 1917, p. 1; Muskogee Times-Democrat, April 4, 1917, p. 1; April 6, 1917, p. 1; Tulsa World, April 6, 1917, pp. 1, 4; Daily Oklahoman, April 4, 1917, p. 6; April 6, 1917, p. 1; Daily Ardmoreite, April 4, 1917, p. 4; April 6, 1917, p. 1; May 6, 1917, pp. 1, 3.

Few rural communities except those with National Guard companies published what might be termed war issues on April 5. The Poteau News was a notable exception. A huge headline reported Wilson's war speech and call for 500,000 men while lead stories announced: "Some More German Kultur," "To Have Nation Wide Spy Hunt," and "Poteau Has Patriotic Mass Meeting." Dislike for the German-American had burgeoned significantly since the February 8 admonition to "let the men from the Fatherland alone." An April 5 editorial ranted:

If we were a German and lived in the United States we are of the opinion we would have very little to say against the country of our adoption, no matter how much we wanted to talk. . . . We know we have as strong German sympathizers here as can be found anywhere. Fellows, if you don't like the way this government is acting the best thing you can do is to get out or get under, for we are going to get a little reckless when things warm up a little more--fact is we are going to believe that you are an enemy unless you are with us heart and soul, and there isn't enough civil law in Oklahoma to protect you when a few soldiers get after you.

Every issue thereafter emphasized patriotism, war editorials, and anti-German reactions. Wewoka led the patriotic outburst among the National Guard communities. April 5 headlines proclaimed, "War Flame Sweeps Country" and "Wewoka Lads Gone Again," after but thirty days of civilian status. "God said, I am tired of kings," fumed the Wewoka Democrat as Editor Harrison and his paper went all out for war.¹

¹Poteau News, April 5, 1917, pp. 1, 2; April 12, 1917, pp. 1, 2; Wewoka Democrat, April 5, 1917, pp. 1, 4; April 12, 1917, pp. 1, 4.

The Republican Enid Events, on April 5, adopted an aggressive pro-war and pro-Wilson policy. Two editorials, "Patriotism" and "Support for the President and Its Basis," expressed satisfaction that Wilson had finally "come to a realization of facts." A cut of Wilson the following week bore the caption, "He has gained a high place in history and the next few months may place him among the immortals." The equally Republican Stillwater Gazette devoted three-fourths of its April 6 issue to war developments, centering its attention upon the query, "What is the matter with Stillwater and Payne county?" The question, raised by Wilburforce Jones in a letter to the editor, demanded: "Is patriotism dead in this country, or has it ever been alive here?" Jones deprecated the fact that "not a flag was in sight, . . . no band, . . . no farewell meeting" as the "twelve brave boys" of Company I left for Fort Sill. "May God help us to arouse ourselves," exclaimed the aged Civil War veteran.¹

The majority of the rural and labor press, however, still evinced little or no enthusiasm for war. While Wilson's war message dominated the front page of the Osage Journal on April 5, the lead editorial stated, "West Will Support War If Necessary [*italics mine*]." The April 12 issue matter-of-factly announced, "'Troop D' Ready." Evidence of patriotic

¹Enid Events, April 5, 1917, pp. 1, 10; April 12, 1917, pp. 1, 2; Stillwater Gazette, April 6, 1917, p. 1.

fervor first appeared on April 26 when a large box featured the flag and a patriotic essay and the editorial page demanded the conquest of Mexico. The Latimer County News Democrat headed its April 6 lead story, "Wilson Makes War Talk," but spent its major energy in three successive issues bitterly upbraiding Governor Williams for vetoing the Wilburton School of Mines appropriation. The Edmond Sun, on April 12, reported a "large gathering . . . to ratify the . . . declaring . . . of war" and seven patriotic speeches which "deplored the fact that the United States is at war." Subsequent issues plugged enlistments.¹

In the extreme west, the Elk City News-Democrat first mentioned the war on April 12. Despite flags and war poems, a front page item announced, "Many Do Not Believe in Conscription." The usually calm Enid Events retorted on April 26, "Farmers Need No Urging." Similarly, the Medford Patriot Star, on the north central border, virtually ignored the war until mid-June, admitting on June 26 that the seriousness of war was "just beginning to dawn on the American people." The Oklahoma Farmer, the state's most influential farm journal, heretofore strongly opposed to war and militarism, first gave evidence of a nascent war consciousness on April 25.

¹Osage Journal, April 5, 1917, pp. 1, 4; April 12, 1917, p. 1; April 26, 1917, pp. 1, 4; Latimer County News Democrat, April 6, 1917, p. 1; April 13, 1917, pp. 1, 4; Edmond Sun, April 12, 1917, p. 1; April 19, 1917, p. 1; April 26, 1917, p. 1.

However, as late as October 10 the Farmer commented that its readers were not yet entirely convinced that the United States should be in the war.¹

Labor, too, questioned the wisdom and necessity of war involvement. The Tulsa Trade and Labor Council endorsed the action of the Central Federated Labor Union of Greater New York, requesting President Wilson to move cautiously and with due concern for the welfare of the common people. The communication urged a popular referendum on the question of a declaration of war and contended that the newspapers misrepresented the point of view of the masses who opposed war entry even after Wilson's eloquent plea on April 2. The Oklahoma Federationist reflected a similar disinclination to war. Only "boilerplate" war releases appeared on April 7. While a syndicated feature, "American Workers in Forefront of All the Patriotic Struggles," appeared the following week, editorial comment remained guarded and reluctant. Subsequent issues complained that Governor Williams had slighted labor in organizing the state's war effort.²

¹Elk City News-Democrat, April 12, 1917, pp. 1, 4; April 19, 1917, p. 1; Enid Events, April 26, 1917, p. 2; Medford Patriot Star, June 12, 1917, p. 1; June 19, 1917, p. 1; June 21, 1917, pp. 1, 5; June 29, 1917, pp. 1, 4; The Oklahoma Farmer, XXVII (April 10, 1917), p. 10; XXVII (April 25, 1917), pp. 5, 7, 10; XXVII (Oct. 10, 1917), pp. 2, 3, 10, 21.

²Tulsa Times, April 3, 1917, p. 1; Oklahoma Federationist, IX (April 7, 1917), p. 2; IX (April 14, 1917), pp. 1, 3; IX (May 19, 1917), p. 2; X (June 23, 1917), p. 1.

Organized labor in Oklahoma eventually declared its official position on the war in a September 22 resolution adopted by the annual convention of the State Federation of Labor:

. . . Labor declares its abhorrence to war and its devotion to the cause of peace, but we recognize that there are evils greater and more intolerable than those of war. . . . We declare that a sturdy defense of the interests of labor is wholly compatible with supreme loyalty to the government . . . [and is] the loyalty of free men who will not acquiesce in any surrender of principle, and that a condition which demands the conscription of men likewise demands the conscription of wealth. . . . We endorse . . . the fullest preservation of democracy and democratic ideals.¹

Labor accepted the war reluctantly but loyally. The I. W. W. represented the only dissident element of any particular consequence. However, labor was determined that industry should not recoup its exploitative position under the guise of war-time patriotism.

Both the Sooner Socialist party and the majority of its adherents continued their unyielding opposition to the war and American participation in it. However, even here there were individual defections and group schisms. Profoundly disturbed by American entry into the conflict, some "185 out of a possible 300" national Socialist delegates met in emergency session in St. Louis the following day to formulate the party's position. The eleven-member Resolutions committee included the veteran Oklahoma agitator, Dan Hogan. Dominated

¹Oklahoma Federationist, X (Sept. 22, 1917), p. 1.

by the radical element, a series of resolutions violently denouncing war, America's entry, and "predatory capitalism," and a pledge of "continuous, active, and public opposition to war," were submitted to the party membership for a referendum vote and received overwhelming support. The resolution declared:

The Socialist Party . . . proclaims its unalterable opposition to the war just declared. . . . War brings wealth and power to the ruling class and suffering, death, and demoralization to the workers . . . [who should] refuse to support their governments in their wars. . . . The American people did not and do not want this war. They have not been consulted . . . and have had no part in declaring the war. They have been plunged into this war by the trickery and treachery of the ruling class of the country.

While the left wing "loyal" minority charged "syndicalism," "treason and insurrection," their milder resolution failed. The Oklahoma Socialist Party actively supported the national referendum and two months later conducted a party election in support of its own anti-war resolution. The resolution, which "carried overwhelmingly," pledged the membership to

. . . continuous, active and public opposition to the war through public demonstrations, mass meetings, and unyielding opposition to all proposed legislation for military and industrial conscription and to vigorous resistance to censorship of the press and mails and restriction of rights of free speech, assemblage and strike.¹

¹Cong. Record, 65 Cong., 1 Sess., May 11, 1917, p. 2088, reprints in entirety the St. Louis anti-war resolutions and pledge, the membership and activities of the Resolutions Committee and other prominent leaders, and the attempts of the conservative element to defeat the resolution. These developments figured prominently in the subsequent debate and passage of the Espionage Bill (H. R. 291). *Ibid.*,

While no prominent Sooner Socialist leaders broke with the party on the war issue as did such eminent national figures as A. M. Simon, John Spargo, and Charles Edward Russell, the Pawhuska World-Wide War reaffirmed its recent pro-war stand. On June 2 and 30, as on February 10, the Pawhuska paper rallied behind the President "for humanity's sake," and featured the flag and patriotic literature under the heading, "Here's to Old Glory, God Bless Her!!" Even the more radical Socialist press voiced more subdued and less frequent opposition. Individual Socialists, too, became less vocal, some out of choice, others intimidated by the mushrooming suspicion and eventual hatred directed toward their organization and all war opponents as disloyal and traitorous. Some, like Steuben de Kalb Wham of Snyder, aggressively advocated the defeat of Germany. The threat of violence such as that visited upon Mrs. Nellie Zay, Dr. W. A. Merritt, Orville Enfield, Madison Hicks, O. F. Westbrook and other of the party's more outspoken protagonists proved equally persuasive.¹

pp. 2087-97. See also H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, Opponents of War, 1917-1918 (Madison, Wisc., 1957), pp. 8-10, for the salient sections of the Socialist resolutions, the subsequent party split, and the anti-Socialist sentiment and persecution that developed. See also Enid News, April 7, 1917, p. 1; Enid Eagle, April 7, 1917, p. 1. The Oklahoma resolution is quoted in "Socialists Protest Draft Law," Harlow's Weekly, XII (June 13, 1917), pp. 3-4. Hogan's daughter, Freda, Oscar Ameringer's second wife, was also an indefatigable party worker.

¹World-Wide War, Feb. 10, 1917, p. 1; June 2, 1917, p. 1; June 30, 1917, p. 1; Oklahoma Farmer, XXVII (May 25, 1917), p. 10; Tulsa World, April 4, 1917, p. 1; Enid News,

As Donald K. Pickens pointed out, the "greatest desire" of the Oklahoma Socialist party "was to keep America out of the war," both because of doctrinaire opposition and because they desired to "continue their reform activities." Many Socialists had voted for Wilson in 1916. They "thought they had voted for peace," observed David Shannon, and thus "deeply resented the declaration of war," regarding it as a "breach of faith" on the part of the President. As a result, the party split into the "reds" and the "yellows," the former advocating violent opposition, the latter considering force "a vain and foolish attempt to show disapproval of the war." It was the "reds," whom the prominent Sooner Socialist leader Oscar Ameringer called "a small group of extreme Left-wingers," who promulgated the fantastic and tragic "Green Corn Rebellion."¹

Authorities such as Charles C. Bush, Shannon, Pickens, and Ameringer are agreed that the Socialist party opposed and disavowed the uprising. Bush contends that under the aegis of clever I. W. W. syndicalists "Socialism became hopelessly

April 14, 1917, p. 1; Peterson and Fite, Opponents of War, pp. 38, 199. For further instances of Socialist and I. W. W. persecution see William T. Lampe, Tulsa County in the World War (Tulsa, 1919), pp. 221-22.

¹Pickens, "Oklahoma Socialism, 1900-1918," pp. 75-85; Shannon, Socialist Party of America, pp. 107-10; Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, pp. 347-58; Bush, "Green Corn Rebellion," pp. 8-14. The Bush study is the authoritative work on the Green Corn Rebellion.

entangled with anarchy" and the two terms "became synonymous." Ameringer maintained that he personally discouraged the malcontents and freely predicted the "veritable white terror [that] swept Oklahoma" in the wake of the "Green Corn" debacle. "We were the outstanding pacifists of that day," he recalled, upon which "war-crazed mobs spewed their venom." Shortly thereafter Patrick S. Nagle called an emergency convention and secured the dissolution of the "mortally wounded" Oklahoma Socialist party. Fear that the Oklahoma draft riots would be used as evidence in the conspiracy trials of Victor Berger and the entire national executive committee prompted the action. Opposition to the war killed the Socialist party, both in Oklahoma and the nation and, as Pickens pointed out, "the primary cause of the Socialist's fall in the state was the Green Corn Rebellion."¹

The I. W. W.'s, while far less numerous than the Socialists, threatened an even more violent opposition to the war in general and conscription in particular. An anti-conscription placard, indicative of the illiteracy of the majority of its members read:

Join us. We refuse to be drafted. We the I. W. W.,
 Leave us free to volunteer or give us war, not with
 Germany, but with America here at home. War it will be
 if Wilson does not withdraw that d--- draft bill. We
 will not be forced but we will force you rich --- -- -
 ----- to leave us alone. Be an I. W. W. and refuse to
 be forced. Give those who come after you h---.

¹Ibid.

While the I. W. W., like other organizations opposing the war, was not guilty of many of the crimes laid at its door, it undoubtedly was the most violent among the anti-war forces operating in Oklahoma. Certainly H. H. "Rube" Monson and other I. W. W. agitators were the prime instigators behind the ill-starred "Green Corn Rebellion." Organized labor in Oklahoma quickly and publicly disavowed connection with the I. W. W.'s, referring to them as "bums" who were "too numerous" and "against everything." Nonetheless, their unsavory reputation and activities in the sharecropping and oilfield regions considerably embarrassed both the war effort and the cause of labor in the Sooner state.¹

As the cold reality of war fastened itself more firmly on the Oklahoma consciousness a familiar pattern of reaction manifested itself in steadily increasing proportions. Opposition and apathy blossomed into acceptance, acceptance into support, and support into patriotic fervor. The wave of patriotic demonstrations commencing in the major cities on April 1 became almost commonplace as Wewoka, Edmond, Wilburton, Lawton, Ardmore and a host of other communities

¹Harlow's Weekly, XII (June 6, 1917), p. 4; Bush, "Green Corn Rebellion," pp. 8-14; Paul W. Smith, "Evidences of Opposition to War Policies in Oklahoma" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, 1950), pp. 49-50. The I. W. W., in a 1917 convention, had condemned all war, declaring that it "could be prevented by anti-militaristic propaganda during the time of peace." See Smith, p. 38.

strove to demonstrate their endemic loyalty.¹ Many high school and college students promptly enlisted receiving credit for a full year's academic work. Daily drill and Red Cross work became commonplace on college campuses. "Militant maidens" at Oklahoma City, Phillips University, and elsewhere organized and asked for "actual fighting." Indeed, the University of Oklahoma student publication, The Oklahoma Daily, correctly gauged the temper of the student element in the population when it proclaimed, "Spirit of War Invades Sooner-land."²

The press and the clergy implemented the drive to maximum patriotic effort. On April 12, Edith C. Johnson's column for women in the Daily Oklahoman bore the accusing title, "Slackers in War; Same in Marriage," asserting: "The national rush for the marriage altar does the young men of this country no credit." The column four days later declared, "The Good Son Is the Good Soldier." On April 17 the Oklahoman announced, "Oklahoma City Pastors Will Not Marry Slackers." The Wewoka Democrat implied a "yellow streak" with the

¹Wewoka Democrat, April 12, 1917, p. 1; Edmond Sun, April 12, 1917, p. 1; Latimer County News Democrat, April 13, 1917, p. 1; Lawton News, April 14, 1917, p. 2; Daily Ardmoreite, May 6, 1917, p. 1.

²Daily Oklahoman, April 6, 1917, p. 1; April 8, 1917, pp. 14-A, 15-A; April 11, 1917, p. 1; Edmond Sun, April 12, 1917, p. 1; April 19, 1917, p. 1; April 26, 1917, p. 1; The Oklahoma Daily, April 11, 1917, pp. 1, 2; April 12, 1917, p. 1; April 13, 1917, p. 1; April 14, 1917, p. 1; Dale interview, Aug. 23, 1956; Enid News, April 6, 1917, p. 1; Enid Eagle, April 11, 1917, p. 1; April 13, 1917, p. 1; April 14, 1917, p. 1.

state's militia regiment still at "half war strength" and the Tulsa World exclaimed, "Prod the Unwilling," and conscript "the weak-kneed." Many German-Americans, such as George Gensman at Enid and B. Paul Schwalbe at Oklahoma City, publicly proclaimed their loyalty. "I want it plainly understood," said Schwalbe, "that my sympathies are with the land of my adoption." At Norman another expressed the hope that "the kaiser would be dethroned." The Daily Transcript at Norman warned, "Watch Your Step!," stating that the "vigorously pro-Germans are being watched very closely." The arrest of suspected German agents such as Felix Rheinart at Enid and Charles Whiteschott at Ardmore heightened tension but, as the Daily Oklahoman observed on May 9, the "great company . . . of German-Americans . . . have discovered that liberty is the tie that binds." Others, however, like the Muskogee Times-Democrat, announced, "Pure Americanism, Or Beat It."¹

While the preponderant majority of Oklahomans viewed the war with profound reluctance and disquietude, only a few raised strenuous objections. A long train of events dating back to the oil transport and cotton market crises in 1914 had gradually conditioned them to regard hostilities as

¹Daily Oklahoman, April 9, 1917, p. 5 [Schwalbe's letter]; April 12, 1917, p. 6; April 16, 1917, p. 4; May 9, 1917, p. 6; April 7, 1917, p. 1; Wewoka Democrat, April 12, 1917, p. 4; Tulsa World, April 24, 1917, p. 4; Enid News, April 8, 1917, p. 1; April 10, 1917, p. 1; The Daily Transcript, April 7, 1917, p. 1; April 10, 1917, p. 2; Daily Ardmoreite, May 6, 1917, p. 1; May 7, 1917, p. 4; Muskogee Times-Democrat, May 15, 1917, p. 4.

inevitable. No one wanted war but the State Administration, the daily press, and the urban element felt that Germany had left them little alternative. Most of labor, agriculture, and the weekly press eventually acceded--but with extreme reluctance. Dissident groups and individuals incurred distrust, dislike, and even persecution. Actually, there was little choice. War had been declared; it must now be fought and won.

CHAPTER XII

OKLAHOMA FALLS IN LINE

Oklahomans, like most Americans, were almost totally oblivious of the realities of war in April of 1917, hence, quite unprepared to meet its exigencies judiciously.¹ Reactions varied sharply as factors of location, occupation, nationality, and religion intermingled to condition individual and group points of view. The major daily press and the urban areas displayed a consciousness of the possibility of war with the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare and the severing of diplomatic relations on February 3. The publishing of the Zimmermann Note on March 1 and the rash of

¹Particularly useful primary source accounts dealing with Oklahoma reactions after the United States became a belligerent as well as the various phases of the State's war effort appear in the following archival collections: the Robert L. Williams Papers, Oklahoma Council of Defense Files, and World War I Files in the Oklahoma Historical Society; the Duluth Stratton Brooks, Sam Williams, Beckham County Chapter of the American Red Cross, Claude C. Pickard, Thomas P. Gore, C. H. Hyde, John A. Simpson, C. B. Ames, Claude Weaver, and Chickasha Milling Co. Papers in the Division of Manuscripts, University of Oklahoma; and the J. B. A. Robertson Papers, Frank Phillips Collection, University of Oklahoma.

ship sinkings immediately thereafter convinced most of them--albeit reluctantly--that war could not be avoided. As the Tulsa World observed on March 2, it was "Time for Action."¹ Few, indeed, remained unconvinced as Congress met in special session on April 2. The degree to which the metropolitan press reflected the attitude of its constituents, of course, is not precisely determinable. Throughout much of the pre-declaration period it is evident that the daily press moved in the direction of war in advance of the general public. However, when Congress declared war on April 6 the majority of urban Oklahomans regarded the war as unescapable and supported it with steadily increasing zeal.

The reaction of the rural press and its constituents cannot be reduced to a single common denominator. Consistently less inclined toward active participation, the rural elements capitulated much more tardily and reluctantly. Indeed, an appreciable minority--the majority of the Socialists, I. W. W.'s, sharecroppers, and pacifist religious groups such as the Mennonites, Dunkers, and Quakers, in particular--never accepted the war and often refused to support it. In addition, the western "wheat belt" region never viewed the war with enthusiasm although only a portion of its Socialist and religious dissidents openly opposed the war effort. The National Guard communities, all of them except Clinton located

¹Tulsa World, March 2, 1917, p. 4.

in the eastern two-thirds of the state, were the first among the rural element to lend active support to the war. These communities had had their "rehearsal for war" in the 1916 Mexican border episode, and the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare along with the disclosure of the Zimmermann Note caused most of them to conclude that the war was "not only probable but inevitable."¹ Certainly the second call of the militia to federal service on April 1 and the President's war message the next day convinced all but the most reluctant.

These same events, however, prompted a minimum response in most of rural Oklahoma. While the actual declaration of war excited a number of eastern and central communities such as Poteau and Seminole to a fervent response, an equal number largely remained silent. In communities such as Poteau and Wewoka, the influence of highly capable and fervently pro-war editors like R. L. Kidd and Luther Harrison, respectively, played a major role in the formation of local opinion in support of American entry into the war. Both, in addition, were ardent and active Democrats. Editors of

¹Wewoka Democrat, March 1, 1917, p. 1; Antlers American, March 1, 1917, p. 1; Poteau News, April 5, 1917, p. 1; The Osage Journal, April 5, 1917, p. 4. Publications, such as the Elk City News-Democrat and the Cimarron News at Boise City, indicated the extreme reluctance of the west--except for the southwestern corner--to support the move to war. As the Medford Patriot Star and the Beggs Independent demonstrated, a scattering of smaller rural communities throughout the state evidenced a similar reluctance.

this caliber--a not too frequent breed among the weekly press--did not reflect public sentiment but rather formulated it. The Osage Journal at Pawhuska reflected the reluctance of the rural majority when it observed that the "west will support the war if necessary." In fact, the American war declaration and effort were not commonly supported by the masses until mid-summer when the patriotic activities of the Council of Defense and the Four-Minute Men moved into effective operation. However, universal support never occurred as the Green Corn Rebellion and other resistance to conscription and the opposition of the Socialists, I. W. W.'s, and other dissident minorities demonstrated.¹

Oklahoma's most prominent officials steered a course midway between that of the daily and the weekly press. While none of them agitated for war, certainly Governor Williams, Senator Owen, and Representative Ferris, each a recognized leader, consistently supported the policies of President Wilson, including the necessity of a declaration of war. McKeown, too, strongly supported the move to war from the outset, although his influence as a newly-elected Congressman was negligible. Hastings, McClintic, Thompson, and the

¹Ibid.; Smith, "Opposition to War Policies in Oklahoma," pp. 16-19, contended that war-induced trade curtailments, religious beliefs regarding war as an avoidable evil, and the attempts of radical labor elements such as the I. W. W. to extend their own socio-economic ideas during the period of wartime emergency were the principal sources of war opposition in Oklahoma.

Republican Morgan took a much more conservative and less vocal position on the war but viewed American entry, nonetheless, as unavoidable.

Thomas Chandler, the recently-elected Republican, and the veteran Democrat, Charles Carter, representing the extreme northeastern and southeastern districts, respectively, made no public expression of their views. Both, however, joined their colleagues in voting for the declaration of war. Since Morgan and Chandler represented the two northernmost Congressional districts, the entire body of Oklahoma's aggressive war leadership--including Governor Williams and the great majority of the state administration--came from the solidly Democratic central and southern portions of the state. This fact, however, implies no disloyalty or lack of cooperation on the part of the predominantly Republican northern segment, for political differences were largely submerged in all matters relating to the war effort.

Gore did not return to the Senate until April 11, seven days after Senate approval of the declaration of war. Certainly his near-fatal illness during the crucial January to April period deprived the opponents of war of one of their most vocal and able protagonists. Gore himself, in a subsequent speech, maintained that he would have voted against the war resolution, although he delimited two mitigating circumstances. In the speech, a logical and frank post mortem of his position, the Senator declared:

There are two circumstances peculiar to myself which must be kept in mind by those who would see things as I saw them. When the Senate voted to declare war I had been sick fourteen weeks. During five weeks I was unconscious. When I lost step the President's "Peace without victory" speech was ringing in my ears. When I came back the stage was set for war, the whole scene had changed but I had not changed with it. I was still under the spell of the late campaign. Sent west as a messenger of peace I had told the people from Colorado to the coast that a vote for Hughes was a vote for war; that a vote for Wilson was a vote for peace. . . .

No one can tell what would have happened if what did happen had not happened. But in the light of my campaign pledges I could not have voted to enter the war. But after we had entered I voted to declare war against Austria in order that our troops could fight on either front as strategy demanded. . . . While my own destiny was broken I am anxious for the sake of my memory and my children to make manifest the truth that I was never, in thought, word or deed either averse or indifferent to the destiny of my country . . . its security and happiness.

Monroe Billington, Gore's biographer, concurs in this view.

Observing that the Senator "could not have known positively how he might have voted under those changing conditions,"

Billington concludes that while "honest questions . . . can be raised about his stand, . . . the Senator was not

traitorous or even unpatriotic," even though he "often failed to grasp the reality of the war situation."¹

¹Cong. Record, 64 Cong., 2 Sess., Feb. 7, 1917, p. 2749; 65 Cong., 1 Sess., April 11, 1917, p. 613; Billington, "T. P. Gore," pp. 178-203; Gore speech, typewritten M. S., Gore Papers, Subject File, War Policy, 1917. Gore reiterated this reaction in 1936 and again in 1938. See Gore to editor, The Independent (Oklahoma City), March 14, 1917, reprinted in Cong. Record, 74 Cong., 2 Sess., March 26, 1936, pp. 4378-81; Gore Speech, 1936, typewritten M. S.; Gore to Mrs. J. F. Williams, April 12, 1938, Gore Papers, Subject Files, War Policy, 1917, and General Correspondence, respectively.

While the preponderant majority of Oklahomans viewed American entry into the war with profound reluctance and disquietude, the extent of overt opposition to conscription and the war effort in general was negligible. True, the syndicalist-inspired Green Corn Rebellion and other isolated instances of actual opposition to conscription and the I. W. W. episode at Tulsa received national publicity that greatly exaggerated the nature and extent of the incidents and caused the state acute embarrassment. Senator Gore casually informed Congress that there had been "some resistance" and asked that the "hapless protest" "be judged generously." Governor Williams assured the New York World: "Nothing serious in Oklahoma."¹

In reality, the "Green Corn" uprising was caused basically by agrarian discontent growing out of the evils inherent in the sharecropping system and did not constitute a bona fide draft rebellion. Bush dismisses the episode as "local and relatively unimportant"; Professors Dale and Wardell as "minor." Unquestionably most Oklahomans desired to be accounted loyal and generously contributed to the war effort, even if they had opposed entering the war. As Paul Smith concludes, "it was a matter of deep concern . . . that the state should not appear lacking in patriotism." The

¹Cong. Record, 65 Cong., 1 Sess., Aug. 6, 1917, p. 5835; Williams to the editor, New York World [telegram], Aug. 5, 1917, Williams Papers, No. 81965; McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History, pp. 330-32.

existence of dissident elements and ideologies, therefore, must be regarded as "more a sign of a healthy democracy than an indictment of treason."¹

Oklahoma was not in the forefront of the move to take America to war. Indeed, even at the time war was declared most Oklahomans would have opposed the fateful step if there had been any other honorable and feasible alternative. As a noted contemporary, Edward E. Dale, has observed, "Oklahoma neither led nor lagged" and by June of 1917 had become "very enthusiastic" and "supported the war with remarkable unanimity" despite having "started pretty slowly." As the war progressed, however, patriotism became a passion with most Oklahomans as it did with the majority of Americans. Unfortunate excesses, of course, inevitably occurred. Oklahoma had its share of "super-heated patriots" who, as Professor Dale recalls, "at times dealt sternly with those who were lukewarm in their sympathy for the conflict." Indeed, "Germans who had refused to buy war bonds or contribute to the national defense were "rounded up" and "put . . . in wire enclosures until they agreed to make some contributions."²

Oklahoma's leading public officials--and Governor Williams in particular--enthusiastically and vigorously

¹Bush, "Green Corn Rebellion," p. 1; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 331-32; Smith, "Opposition to War Policies in Oklahoma," p. 63.

²Dale interview, Aug. 24, 1956; Dale, personal letter, April 20, 1960; Dale and Wardell, History of Oklahoma, pp. 331-32.

supported the war effort. The Governor, whom Dale characterizes as "violently patriotic," "winked at . . . strong arm tactics" and refused to call the legislature into special session largely because he "wanted to run the show himself." Williams himself later declared:

I believed we could organize and cement the people of the state in such patriotic effort that it wouldn't be necessary to bring the legislature back and make appropriations in the millions as did . . . other states to meet the colossal contest. . . . Draft boards were immediately organized . . . [and] served without compensation except the clerks. . . . Every agency in the state supported the war--the press, the pulpit, . . . the bar . . . and the farmers. . . . So you can understand why Oklahoma ranked No. 1 in the first draft and No. 2 in the second.¹

Such reactions, of course, were typical on a nationwide basis and were not uniquely "Oklahoman." A world war was a totally new experience for the entire nation and most Oklahomans reacted with typical frontier-conditioned forthrightness. Oklahoma's wartime role and reactions were typical of its regional location. Both the South and the Midwest, basically rural and isolationist, viewed actual hostilities with far more reluctance than the industrial and trade-conscious East Coast or even the Great Lakes states.²

¹Ibid.; Williams, "Oklahoma's War Governor Remembers 1917," Daily Oklahoman, April 6, 1937, p. 10. Edwin C. McReynolds, also a contemporary, evaluated the Sooner war contribution as "creditable." Oklahoma Guide, p. 44.

²Among the numerous studies on regionalism in the U. S. the following are most pertinent in terms of isolationist sentiment: U. S. in General: Merrill Jensen (ed.), Regionalism in America (Madison, Wisc., 1952); Ralph H. Smuckler, "The Region of Isolationism," American Political Science Review, XLVII (June, 1953), pp. 386-401; Samuel

Public opinion studies bear out this regional diversity. Edwin Costrell found that "Maine wanted war in the spring of 1917--and wanted it fervently." A war referendum would have carried overwhelmingly. German resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1, 1917, crystallized the demand for war which first became evident with the Sussex sinking in March, 1916. Thirty per cent of Maine's citizens were of foreign birth or parentage; three-fourths being Canadians or English, one-tenth pro-German Irish, and two per cent German or Austro-Hungarian. Maine, says Costrell, was strongly pro-Ally, "slightly imperialistic," "hankered for a growth of national assertiveness," and in these feelings typified Atlantic seaboard sentiment. A Maryland study bears out the latter contention, reporting that in support of the war "this state was well to the fore from the very start" and "responded patriotically in every instance."¹

Lubell, "Who Votes Isolationist and Why," Harper's Magazine, CCII (April, 1951), pp. 29-36; H. Schuyler Foster, "How America Became Belligerent," American Journal of Sociology, XL (Jan., 1935), pp. 464-75; The South: Howard Odum, Southern Regions of the United States (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1936); Alexander De Conde, "The South and Isolationism," The Journal of Southern History, XXIV (Aug., 1958), pp. 332-46; Virginus Dabney, "The South Looks Abroad," Foreign Affairs, XIX (Oct., 1940), pp. 171-78; The West: Ray Allen Billington, "The Origins of Middle Western Isolationism," Political Science Quarterly, LX (March, 1945), pp. 44-64; William G. Carleton, "Isolationism and the Middle West," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXIII (Dec., 1946), pp. 377-90.

¹Edwin Costrell, How Maine Viewed the War, 1914-1917 ("University of Maine Studies," Second Series, No. 49; Orono, Me., 1940), pp. 1-2, 20-21, 39-40, 89-91; Maryland War Records Commission, Maryland in the World War, 1917-1919 (2 vols; Baltimore, 1933), I, p. 94.

Less fervently pro-war than the Atlantic Coast in early 1917, the Great Lakes area by April nonetheless regarded involvement as inevitable and supported the President's call for war. Here again the submarine cast the die. Cedric C. Cummins maintains that in Indiana "the people would never quite cease to view the European strife through the portholes of the 'Lusitania' and the 'Arabic'" and that "preparedness sentiment had risen sharply" thereafter. Except for the German and Socialist elements most Indianans supported the Allied position from the outset. The Columbia Evening Republican typified majority sentiment when it declared that hostilities would not be met "joyously and with a smile" but "with a deep feeling of responsibility, a feeling that if the test has come they must meet it as men."¹ Illinois had violence in the factory districts and along the waterfront, I. W. W.-inspired draft riots in Chicago, Mt. Vernon, and Rockford, and kept its 40,234 adult Germans under close surveillance. Church, educational, professional, and labor groups all adopted stirring resolutions of loyalty, and overzealous support of the war effort led to unfortunate excesses including the mob hanging of an innocent spy

¹Cedric C. Cummins, Indiana Public Opinion and the World War ("Indiana Historical Collections," Vol. XXVIII; Indianapolis, Ind., 1945), pp. 7-9, 72-74, 132, 246-47, 251 [quotes the Columbia Evening Republican].

suspect of German ancestry.¹

Upper Midwest and Oklahoma public opinion largely coincided. The onset of war in 1914 "shocked and horrified most Minnesotans" but no cry for American intervention resulted. "War is a great illusion," asserted the Minneapolis Journal in 1914, "the people . . . do not believe in war." "It is a hell's broth, all of it; . . . a betrayal of civilization," echoed the Duluth Herald. Labor, in particular, opposed war involvement "except in case of dire extremity." The three largest of the numerous peace societies enrolled over 100,000 members and all ten of the state's representatives and Senator Moses Clapp supported the Gore Resolution or some similar warning. Full-scale submarine warfare in early 1917 drove many from the peace societies to the Loyalty Leagues, and numerous resolutions pledged support to Wilson, war notwithstanding. However, "thousands" gathered in Minneapolis where prominent speakers declared that "'capital was dictating war for its own selfish ends and that labor was being sacrificed on the altars of greed and avarice.'" Theodore C. Blegan concludes: "Probably most Minnesotans were against the war, whether their sympathies were with the Allies or the

¹Marguerite E. Jenison (ed.), The War-Time Organization of Illinois, pp. 6-7, 70-74; Jenison (ed.), War Documents and Addresses, pp. 20-30, 42-60, 81-82, 250-56. Vols. V and VI, Illinois in the War series (Springfield, Ill., 1923).

Germans."¹ Similarly, Franklin Holbrook and Livia Appel found a "really disquieting" degree of "pacifist sentiment" and "disaffection" in a "stubborn minority" comprised largely of German, labor, and Socialist elements. Four Congressmen voted against the war declaration. However, once war was declared, all but the most radical joined the "great wave of patriotic emotion" that "swept over" the state.²

In rural and isolationist North Dakota almost the entire populace opposed both preparedness and the declaration of war in 1917. Many never changed their attitude even though they withheld criticism and loyally contributed to the war effort. Robert P. Wilkins explains this unique reaction:

Deeply rooted ideological distrust of the financial and industrial capitalist classes by the German and Norwegian elements, . . . which was greatly intensified by the exploitation of the North Dakota producers [especially wheat], may be said chiefly to account for the persistent opposition to the policies that appeared to lead to war, and to the actual involvement of the United States.

Almost three-fourths of all rural North Dakotans were of foreign birth or parentage and nearly one-half were either

¹Theodore C. Blegen, Building Minnesota (Boston, 1938), pp. 424-26. Minneapolis Journal, Aug. 12, 1914, p. 4; Sept. 13, 1914, p. 2; Duluth Herald, Sept. 2, 1914, p. 8.

²Franklin F. Holbrook and Livia Appel, Minnesota in the War With Germany (2 vols.; St. Paul, Minn., 1928-32), II, pp. 52-59. Chaps. I, "Foreshadowings of Conflict," pp. 1-31; and II, "The Declaration of War," pp. 32-66 in Vol. I; and Chap. III, "The Fight for Public Opinion," pp. 64-88, in Vol. II provide a well-documented and quite objective and detailed account of Minnesota reactions to the war and the question of American entry.

Norwegian or German. While solidly Republican, Progressive, and Socialist ideologies flourished. Incidents such as the Lusitania torpedoing and the Zimmermann Note each caused a "burst of resentment" but outrage soon dissipated and almost no one called for war. War is "needless and foolish . . . and a disgrace to the civilized world" declaimed the Grand Forks Daily Herald in 1915. "We are Americans first" asserted the Bismarck Daily Tribune as it assailed the "foolish" propaganda of both Britain and Germany. Herbert E. Gaston concluded that "if the North Dakota vote had been polled on the subject of war in April of 1917, it would have gone against war. No one who observed conditions and sentiments could honestly say otherwise."¹

Like so many other states, unrestricted submarine warfare first led Missourians seriously to consider resort to war and the Zimmermann Note further "opened their eyes." The press favored the Allied cause and Wilsonian policy from the outset and in the spring of 1917 almost unanimously called for war. John C. Crighton maintains that "Missourians with a high degree of unanimity concluded that the maintenance of American rights and the preservation of a world balance of

¹Robert P. Wilkins, "North Dakota and the European War, 1914-1917: A Study in Public Opinion" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, West Virginia University, 1954), pp. v, 2-3, 8-9, 14, 284, 309, 324, 334; Grand Forks Daily Herald, Nov. 24, 1915, p. 10; Bismarck Daily Tribune, April 18, 1915, p. 4; Herbert E. Gaston, The Nonpartisan League (New York, 1920), p. 175.

power favorable to the United States were more important than the safe-guarding of peace." On the other hand, a highly vocal German and Irish minority existed and Senator William J. Stone and four of the state's sixteen Congressmen voted against the declaration of war.¹

While C. Hartley Gratton claimed that the Far West remained "utterly indifferent" to the war until the United States became a belligerent, the more recent studies of Emlyn D. Jones show that the Pacific Coast "was not an isolated section dragged unwillingly into the war by a frenzied East and a distraught President." Instead, the invasion of Belgium "came as a terrific shock" and the sinking of the Lusitania "caused a serious outburst of feeling." Jones concludes that "the Pacific Coast was willing to go to war with Germany at any time after the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare" and that the Zimmermann Note and other German intrigues, along with "fear of a militaristic and victorious Germany, further solidified this feeling." Indeed, fifteen of the area's twenty dailies opposed "backing down" from the "Sussex Pledge" and only two favored peace on Germany's terms. The Los Angeles Times consigned a California senator "to Germany or Manchuria or Patagonia or hell or some other summer resort" for opposing Wilson's

¹John C. Crighton, Missouri and the World War, 1915-1917: A Study in Public Opinion (The University of Missouri Studies," Vol. XXI, No. 3; Columbia, Mo., 1947), pp. 179, 185-87.

war policies. Jones concludes that "the Pacific Coast was willing to go to war with Germany at any time after the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare."¹ Oklahoma's reactions, then, were not an anomaly. Only on the Atlantic Coast did the pattern basically differ.

What did the people of Oklahoma consider to be the primary cause precipitating America's entry into the war? The evidence, in retrospect, appears conclusive that for Oklahoma, as for every other state examined except possibly North Dakota, the Unterseeboot, the German submarine, ranked far and above all other causes as the major precipitant. There was, of course, a vast complex of both direct and indirect causes and conditions that eventually shaped Oklahoma opinion on the fateful question, shall America enter the war in 1917. A new state in a new century and a part of the last great western frontier, Oklahoma's unique position in 1914 and 1917 embraced complex and significant geographical, historical, political, economic, cultural, racial, and nationality factors which strongly conditioned Sooner attitudes and reactions toward every war development.

The rapidly expanding population--1,657,155 in 1910--was almost exclusively native-American and the minute

¹C. Hartley Gratton, Why We Fought (New York, 1929), p. 39; Emlyn D. Jones, "Pacific Coast Press Opinion and the Break with Germany, 1917" (unpublished Master's thesis, Leland Stanford Junior University, 1942), pp. 7, 36, 47-48, 102, 106; Jones, personal letters, Oct. 2 and 15, 1959; Los Angeles Times, Feb. 8, 1917, Sec. 2, p. 4.

8.1 per cent of those of foreign birth or parentage was largely widely dispersed and well assimilated. While one-half of the foreign-born element stemmed from the Central Powers' nations, most of them were consistently loyal, and there was no organized effort to enlist support for the German cause. The preponderant majority of the total population inclined toward the Allied cause from the outset. Although the leading state in Indian population, Oklahoma's 74,825 Indians represented only one-twentieth of the Sooner population total. One-twelfth--137,612--of the inhabitants were Negroes but their influence and status was negligible whereas the Indian minority, particularly the Five Civilized Tribes, figured prominently. Two-thirds of the people were of Southern origins but North-South differences were not acute and had no bearing on war-related reactions since the great majority in both instances had originated in rural-isolationist areas. Religious and moral principles played a vital role even though only one-fourth of all Oklahomans claimed Church membership. Significantly, with the exception of the 1.3 per cent of Quakers and Mennonites, the church bodies represented readily accepted and supported American entry in World War I. Above all else the preponderance of the rural element--four-fifths of the total population--characterized the Sooner point of view.

While the Democrats consistently dominated the political scene, both the Republicans and the Socialists wielded

considerable influence. From the Congressional delegation on down through the State Administration only one man, the veteran Republican Congressman Dick T. Morgan, was not a Democrat in the period from 1915 through 1917. Socialism, a Populist-influenced rural protest movement in Oklahoma, devoted itself almost exclusively to the ills of agriculture and the tenant farmer and state- and local-level reforms rather than doctrinaire considerations. Steadily increasing in strength and membership after 1900, the election of 1914 proved the highwater mark of Sooner Socialism as they polled over 52,000 votes and elected five state representatives and one senator. The inexorable opposition of the Socialists to war, which ultimately emasculated the party, did not become a major issue in the 1914 campaign. Actually, this election provided Oklahoma's wartime Administration with irascible and violently patriotic Governor Robert L. Williams the dominant personality.

Economic factors subtly conditioned Oklahomans toward acceptance of war but here again the submarine was the determining factor. Each seeking the other's economic strangulation, both Germany and England grossly violated America's neutral rights and Oklahoma's lucrative trade in cotton, oil, grain, and horses suffered heavy losses via arbitrary trade restrictions and actual destruction. The fact that the percentage of gain tremendously exceeded increasing losses did not ameliorate Sooner resentment against

either nation. Indeed, with the cotton and oil gluts in 1914 as major irritants, the British received the greater opprobrium until the Germans unleashed the submarine. This turned the balance, for Allied infractions involved only property while the submarine destroyed lives. Trade rights and profits, per se, did not convince many Oklahomans of the inevitability of war but the intrusion of the submarine did.

Neither the onset of war nor the rape of Belgium caused either the Sooner press or general public to demand American intervention or even moderate preparedness in 1914. Peace, anti-preparedness sentiments, and strict neutrality prevailed. While such major catastrophies as the sinking of the Lusitania and the Arabic and the execution of Edith Cavell seriously disturbed the equanimity of the Oklahoma press and public opinion in 1915, few even suggested the possibility of war. A breach did occur between the rural and urban elements as the Muskogee Phoenix, the Republican Tulsa World, and finally the Daily Oklahoman aggressively embraced the cause of preparedness. Labor, agriculture, and the rural press remained staunchly opposed. Peace and not-so-strict neutrality still prevailed in Oklahoma as 1915 waned but preparedness had gained influential converts.

Actually, 1916 rather than 1917 was the year of decision, both for Oklahoma and the Nation. The Gore-McLemore Resolutions widened the rural-urban breach and

injected the element of patriotism into the preparedness controversy. Labor, agriculture, and the rural press continued to oppose preparedness and to support neutrality and its chief Sooner advocate, Gore. A few, like the Oklahoma Federationist, supported such measures openly; the majority through a significant silence. Loyalty to country, to President, and to party had become major factors. The sinking of the Sussex won new adherents for preparedness and helped to secure the reluctant passage of major preparedness legislation. However, the basic pro- and anti-preparedness alignment in Oklahoma did not change materially. Even the now military-minded Daily Oklahoman branded proposed heavy army increases as being "not preparedness but militarism." Wilson's re-election on the slogan, "he kept us out of war," brought him significant support from all four political parties in Oklahoma and, along with Congressman Murray's defeat largely because of advocacy of preparedness, dramatized the Sooner passion for peace. However peace advocates had become less optimistic--and much less vocal.

Oklahomans were never more united and unanimous on an issue involving war and peace than in the Mexican Border episode in 1916. Indeed, the border vigil aroused the rural areas for the first time in any major way. Even the highly pacifist and non-interventionist Latimer County News-Democrat insisted that our God-given "duty to . . . eternally wasted and plundered" Mexico was to "go over and possess it" so that

under the aegis of American civilization it might "blossom as a rose."¹ Certainly the march to Mexico with its regional impact caused Sooners to react much more strongly when the Zimmermann Note came to light and in truth represented a salutary rehearsal for war. Peace still uneasily prevailed in Oklahoma at the close of 1916, but actual neutrality had become largely a fiction and preparedness, whether desired or not, a fact.

The daily press and a large number of urban Oklahomans reluctantly but indisputably regarded the war as inevitable with the German resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1, 1917, and the severing of diplomatic relations two days later. To them, like the historian Thomas A. Bailey, "the staggering announcement . . . was equivalent to a declaration of war."² The publishing of the Zimmermann Note a month later caused a tremendous nationwide wave of resentment which Oklahomans shared to a lesser degree than many other states. Here, as elsewhere, the shocking disclosure served to convince the great majority of the disunited elements in the nation of Germany's grim determination and the nearness of war and to facilitate national unity. Wilson's war message to Congress on April 2 and

¹Latimer County News-Democrat, March 17, 1916, p. 4.

²Thomas A. Bailey, Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace (New York, 1944), p. 5. See also pp. 6-7, 10-11, 14.

Congressional approval of armed hostilities four days thereafter convinced most of the remaining hesitant and disapproving urbanites and a considerable portion of the rural and labor elements that participation could not be avoided.

Rural reluctance died hard. A minute element of the rural press, including the smaller dailies, first expressed an initial excited reaction when the Lusitania was torpedoed in 1915 and the choler increased slightly with each succeeding crisis. However, the disquietude immediately receded in every instance except the Mexican border episode, and comment reverted to the pacifist-neutrality pattern and concern for local affairs. This trend continued until the rapidly-transpiring train of events following the announcement of unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1, 1917, forced everyone to face up to cold reality but even then there were some who resisted the inevitable. Even the metropolitan press had reacted similarly in 1914 and 1915. The factor of national interest and fear of German control of the Atlantic sea lanes did not overly perturb Oklahomans. A few large dailies occasionally raised the issue but the majority placed reliance on the factor of distance and the superiority of the British fleet. Indeed, the Japanese threat on the Pacific Coast caused greater concern. The interrelated issue of trade losses irked dollar-conscious Oklahomans but neither the principles nor the profits involved, they felt, justified war.

Once the cold reality of declared war impinged itself upon the consciousness of the Oklahoma public, all but the most radical dissidents, both individuals and groups, eventually capitulated. In the final analysis, there was no other logical alternative. Patriotism, the press, public opinion, indeed, national integrity, precluded no other course once the war had been declared. Oklahoma had no "war hawks" and the preponderant majority of its citizens accepted the war with obvious reluctance. However, there seemed little choice. Certainly, as Bailey so aptly observed, "in a very real sense, America's war declaration bore the well-known trademark, 'Made in Germany.'" However, it must also be admitted that "a more even-handed American neutrality might have averted the clash," and "with the wisdom of hindsight, one can see . . . several ways by which America could have avoided the all-out submarine challenge."¹

The Oklahoma rank and file were not fervently pro-war on April 6, 1917, but they accepted it because they saw no other alternative. Oklahoma reactions bear out the conclusion reached by H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite that "the American people certainly did not want war, but a vast majority was willing to accept it as something that had to be fought and won." Many national and state authorities and contemporaries support this view. Bailey concluded that "the

¹Bailey, A Diplomatic History, pp. 593-95.

United States accepted the gage of war in 1917 without overwhelming enthusiasm," and certainly in the Sooner state, as in most of the Middle West, "influential groups of people were apathetic if not actually hostile to fighting." Link reached the same conclusions, maintaining that "even as late as April 1, 1917, the great majority of people were still firmly for peace." Oscar Ameringer, the Oklahoma Socialist, advanced the same opinion.¹

As the Muskogee Times-Democrat observed on April 9, "We're All in It," declaring further that "the martial resources of a nation are nowadays dependent upon all the individuals of a nation." The Daily Oklahoman aptly epitomized the majority point of view, both in Oklahoma and the nation, in an April 7 editorial entitled, "America and Destiny." The Oklahoman gravely observed:

Congress has declared a state of war exists with Germany . . . and, in consequence, this nation steps out of its traditional isolation into the shock and crash called Europe. The decision, however, was inevitable. America must shoulder its burden of civilization. . . . An old order has passed, a new order has come. . . . Meanwhile a bloody road stretches just ahead of us. We shall follow it in honor, valor and unselfishness. America is ready for her destiny.²

¹Bailey, Wilson and the Lost Peace, p. 15; Peterson and Fite, Opponents of War, pp. 10-11; Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 275; Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken, pp. 353-54.

²Muskogee Times-Democrat, April 9, 1917, p. 4; Daily Oklahoman, April 7, 1917, p. 6. See also Peterson, Propaganda for War, pp. 322-25.

Oklahomans concluded that "in the final analysis America fought because she was attacked--the war was 'thrust' upon her." Hence, the rank and file of Oklahoma citizens "fell in line" and supported every phase of the war endeavor. As Arthur S. Link observed, "a new epoch in the history of the United States had begun," and while Oklahomans "neither led nor lagged," they comported themselves with honor and credit.¹ Like the rest of the pacifist and isolationist Midwest and substantial sections of the South and Southwest, Oklahoma joined the nationwide trek down the road to war.

¹Bailey, A Diplomatic History, p. 595; Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, p. 282; Dale interview, Aug. 23, 1956.

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