

AMERICAN DECADES

1910-1919



EDITED BY
VINCENT TOMPKINS

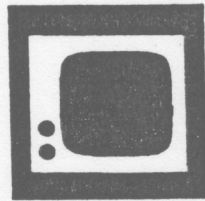
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MEDIA



by NANCY E. BERNHARD

CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGY
344

OVERVIEW
349

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

The American Newspaper	350
The Antiwar Press	351
<i>The American Newsreels during World War I</i>	351
Censorship at the Front	352
<i>Floyd Gibbons Aboard the United States</i>	353
Laconia	353
<i>"La Fayette, We Are Here!"</i>	354
The Creel Committee	354
<i>The False Armistice</i>	355
<i>The Los Angeles Times Explosion</i>	356
The First American	

Tabloid	356
The Hindenburg Confession	357
<i>The Lost Battalion</i>	357
The Most Hated Man in America	358
<i>The Dawn of Modern Advertising</i>	359
The New Republic	359
<i>True Story</i>	360
A New World of Books	360
The Radio Music Box	361
<i>President Hughes?</i>	362
The "Smart Magazines"	362
Stars and Stripes	363
The Titanic and the Radio Act of 1912	365
<i>A Warning for Lusitania</i>	365
<i>Passengers</i>	365
HEADLINE MAKERS	
Edna Woolman Chase and Condé Nast	367

Frank I. Cobb	368
Richard Harding Davis	369
Rheta Childe Dorr	369
George Herriman	370
John Reed	371
Carr Van Anda	372
Oswald Garrison Villard	373

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS
374

AWARDS
375

DEATHS
376

PUBLICATIONS
378

Sidebars and tables are listed in italics.

OVERVIEW

Business and Taste. In the second decade of the twentieth century, newspaper and magazine publishing decisively left behind the era of personal journalism and became big business. The 1910s witnessed the birth of the tabloid newspaper and the confessional magazine, two hallmarks of twentieth-century popular culture. These formats targeted the growing constituency of urban working people and reflected a basic change in social codes and attitudes. The era of the consumer was dawning: in order to lure the largest possible number of readers and advertisers, publishers developed editorial formulas to shock and titillate. While pandering to questionable tastes was nothing new, the widespread acceptance of such material as normal and suitable by great numbers of people was. Popular tastes were changing. Respectability was no longer the most crucial measure of culture. Instead, people asked: Is it new? Is it exciting? Does it sell?

The End of Muckraking. The spirit of reform that had dominated journalism during the first decade of the century began to ebb during the second with little fanfare. People tired of hearing about the abuses of big business and the corruption of government. Publishers, themselves often tied to the fortunes of such elites, had little reason, in the absence of reader interest, to keep the muckraking movement alive. Advertisers began to spend more money on slick and splashy illustrations, and they needed fashionable magazines to carry them. The "Smart Magazines" — *The Smart Set*, *Vanity Fair*, a revamped *Vogue* — focused on the fast, clever, insouciant lifestyles of the urban rich. What Frederick Lewis Allen later called the "Ballyhoo Years" of the 1920s was foretold by this trend in mass circulation magazines.

The Birth of Modern War Journalism. The dominant event of the decade was World War I. Journalism grew and matured in response to the demands of reporting a mammoth and horrifying spectacle and to accommodate new technologies and techniques in the dissemination of information. Hundreds of American correspondents covered the war in Europe even before the United States entered the fray in 1917. The principles of a free press were tested as never before. Each belligerent nation tried its best to control the flow of information about its political goals and military failures and successes. The Ameri-

can public undoubtedly received more and better war news than the people of any other country, whether ally or enemy. But that is not to say it received full or frank information at all times: for the first time the U.S. government at home and the military in the field engaged in systematic censorship and propaganda.

At Home. President Woodrow Wilson created the Committee on Public Information (CPI) to manage the distribution of information to the public. Headed by temperamental newspaperman George Creel, the CPI gained a notorious reputation among defenders of the free press. Not only did it limit and slant the information it distributed, the CPI engaged in outright propaganda, whipping the American people into an anti-German frenzy. While it asked for voluntary cooperation from the press and the motion picture industry rather than enforcing its censorship codes, the CPI managed information more effectively than many official censors. It was aided in the spirit of suppression by two pieces of legislation, the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918. Under these laws it became a crime to oppose U.S. entry or participation in the war. Many German American and socialist papers were shut down or had their mailing privileges revoked by the government because of their political views. Between 1914 and 1917 — when the United States had not yet entered the war — a range of opinion was at least tolerated by the government and by mainstream public opinion. After 1917 intolerance and enforced patriotism took over, and the media had little choice but to cooperate.

At the Front. The military enforced a clear code of censorship among the reporters covering the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in Europe, but the correspondents chafed under these restrictions. At least as independent-minded and resourceful as any other reporters, the war correspondents often found ways to evade military discipline. Required to wear military uniforms and armbands with a *C* for correspondent, they were decidedly more ruffled than the average soldier. The number of accredited correspondents rose above five hundred, with more than fifty covering the AEF's expeditions on the Western Front. While Gen. John J. "Black Jack" Pershing's censor, a former wire-service reporter

named Frederick Palmer, tried to keep the correspondents in a group monitored by a press officer, they often evaded such hand-holding and covered the fighting their own way. Still, military information was restricted to that which had been released by official communiqués, and much brilliant reporting was trashed by the censor.

New Technologies. The telegraph made transatlantic reporting of war news far speedier than it had ever been before. Carr Van Anda, the legendary managing editor of *The New York Times*, encouraged his war correspondents to use the technology even at premium rates to ensure that the *Times* would print a complete and authoritative account of the military and diplomatic news. The wireless telegraph, or radio, also figured prominently in the news and in its dissemination. Most notably, the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912 showed both the lifesaving possibilities of the technology and the need for regulation of its use. During the war the navy took over the entire radio spectrum, and its scientific innovations, spurred by necessity,

led to a flourishing of commercial broadcasting after the armistice.

On the Verge of the Modern. The 1910s were a transitional decade for the American media. Moving from the nineteenth century's preoccupation with political power and industrial growth, the public's attention seemed to shift to matters of personal style and popular culture. A thirst for the new came in tandem with skepticism about any given proposition. New technologies promised to transform media thoroughly in the coming decades, even as the experience with wartime propaganda revealed how easily both professional journalists and the public could be manipulated. An ironic mood, so prevalent in the fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and John Dos Passos, found ample expression as well among journalists such as H. L. Mencken, who could write after the war that the United States was "essentially a commonwealth of third-rate men" and get away with it. The modern sensibility was widely felt in the media.

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

Muckraking Comes Home. Between 1903 and 1910 muckraking magazines had exposed corruption in American government and business with great fervor and to great acclaim. The magazine publisher Robert J. Collier began to wonder why the newspapers in American cities had not unearthed those stories. He asked Will Irwin, a veteran reporter for the *New York Sun* and former *McClure's* magazine editor, to investigate the American newspaper industry. Irwin spent a year traveling around the country interviewing publishers, editors, reporters, and readers. He found that while some newspapers held to strict professional codes of independence and courage, others shaped their news coverage to the tastes and beliefs of their advertisers or their owners. His fourteen-part series, published in 1911 in *Collier's* as "The American Newspaper," was far more than an exposé; it was a major history of American journalism.

A Varied Industry. Observing that the power of the press had clearly shifted from owners to editors in the twentieth century, Irwin looked at how editors selected the news. There was no standard method of selection or even a shared sense of the role of the newspaper in society. Oswald Garrison Villard, editor of the *New York*

Evening Post and *The Nation*, felt a moral obligation to improve the world. Adolph S. Ochs and Carr Van Anda of *The New York Times* aspired to produce a newspaper of superior merit, one that could claim to report the news fairly and objectively. Other publishers admitted more mercenary, profit-oriented goals. Business-oriented editors concerned themselves with what the public wanted, while professionally oriented editors thought about what the public needed.

The Mixed Legacy of the Yellow Press. Despite its reputation for fouling the waters of public discourse, Irwin lauded the sensationalistic yellow journalism of the late nineteenth century for improving the quality of writing in journalism and for attracting more-educated practitioners. He concluded that this type of publishing was on the decline, in part because its chief embodiment, William Randolph Hearst, had used his newspapers to further his own political ambitions, and people had soured on him. Irwin also observed that most people did not long remain readers of the yellow papers: immigrants learned English; youngsters grew up; women became more discriminating; and they all moved on to other kinds of papers after about six years.

The Nation

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Masthead from the 7 February 1918 issue of the *Nation*, the first one edited by Oswald Garrison Villard

A Growing Professionalism. Irwin also noted an emerging code of professional ethics for journalists, now being cultivated in new departments and schools of journalism in American colleges and universities. Scrupulous reporters gained consent from the people they wrote about and never printed information learned in social settings. The newspaper should be a watchdog, this new breed of journalist believed, but it should also be a “gentleman.” Irwin singled out the influence of big business as the greatest threat to the industry’s integrity, both through the power of advertisers to influence the news and by the association of publishers and editors with prominent members of their communities. The antidote was a strong sense of professionalism among reporters, an awareness of their responsibility to the American people to keep the press the freest in the world, the guardian of liberty.

Sources:

Marion Marzolf, *Civilizing Voices: American Press Criticism, 1880-1950* (New York: Longman, 1991);

Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).

THE ANTIWAR PRESS

A Variety of Resisters. Though the “war to end all wars” and the “war to make the world safe for democracy” — were the official slogans of the war effort, not everyone in the United States believed that World War I would accomplish these noble goals. Isolationists believed that the United States had no business meddling in the problems of Europe. Religious pacifists opposed any war on moral grounds. Black Americans found it hypocritical to fight for a cause abroad that served them badly at home. Immigrants from Germany and Austria were torn between support for their ancestral

THE AMERICAN NEWSREEL DURING WORLD WAR I

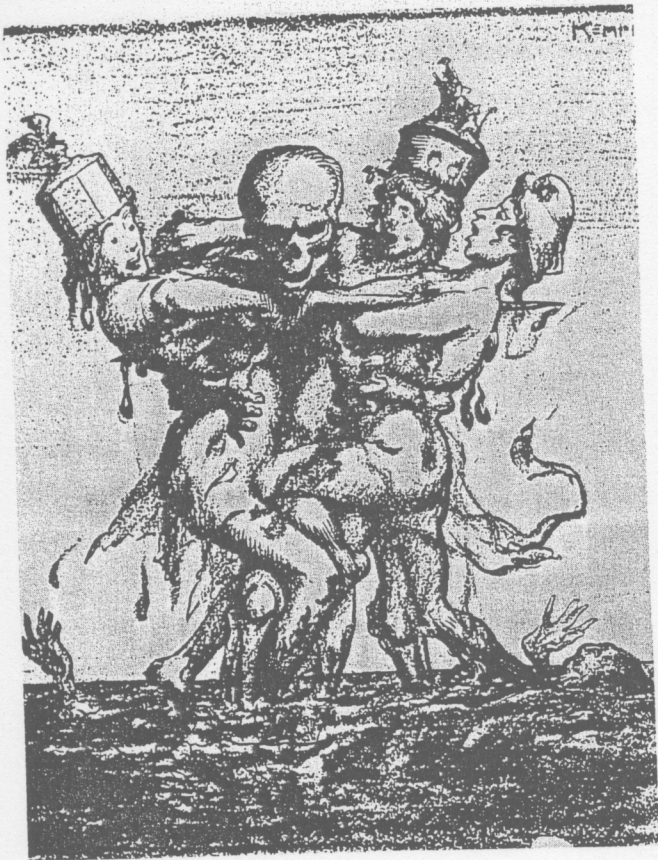
The American newsreel industry was in its infancy when World War I began in Europe, but each belligerent government forbade cameras on its battlefields. Enemy troops often mistook large camera tripods and long lenses for newfangled weapons, and made them particular targets. Some British officers in Belgium even gave orders to shoot anyone with a camera. Given the doubled risks of trying to get combat footage, plus the common practice by theater owners of excising graphic war images to protect the fragile sensibilities of their customers, few newsreel photographers attempted to film real battles. Instead, they staged elaborate mock fights, complete with bayonets that sprung backwards and exploding water bottles. Still, many cameramen lost their lives. One Frenchman was shot on his inaugural outing with a new hand-held Aeroscope camera. The camera, with its efficient stabilization mechanism, went on recording the Battle of Verdun after its operator was dead.

Once the United States entered the war, a far more complete film record began to accumulate due to the large and well-organized Army Signal Corps. Censorship all but eradicated civilian newsreel efforts in Europe, and the little film movie audiences saw was straight propaganda filtered by the Committee on Public Information. The Signal Corps provided a training ground for an entire generation of newsreel cameramen, and Hollywood cinematographers and directors.

Source: Raymond Fielding, *The American Newsreel, 1911-1917* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972).

homes and loyalty to their new one. Socialists believed the war only furthered imperial and capitalistic ambitions. The struggles of all of these groups found expression in their newspapers and magazines. For their opposition to the war, some suffered persecution and prosecution under the 1917 Espionage Act and the 1918 Sedition Act.

The Black Press. Most black newspapers and periodicals met U.S. entry into the war with mixed responses. Why, some editors asked, given all the discrimination and violence blacks confronted at home simply because of their race, should they go thousands of miles away to defend democracy? One Virginia weekly was suppressed for publishing such views. Other black journalists realized that opposing the war could do irreparable harm to black causes at home. The large and influential black papers, led by the *Chicago Defender*, focused on the issue



"Come on in, America, the Blood's Fine," a cartoon by R. Kempf that appeared in *The Masses*, June 1917

of segregation and discrimination within the military and urged the training of black officers. Even when presented in a prowar context, however, these criticisms were viewed by the wider white society as unpatriotic. The federal government's Committee on Public Information (CPI) claimed that assertions of discrimination in the armed services were lies disseminated by German agents infiltrating the black community.

Divided Loyalties. While the United States remained officially neutral between 1914 and early 1917, the German-language American press rejoiced in German victories. As the United States moved closer to the Allied camp and finally declared war in 1917, many editors said nothing rather than criticize their country. Most supported the United States as the present and future home of their children. The anti-German hysteria that swept the country turned on these newspapers, and editors were required to file translations of all the stories they published related to the government and the war effort.

Socialists Silenced. Max Eastman, editor of *The Masses*, wrote in 1917, "It is not a war for democracy." Pointing to the ties between prominent industrialists and bankers in the United States and England, socialists contended that the war was being fought to protect investments. Three major socialist publications, *The Masses*, *Appeal to*

Reason, and Victor Berger's *Milwaukee Leader*, were silenced by the government. Many papers voiced the notion that no matter which side won, workers would lose.

Suppression. All sorts of organizations sprang up to enforce "correct" thinking about the war. The American Defense League, the American Protective League, the Sedition Slammers, and the Terrible Threateners formed patrols that roamed the streets looking for people espousing antiwar views. *The New York Times* urged readers to report anything suspicious to the authorities. (The brother of *Times* publisher Adolph S. Ochs, whose family came from Germany, legally changed his name to Oakes to Anglicize it.) But the government was the official censor. Under the Espionage and Sedition Acts, the postmaster general had the right to confiscate any material violating the acts. In the first six months after the passage of the Sedition Act, more than 1,000 people were arrested, and 130 were imprisoned under its provisions. More than eighty newspapers and periodicals were suppressed for antiwar articles, including most of the major socialist papers and many foreign-language papers. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote in defense of a raid on a bookstore, "When a nation is at war many things that may be said in peace are of such a hindrance to its efforts that their utterance will not be endured." The United States failed to protect unequivocally the civil liberties of its citizens during wartime.

Sources:

- Lauren Kessler, *The Dissident Press: Alternative Journalism in American History* (Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage, 1984);
- H. C. Peterson and Gilbert Fite, *Opponents of War, 1917-1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968).

CENSORSHIP AT THE FRONT

Few Choices. In the years when the United States remained officially neutral, the British, French, German, and Austrian governments rarely allowed their own reporters, let alone those representing neutral countries, to travel with their armies. It was difficult for writers to get access to the front or to get their stories past the official censors. Ernest Hemingway wrote, "The last war, during the years of 1915, 1916, 1917 was the most colossal, murderous, mismanaged butchery that has ever taken place on earth. Any writer who said otherwise lied. So the writers either wrote propaganda, shut up, or fought."

Winners Are More Accommodating. The European belligerents worked hard to seduce reporters into writing favorable stories and to prevent them from writing unfavorable ones. At first the German army prevailed on the Western Front; while it did it allowed neutral reporters to observe battles and let them write what they wanted. The Austrians provided each correspondent with a guide, free wine and cigarettes, and elaborate meals, all served with promises of free trips to the front, but this access never materialized. On the Eastern Front the Russians provided two railway cars to show reporters the lines in



Floyd Gibbons of the *Chicago Tribune*, one of a group of journalists who fought the efforts of the chief American wartime censor, Frederick Palmer

Galicia, but the battle turned against them, and the cars never reached the action. The French said simply that any correspondent found near the front would be executed as a spy. And the British stipulated that neutrals covering their armies would be considered spies and shot if they subsequently covered the Germans. The Germans also followed this policy, so American reporters tended to cover one side or the other.

"Gentlemen of the Press." Once the United States entered the war, each American reporter, to receive accreditation, had to appear before the secretary of war and swear to report the truth but also to refrain from disclosing facts that might aid the enemy. He then had to write (with a pen, not a typewriter) an account of his life, work, experience, character, and health and an itinerary and set of plans for his European trip. His paper had to pay \$1,000 to the army to cover equipment and offer a \$10,000 bond to promise that he would act as a "gentleman of the press." Correspondents overseas were also obligated to wear green armbands with the letter *C* in red.

FLOYD GIBBONS ABOARD THE UNITED STATES LACONIA

In early 1917, just before the United States entered the European war, twenty-nine-year-old Floyd Gibbons, a correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune* who had already covered the Mexican revolution, was assigned by the paper to the European theater. Instead of booking passage on a neutral ship, he looked for one that was likely to get torpedoed. He sailed from New York on 17 February 1917 on the Cunard liner the *Laconia*, with a special set of supplies provided by the *Tribune*. It included a life preserver, flasks of brandy and water, and multiple flashlights.

On 25 February a German submarine torpedoed the *Laconia*, and it sank. Only thirteen of the three hundred people aboard were lost, and the survivors were rescued after six hours on open water. The next day, just as President Wilson was telling Congress that the Germans had not yet committed an overt act of war on the high seas, the *Tribune* carried Gibbons's first-person account, and the country edged closer to war. A wound he incurred later in the war on the Western front required Gibbons to wear an eye patch, and his image as a fearless, heroic war correspondent became indelible.

Source: John Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence: The Great Reporters and Their Times*, second edition (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

Major Palmer. Frederick Palmer had been the only American correspondent accredited to the British army before U.S. entry into the war. He had written for the Associated Press and the United Press. When his personal friend Gen. John J. "Black Jack" Pershing was made commander in chief of the U.S. forces, Palmer turned down \$40,000 a year (then an astronomical sum) to cover the American forces for the *New York Herald* and its syndicate in order to become the chief American censor. Palmer had already covered five wars and was impressed with the British army's control of its press. He did not expect his American colleagues to put up a big fight, but this assumption was gravely mistaken. His spare and sporadic releases of information did not satisfy the correspondents. Among this group were several legends: Floyd Gibbons of the *Chicago Tribune*; Will Irwin and Heywood Broun of the *New York Tribune*; Herbert Bayard Swope of the *New York World*; Wythe Williams and Jimmy James of *The New York Times*; Paul Scott Mowrer and Junius Wood of the *Chicago Daily News*; Damon Runyon of the *New York American*; Irvin S. Cobb of the

"LAFAYETTE, WE ARE HERE!"

On 4 July 1917 Gen. John J. Pershing, the commander in chief of the American forces in France, went to Little Picpus cemetery on the outskirts of Paris to lay a wreath on the tomb of Lafayette, the French general who had come to the aid of the American revolutionaries in 1776. A troop of reporters with nothing better to do tagged along. Maj. Charles E. Stanton, the army paymaster, was a gifted public speaker and made a preliminary set of remarks, working himself up to a fever pitch and concluding with the ringing proclamation, "Lafayette, we are here!" General Pershing came next and made some inaudible murmurings as he laid the wreath on the tomb.

Far back in the crowd the correspondents mistakenly thought the general had made the effusive and dramatic remark. Floyd Gibbons of the *Chicago Tribune* and several others filed their 4 July stories with praise for Pershing's eloquence. Paymaster Stanton later wrote that their mistake dogged the general for the rest of his career, creating false expectations for his skill as a speaker.

Source: John Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence: The Great Reporters and Their Times*, second edition (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

Saturday Evening Post; and the youngest, at twenty-three, Westbrook Pegler of the United Press.

Rules Made to Be Broken. Palmer implemented several stringent rules. Correspondents would be required to wear uniforms and would travel together under the control of press officers. All copy had to be cleared by Palmer's office, and there was no right to protest his censorship decisions. Many other minor regulations were imposed. Long before the reporters reached the front, open war was declared between Major Palmer and the correspondents. Gibbons and Broun often fled the reporters' bivouac to track down their own stories. Broun's accreditation was revoked, but he did not care. The reporters often disregarded the strict rules, and managed to function nearly normally. Despite the efforts of the American military, the American public received more and better war news than the citizens in its Allied countries, but World War I was not a banner time for the free press.

Sources:

John Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence: The Great Reporters and Their Times*, second edition (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1985);

Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975).

THE CREEL COMMITTEE

The Committee on Public Information. In March 1917, when United States entry into the war seemed inevitable (the declaration came one month later), rumors circulated in Washington that military leaders were again advocating censorship of the press. Beginning in June 1916 President Woodrow Wilson's attorney general, Thomas Gregory, had pushed for measures to punish members of the press found guilty of espionage and strictly limit freedom of the press and of speech. He tried again in February 1917, but on each occasion Congress balked. The administration tried again following the declaration of war and found the mood in Congress much more receptive. Newspaperman, muckraker, and Wilson adviser George Creel sent the president a memo urging a voluntary agreement with the press to control information rather than the institution of formal censorship. Wilson agreed and created the Committee on Public Information (CPI), with Creel as its chairman. The other members of the committee would be the secretaries of war, state, and the navy, who had themselves suggested such a committee to the president on 13 April 1917, writing that Americans ought to be "given the feeling of partisanship that comes with full, frank statements concerning the conduct of the public business." Given Creel's background as a crusader and his fiery temperament, many observers felt that putting him in charge of rallying public opinion for the war was most unwise. Wilson's stated fear — that once into war the American people would "forget that there was ever such a thing as tolerance" — was realized in part because of the work of the CPI. It prevented formal censorship on the home front (not in the combat theater, where strict censorship reigned) but raised serious questions about where the line lay between public information and propaganda.

Expert Communication or Propaganda? The CPI organized a speaker's bureau of seventy-five thousand people, known as the "Four-Minute Men." They traveled all over the country making short speeches to rally the public for the war effort. By 1918 they were being told to make liberal use of war atrocity stories in their speeches. Creel recruited advertising experts and prominent journalists such as Ida M. Tarbell, Ernest Poole, Ray Stannard Baker, and Will Irwin to publish a daily newspaper with a circulation of one hundred thousand, known as the *Official Bulletin*. A government wire service supplied official information from all over the world. To some observers Creel expertly mobilized every form of communication in the cause of the war. To others he incited the "righteous wrath" of the public against the "Hun" and the "Boche." Writer Raymond B. Fosdick (who was also head of the Commission on Training Camp Activities) summarized the attitude of the American people: "We hated with a common hate that was exhilarating." Fosdick observed a church meeting where a speaker demanded that the kaiser be boiled in oil, and the congregation rose to its



Covers for four of the most famous publications of George Creel's Committee on Public Information

feet in hysterical approval. Such spectacles chilled civil libertarians.

Pamphlets, Publications, and Movies. The CPI regularly issued publications with titles such as "German War Practices" and "The German Whisper," written as exposés of enemy tactics. They certainly inflamed the public. At the outset of the publicity campaign, the committee made films with innocuous titles such as *Our Colored Fighters* and *Pershing's Crusaders*. By war's end they had turned to producing movies such as *The Kaiser: The Beast of Berlin*, and *The Prussian Cur*. Creel sent the writer Lowell Thomas to Europe to collect stories that could be used to stir appropriate sentiment. When the Western Front proved too gory for good recruiting material, he went on to the Middle East where T. E. Lawrence was fighting along with the Arabs against the Turks. Thomas's romanticized dispatches about Lawrence helped to shape one of the indelible myths to come from the war, that of Lawrence of Arabia. Lawrence called Thomas, who grew rich off creating the legend, "the American who made my vulgar reputation; a well-intentioned, intensely crude and pushful fellow."

THE FALSE ARMISTICE

Roy Howard, the president of the United Press wire service, left Paris for Brest on 7 November 1918 to board an army transport for home. He knew that the warring parties had worked out the terms of the armistice but had not yet announced them. In Brest he found celebrations in the streets. Adm. Henry B. Wilson, the commander of the U.S. Navy in France, showed Howard a telegram from the U.S. embassy announcing the signing of the armistice. With the admiral's permission, Howard immediately filed a report to the United Press (UP).

The dissemination of the report in the United States set off furious celebrations there as well, but lacking further corroboration, many editors viewed it with caution. Later that day the Associated Press reported that the Germans had not yet agreed to the armistice terms. At about the same time a courier reached Brest cautioning Adm. Wilson that the previous telegram could not be confirmed. Wilson filed a correction, but the wires were jammed and it did not get through for several more hours.

While the UP had acted in good faith, indignation against the wire ran high, especially among its competitors. The source of the erroneous telegram remains a mystery.

Source: John Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence: The Great Reporters and Their Times*, second edition (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

Terrible Legacy. While avoiding formal censorship, the CPI's *Official Bulletin* certainly blacked out information that did not reflect favorably on the war effort. In the aftermath of the war the public and Congress grew progressively more outraged over having been, as they saw it, "duped" into war in the first place. Despite all the criticism Creel received personally for his temper during the war, the CPI became far more notorious as a source of foul and misleading propaganda after it had been disbanded. When the United States mobilized for World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt designed his public information policies in large measure by trying not to duplicate the mission and the spirit of the CPI.

Sources:

- George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York: Harper, 1920);
- David Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980);
- Stephen Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

THE LOS ANGELES TIMES EXPLODES

On 1 October 1910 a dynamite blast destroyed the *Los Angeles Times* building. Fifteen men died, and half a million dollars in damage resulted. The brothers, John and James McNamara, officers in the Structural Iron Workers' Union, had been fighting against *Times* owner Gen. Harrison Gray Otis and his open-shop policy. They advocated "direct action" against repressive capitalists but at first claimed their innocence. The city of Los Angeles seemed ready to square off in a class war.

Just when the famous muckraker Lincoln Steffens had persuaded many of Los Angeles's most powerful politicians that to put the McNamara brothers to death would only intensify the bitter division in the city, their defense lawyer, Clarence Darrow, was accused of trying to bribe a member of the jury. Then, before their trial concluded and before election day, when many socialist candidates expected to win, the McNamara brothers confessed to the bombing, dealing a great blow to the labor movement in California.

Source: Louis Filler, *The Muckrakers* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979).

THE FIRST AMERICAN TABLOID

Born of a Family Split. The *New York Illustrated Daily News* made its debut on 26 June 1919. Two grandsons of *Chicago Tribune* founder Joseph Medill served as copublishers of their family paper, and both served in World War I. Col. Robert R. McCormick was as conservative as his grandfather, but Capt. Joseph Medill Patterson had imbibed the reform spirit of the early twentieth century. As a young man he had enrolled at Yale University but took time off to become a *Tribune* correspondent in China, where he covered the Boxer Rebellion. After graduating from Yale in 1901, he defended the rights of the common people against political corruption in his reporting and won election to the Illinois legislature. His politics never meshed with those of the conservative paper, and he left the daily to write socially minded novels and plays. Before the United States entered World War I he became a European correspondent for the paper, and he joined the military when Congress declared war.

Lord Northcliffe Recommends. In 1903 the British public saw its first tabloid paper, the *Daily Mirror*. The paper began as a publication for women but soon changed into a "half penny illustrated," printed on paper half the size of a regular newspaper and full of pictures and sensational crime and sex stories. By 1909 its circulation reached one million, and the *Daily Sketch* and the *Daily*

Illustrated Daily News

No. 1 New York Thursday, June 26, 1919. 2 Cents

GERMANS BLOCK SIGNING OF TREATY
Newport to Entertain Prince of Wales in August



Front page of the first issue of Joseph Medill Patterson's *New York Daily News*, under its original title

Graphic had been introduced as competitors. Joseph Patterson met the *Mirror* publisher, Lord Northcliffe, in London during the war. When Northcliffe told him of the enormous profits to be made in tabloid publishing, Patterson saw a way to avoid future conflict with his cousin McCormick and to serve the immigrant and semi-literate population whose welfare most concerned him.

Innovations. With a \$1 million loan from the flush *Chicago Tribune* Company, the new tabloid began printing in 1919. Its cover, true to its British inspiration, showed the Prince of Wales, who was soon to visit the United States. The *Daily News* sponsored its own beauty contest and in an ad enjoined readers of *The New York Times* to "SEE NEW YORK'S MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRLS EVERY MORNING IN THE ILLUSTRATED DAILY NEWS." The paper was largely tailored for women but appealed to men with unprecedented attention to the latest sports news. It started a long tradition by publishing photographs of boxing, baseball, and other events on the back page, but Patterson initially tried to keep the news content of the paper serious.

"A Daily Erotica for the Masses." Almost as soon as the *Daily News* dropped the word *Illustrated* from its title

(a few months after it first appeared), it gave up its goal of being a smaller, more pictorial alternative to the large papers and became thoroughly sensational. Its brief news stories concerned titillating and grisly crimes and sex scandals, capitalizing on a more generalized postwar assault on traditional morality. The *News* seemed particularly adept at securing pictures and love letters from divorce proceedings and love-nest scandals. As the first and still the strongest American tabloid, the *Daily News* set far-reaching precedents for newspaper publishing.

Sources:

Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, *The Press and America*, fourth edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978);

Sidney Kobre, *Development of American Journalism* (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1969).

THE HINDENBURG CONFESSION

A Solemn Pledge. On Armistice Day four reporters who had witnessed the horrors and brutality of the war shook hands and pledged that they would spend the rest of their lives writing the truth about the war so that the bloodshed would never be repeated. The millions of soldiers and civilians dead from combat and disease, the unprecedented pain and suffering — each man felt he would give his life to prevent such massive injustice from happening again. The four reporters were Herbert Corey, George Seldes, Lincoln Eyre, and Cal Lyon.

And So Much for Military Discipline. At the same time, the four young men decided that the rules of military discipline no longer applied to newspaper correspondents. They decided to drive into Germany to observe conditions and to try to interview Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, the (former) commander of the German army. They drove through France into Germany and soon came upon the German army in full retreat. The soldiers were frightened and surprised to see Americans (correspondents wore military uniforms), and a colonel gave a brisk order, "Take them into the woods and shoot them." Eyre frantically tried to explain in German that they were reporters.

Rescue. A soldier with a red armband arrived and took control of the situation. This man was a member of the Arbeiter und Soldatenrat, the Workers' and Soldiers' Council, a group from Kiel that had mutinied against their overseers in the last days of the war and whom the Allies had appointed to help administer Germany after the surrender. He sent them to Frankfurt, where a friend of his could arrange transportation to Kassell, where Hindenburg was stationed. After the field marshal refused to see the reporters, the council representative called to set up the interview and arranged for Hindenburg's personal automobile to pick them up.

An Astonishing Evaluation. Seldes asked Hindenburg what he thought had ended the four years of stalemate on the Western Front. Hindenburg replied directly that it was the arrival of the U.S. infantry. Until 1917 he

THE LOST BATTALION

Just a few weeks before the armistice, during the advance of the entire American army, the Second Battalion of the 308th Infantry, Seventy-seventh Division, was reported missing. The United Press scooped the story, which remained page 1 news for almost a week. Where were they?

In fact, the battalion had been trapped at the edge of a steep precipice by German soldiers. They held off the Germans for five days. While Major Whittlesey, the officer in command, was reported to have replied "Go to Hell" to the German demand for surrender, this was a myth. He made no reply but did order his men to cover two white airplane panels lying on the ground, lest they be mistaken for a sign of surrender.

Some enterprising reporters from the army publication *Stars and Stripes* investigated the fate of the "Lost Battalion," and found that nearly 200 of Major Whittlesey's soldiers had marched out of the Charlevaux Valley; 107 had died; and 378 had been evacuated on stretchers. The five-day stand of the Lost Battalion became known as one of the most heroic deeds of any American unit during the war.

Source: George Seldes, *Witness to a Century: Encounters with the Noted, the Notorious, and the Three SOBs* (New York: Ballantine, 1987).

believed Germany could have won the war on land. When the Allies could replace their divisions with fresh troops from the United States rather than from their own weak and broken divisions, he knew Germany's cause was lost. "The Americans are splendid soldiers," he said. The American attack in the Argonne Forest won the war, according to the German military commander. Having said that, Hindenburg wept.

Quite a Burden. Seldes believed that had the American censor allowed the four reporters to file their story, it would have made headlines in every newspaper in the Western world and would have made a lasting impression on millions of people, including the Germans. He wrote, "I believe it would have destroyed the main planks of the platform on which Hitler rose to power, it would have prevented World War II, the greatest and worst war in history, and it would have changed the future of all mankind." It becomes particularly poignant, in light of the promise that the four correspondents made to one another, that they were prevented from making Hindenburg's confession public. And Seldes also made a painfully frank personal confession. Had he, or any of the others, been willing to endanger his position in journal-

ism in order to publish that story, he might have prevented World War II all by himself. While that seems improbable, the story of Hindenburg's confession and its suppression does raise irresistible historical "what-ifs."

Source: George Seldes, *Witness to a Century: Encounters with the Noted, the Notorious, and the Three SOB's* (New York: Ballantine, 1987).

THE MOST HATED MAN IN AMERICA

Against Entry. William Randolph Hearst, the larger-than-life publisher of the *New York American*, the *San Francisco Examiner*, and many other major papers and magazines, opposed U.S. entry into World War I, both before and after it occurred. Hearst was no pacifist, as his enthusiasm for the war against Spain in 1898 had demonstrated. But from the beginning of war in 1914, and through the three years of official American neutrality, he and his papers argued that it was Europe's war, that the Allies would lose, and that there was no sense getting involved and sacrificing American lives. He was called anti-British (true), pro-German (false), and the most hated man in the country. His publications lost circulation, advertising revenue, and respect. Hearst was burned in effigy, not for the first or last time.

Anti-British. Hearst disliked the English for several reasons. His wife was Irish American, and he thus supported Ireland's resistance to British rule. Also, he had sympathy for all peoples fighting for their freedom. Hearst detested President Woodrow Wilson, who was a confirmed Anglophile and whose ostensibly neutral policies slid closer and closer to the Allies between 1914 and 1917. He objected to the loans made by American banks to the British, in effect wagering the health of the American economy on the victory of the Allies and providing a compelling reason to guarantee it. A longtime dislike for anything Japanese also fueled Hearst's opposition: Japan was allied with the British. Finally, the infusion of British propaganda into the United States riled Hearst: as a master propagandist himself, he hated to see an adversary succeed.

Not Especially Pro-German. Although he took pleasure in German beer, castles on the Rhine, and the therapeutic waters at Bad Neuheim, Hearst had never shown particular political sympathy for the Germans. He had even advocated making war against the kaiser when a German admiral insulted Admiral Dewey in Manila Bay. He hired a former *New York Times* correspondent, William Bayard Hale, and sent him to Germany but did not know that Hale was in the pay of the Germans. Critics charged that he took his determinedly unpopular and, after 1917, when the United States declared war, unsafe position in order to attract German American and Irish American readers. While it is true that these groups bought his papers in greater numbers during the war, overall Hearst lost a fortune because of his diehard stand.



The 18 May 1918 issue of the *New York Tribune* featured this article attacking William Randolph Hearst and his antiwar efforts.

Let Them Come to Us. Once President Wilson declared war, Hearst took his most bizarre position. Since England would surely lose, he said, the United States should not act simply as an adjunct to the British armies. He argued that to transport an army across the Atlantic, infested with German submarines, was to consign it to the bottom of the sea. "Let Germany come to us," he said, "or it will be a bloody sacrifice." Theodore Roosevelt branded Hearst "one of the most efficient allies of Germany on this side of the war" and stressed that the "Huns within" were more dangerous than the "Huns without."

Pilloried in the Press. The *New York Tribune* began a weekly series titled "Coiled in the Flag — Hears-s-s-s-t," likening the publisher to a snake and quoting from his editorials. Roosevelt denounced President Wilson for failing to use the power of the government to suppress the Hearst papers. A mob in Poughkeepsie burned copies of the *New York American*. To fight back, Hearst took advertisements in rival papers listing "What Hearst Papers Have Done to Help Win the War." In 1918 he invited 250 senators and congressmen to New York at his expense to witness a demonstration on 4 July of his patriotism, but only thirty-four legislators and their families accepted the invitation.

A Loan or a Bribe? Shortly after the war ended, it was revealed that a consortium of thirteen wealthy German American brewers had loaned Arthur Brisbane, Hearst's

THE DAWN OF MODERN ADVERTISING

In 1914 Cadillac introduced its first eight-cylinder automobile in a bid to outstrip the V-6 Packard. But the new model was prone to short circuits and fires. Theodore McManus, the star copywriter for General Motors, devised a unique advertisement to compensate for the bad publicity surrounding the Cadillac. An ad with no mention of General Motors or Cadillac ran once in the 2 January 1915 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*. It read in part, "In every field of human endeavor, he that is first must perpetually live in the white light of publicity . . . when a man's work becomes a standard for the whole world, it also becomes a target for the shafts of the envious few. . . . There is nothing new in this. It is as old as the world and as old as the human passions — envy, fear, greed, and ambition, and the desire to surpass. And it all avails nothing. . . . That which deserves to live — lives."

Cadillac was inundated with requests for reprints, up to ten thousand a year for several years, and sales of the V-8 took off. Thirty years later, when readers of *Printer's Ink* were asked what the greatest advertisement of all time was, they cited "The Penalty of Leadership" ahead of every other challenger.

Source: Stephen Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators* (New York: Vintage, 1984).

close ally and editor, \$375,000 in 1917 so that he could purchase the *Washington Times*. A congressional investigation ensued to determine if Brisbane, and by extension Hearst, had been paid to act as the mouthpiece for these investors. The *Times* coverage of the war had paralleled that of the Hearst papers. When asked by a congressman if Germans dictated the content of the Hearst papers, Brisbane replied that nobody could tell the sovereign publisher what to print. Hearst's willingness to take wildly unpopular positions seems to bear this out.

Source:

W. A. Swanberg, *Citizen Hearst* (New York: Scribners, 1961).

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Herbert Croly's *Insurrections*. In 1909 a young intellectual, the son of two newspaper writers, published an influential political polemic titled *The Promise of American Life*. Herbert Croly argued that while the laissez-faire philosophy of keeping government out of the marketplace held great appeal for a small-scale society, the advent of big business meant that a strong central government was needed to protect the weak. And to avoid being



Herbert Croly, a founder and the editor of the *New Republic*

overtaken by special interests, government required strong leadership. Theodore Roosevelt became an early convert to Croly's "New Nationalism." Croly is also credited with inspiring Woodrow Wilson's "New Freedom." Though painfully shy, Croly, along with some like-minded colleagues, determined to start a magazine, a "journal of opinion" that would start "little insurrections" in the minds of its readers.

A *Straight Fortune*. Willard and Dorothy Straight became Croly's financial backers. Dorothy was a Whitney by birth and received royalties from Standard Oil. Willard was a Morgan banker who had served as a consul in China and believed in American internationalism. After reading Croly's book, the Straights decided that rather than giving money to schools or hospitals, they wanted to fund a magazine to disseminate Croly's views. The Straights purchased a townhouse in New York to house the magazine, complete with a library and a French chef for the staff's comfort. The magazine began publication in 1914 under the editorial direction of Croly; Walter Weyl, a noted muckraking journalist; and the brilliant young journalist and political philosopher Walter Lippmann, who by age twenty-five had already published two influential books, *A Preface to Politics* (1913) and *Drift*

TRUE STORY

The colorful and controversial publisher of *Physical Culture*, Bernarr Macfadden, started a new magazine in 1919 called *True Story*. Readers sent in accounts of their triumphs and tragedies in love, and Macfadden and a panel of young readers selected those that best held their interest. They received seventy thousand to one hundred thousand entries per year. Each entry had to be accompanied by an affidavit from someone other than the writer that the story was true, but many readers nonetheless found the tales so shocking that they refused to believe they were genuine.

Despite the titillation that these stories of girls gone astray, jealous husbands, and love triangles provoked, each one had to end with a strong moral lesson. Macfadden maintained a five-person advisory board made up of three ministers, a priest, and a rabbi. With its bold tabloid format, *True Story* influenced many other magazines and introduced a new confessional style to advertising.

Source: Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

and *Mastery* (1914). Although Willard Straight died in 1918, the Straight family continued to subsidize the magazine for forty years, at an average of \$100,000 a year, and never interfered with its editors' prerogatives.

A Distinguished Staff. The *New Republic* staff in its first years included Francis Hackett, who had created the book supplement for the *Chicago Evening Post* and became literary editor of the *New Republic*. Learned Hand, a powerful federal judge, acted as adviser and brought aboard Felix Frankfurter, a future Supreme Court justice. Croly served as editor until his death in 1930. Other early and notable contributors included Randolph Bourne, Malcolm Cowley, Edmund Wilson, and John Dewey.

Peace without Victory. The magazine's staff was largely inexperienced with foreign relations when World War I broke out. The *New Republic* initially took a neutral stance, which was the officially stated position of the Wilson administration. By February 1917, two months before the United States declared war, the magazine was advocating U.S. entry. Lippmann was widely credited with having won Wilson over to the cause of war. Many people believed the *New Republic* represented the views of the Wilson administration, and its circulation soared to 45,000, actually making a profit. It pushed for U.S. participation in the League of Nations, coining the phrase "Peace Without Victory" as the goal of the peace conference. But the editors were dismayed by the politi-

cal intrigues of the Versailles Conference and eventually opposed U.S. entry to the League of Nations as a betrayal of Americans' goals in entering the war. Though its circulation dropped off after the war, the magazine continued throughout the century as one of the foremost outlets for liberal political journalism.

Sources:

Charles Forcey, *The Crossroads of Liberalism: Croly, Weyl, Lippmann, and the Progressive Era, 1900-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961);

David W. Levy, *Herbert Croly of the New Republic: The Life and Thought of an American Progressive* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985);

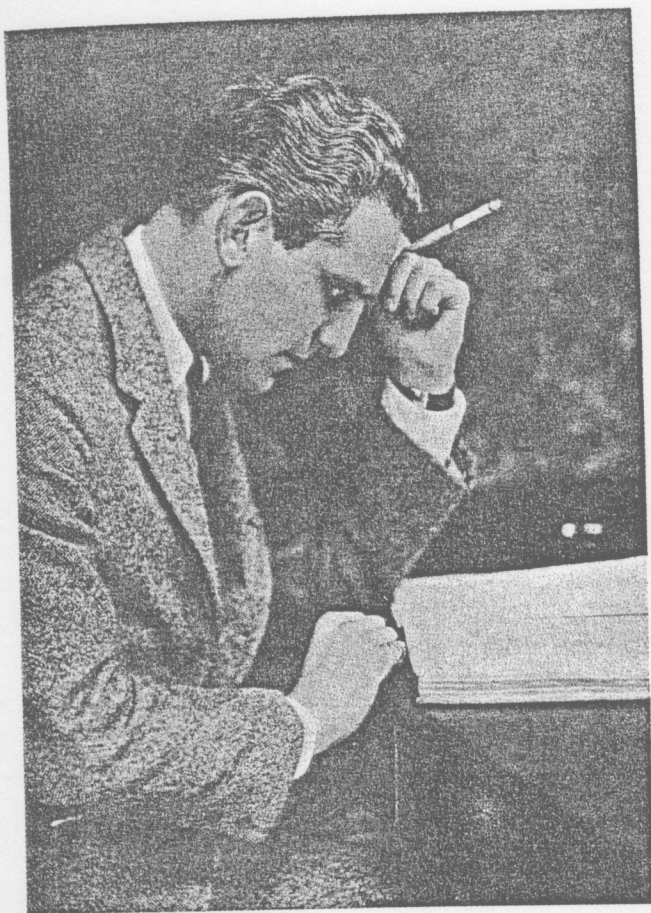
Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964);

Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (New York: Vintage, 1981).

A NEW WORLD OF BOOKS

Selling Books. As the mass market for books continued to grow in the second decade of the twentieth century, old-fashioned publishers lamented that the quality of the writing and the paper on which it was printed were both declining. Literary merit certainly brought some books to light, but salability became the paramount concern for the modernizing publishing business. To fill an established marketing niche, publishers went to established writers with plans and formulas for projected books rather than waiting to choose among completed manuscripts. The biggest problem facing the industry was distribution. Even the biggest houses employed no more than four salesmen, with territories such as all the major cities east of the Mississippi, or the entire South, or, in one busy fellow's case, New England, part of the Midwest, and the Pacific Coast. In 1914 there were 3,501 bookstores in the country to call on, statistically one for every twenty-eight thousand people, but these were concentrated in cities and large towns. The rural population was woefully underserved. Before World War I, 90 percent of all books were sold by subscription salesmen, who traveled door to door, with the rest sold by direct mail.

The Next Generation. While in 1911 the older generation of publishers began a Publishers' Lunch Club that met on the first Thursday of each month, a new generation of publishing entrepreneurs was blazing new trails in the business. B. W. Huebsch, Alfred A. Knopf, and Albert and Charles Boni were all learning the trade in other houses or establishing their own firms. With the money that his father sent Albert to pay for Harvard Law School, the Bonis opened Washington Square Bookshop on MacDougal Street in 1912 and were at the center of bohemian life in Greenwich Village. They cut an opening into the Liberal Club next door and made a big impression on the publishing industry with their Little Leather Library, thirty titles with excerpts from the classics bound in imitation leather, which sold by mail order for \$2.98 for a complete set of all thirty volumes. Woolworth's sold



Horace Liveright, who joined with Alfred and Charles Boni in 1917 to form the publishing firm of Boni and Liveright

a million sets in a single year. In the spring of 1917 they incorporated a new firm in partnership with Horace Liveright and introduced the Modern Library of the World's Best Classics, later shortened to the Modern Library. The first eighteen titles were reprints, followed by original works by Leon Trotsky and Fyodor Dostoyevsky, plays by August Strindberg, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), by Oscar Wilde.

War Books. Boni and Liveright attracted the attention of military intelligence officers during the war for their publication of pacifist and antiwar authors. Several of its titles were suppressed. Other publishers showed restraint or rushed to profit from public interest in the war. In 1913 Scribners published a prescient work, *The Last Shot*, by Frederick Palmer, which correctly predicted the sudden beginning of the war the following year, the battle lines, the broken treaties, and the importance of big guns in changing the style of warfare. When the war began, it became a runaway best-seller, the only war book to sell well before U.S. entry in 1917. Scribners published war-related books by Richard Harding Davis and the unlikely correspondents Edith Wharton and Mary Roberts Rinehart but preferred to leave the exploitation of the war to others. Houghton Mifflin, the ultraconserva-



Dávid Sarnoff, who helped the commercial development of radio while working for the Marconi Company. After World War I he became commercial manager of the Radio Corporation of America.

tive Boston-based house, published more than one hundred war-related books between 1914 and 1919.

Source:
John Tebbel, *Between Covers: The Rise and Transformation of Book Publishing in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

THE RADIO MUSIC BOX

Sarnoff. A young immigrant from Russia named David Sarnoff spent the thirteen years from 1906 to 1919 working for the American branch of the Marconi Wireless Company. As one of the company's most skilled telegraph operators, he often forwarded memos with suggestions for company operations to E. J. Nally, the vice president and general manager. In November 1916 Sarnoff wrote a memo to Nally on the subject of the "Radio Music Box." None of the Marconi executives who read it gave it a second thought, and if they did it was to consider Sarnoff a screwball. But the memo foretold the

PRESIDENT HUGHES?

Lee De Forest was one of the truly innovative pioneers in radio broadcasting. His invention of the three-element grid audion tube, or triode, greatly advanced the technology of radio reception and was the forerunner of the vacuum tube, which would be central to mass-produced radios. In 1915 he erected a 125-foot tower on top of his factory and workshop in the Bronx and began nightly half-hour "concerts" of phonograph music. That fall he broadcast the Harvard-Yale football game.

On Election Day 1916 De Forest provided six hours of coverage of the neck-and-neck presidential race between the sitting president, Democrat Woodrow Wilson, and Republican Charles Evans Hughes. When De Forest signed off at 11 P.M., he declared that Hughes had been elected president, only to learn in the morning, with the rest of the nation, that Wilson was the victor.

Source: Susan Douglas, *Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899-1922* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

future of the radio industry at a time when the technology was still used exclusively as a means for point-to-point communication. While radio pioneer Lee De Forest was already transmitting music from a phonograph from his home in the Bronx, his audience was made up of those who already had receivers. It would be left to others, including Sarnoff, to induce the public to buy radio receivers in great numbers.

Broadcasting Envisioned. Sarnoff proposed to develop radio as a "household utility" along the lines of a piano or a phonograph. "The idea is to bring music into the home by wireless," he wrote. While similar plans using wires had failed, Sarnoff proposed that a transmitter with a range of twenty-five to fifty miles could be installed in a central place, where singers and musicians would work their magic. Hundreds of thousands of families could receive simultaneously from the single transmitter.

Simple. A radio receiver in 1916 was a complicated apparatus, operated by people with at least minimal engineering experience. Sarnoff conceived a simple appliance for the novice. "The receiver can be designed in the form of a simple 'Radio Music Box,'" he wrote, "and arranged for several different wavelengths, which would be changeable with the throwing of a single switch or the pressing of a single button." An amplifier eradicated the need for headphones, and a circular antenna could be sealed inside the box. Sarnoff even foresaw the box "placed on a table in the parlor or the living room."

Add Sports and Talks. In addition to music, Sarnoff proposed that other forms of entertainment and information could be transmitted through the air. Lectures on any subject could be broadcast, as well as sports scores: a transmitter could be set up at the Polo Grounds. He predicted that such a service would be of immense interest to farmers and other people living in isolated places. They could enjoy the cultural activities taking place in the nearest city.

\$75 Million. Sarnoff discussed the prices and profits to be made in such a venture. If one million families out of fifteen million in the country bought radio music boxes, and each was priced at \$75, the manufacturer would earn \$75 million, minus manufacturing and distribution costs. With the outbreak of World War I, the Marconi Company was taken over by the government. It was reconstituted in new form after the war as the Radio Corporation of America, with Sarnoff as commercial manager. He did not become its president until thirteen years later, but in many ways he ran it from the beginning, and radio made much more than \$75 million for its pioneering companies.

Source: Carl Dreher, *Sarnoff: An American Success* (New York: Quadrangle, 1977).

THE "SMART MAGAZINES"

From Society and Comedy. A new class of magazines began to publish during the 1910s, which writer George Douglas has dubbed the "Smart Magazines." The principal examples from this era were *The Smart Set* and *Vanity Fair*. Later additions to the fold included *The New Yorker* and *Esquire*. They grew out of two separate strains in magazine publishing: the urban society journal and the humor magazine. Urban society journals published news about the "Four Hundred" high-society families, their parties and charities, their debutantes, weddings, and travels. Humor magazines such as *Life* (not to be confused with a later publication by that name), *Punch*, and *Judge* published satire, cartoons, and comedic fiction. The "Smart Magazines" catered to an elite audience but set out to amuse, entertain, and provoke, to be the fodder of conversation at parties.

Vanity Fair. *Vogue* publisher Condé Nast bought two dying society journals in 1913, *Dress* and *Vanity Fair*. He originally combined the two as *Dress and Vanity Fair*, but when he hired Frank Crowninshield as editor, Crowninshield immediately dropped the first part of the name. Crowninshield was a dapper man-about-town who knew so many prominent people in the arts and belonged to so many society clubs that the magazine sometimes resembled an outlet for his friends. He was unapologetic about the magazine's pretensions, saying, "My interest in society — at times so pronounced that the word 'snob' comes to mind — derives from the fact that I like an immense number of things which society, money, and



Cover for the August 1916 issue of *The Smart Set* magazine

position bring in their train: painting, tapestries, rare books, smart dresses, dances, gardens, country houses, correct cuisine, and pretty women." *Vanity Fair* was beautifully published on slick paper and was what a later era would call a "coffee-table" magazine. Crowninshield's vision was of a publication that people could not stop talking about. He managed to present serious issues with a light touch. *Vanity Fair*, if not the best magazine ever, as critic Cleveland Amory called it, certainly reflected the spirit of its age and printed the work of outstanding writers and artists.

The Smart Set. Started in 1900 by William D'Alton Mann, the publisher of the society tattle sheet *Town Topics*, *The Smart Set* bore the subtitle, "The Magazine of Cleverness." While it had a steep newsstand price of twenty-five cents, it was a commercial success from the beginning because advertisers were eager to reach the highbrow carriage trade that read it. Mann wanted *The Smart Set* to be for the Four Hundred, but also by and about them. If the idle rich never wrote for the publication (ghost writers took on aristocratic names instead), they did embrace its innovative fiction, features, and de-

sign coverage. Looking to revivify the magazine in 1908, Mann recruited two of the most promising young men of letters in the nation, who met for the first time in the New York office of *The Smart Set*. George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken started as the magazine's drama and literary reviewers and became its coeditors from 1914 until 1923, after a succession of changes in ownership. Mencken wrote to Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the prestigious *Atlantic Monthly*, that he intended *The Smart Set* to be a "magazine for civilized adults in their lighter moods. A sort of frivolous sister to the *Atlantic*."

"The Aristocrat Among Magazines." Both Nathan and Mencken styled themselves as iconoclasts, working against the tides of popular enthusiasm. They supported and attacked their prejudices with gusto and delight and seemed to find amusing spectacles everywhere. *The Smart Set* published a new generation of European writers, including D. H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad, W. Somerset Maugham, and William Butler Yeats. Americans such as Theodore Dreiser, Floyd Dell, Edna St. Vincent Millay, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Robinson Jeffers also made their appearances. *The Smart Set* was part of the cultural renaissance triggered by the famous Armory Show of paintings and the introduction of "little" magazines such as *Poetry*. *The Smart Set* soon became one of the premier literary magazines in the United States. It limped along financially, but the sheer force of the coeditors' personalities and wit, their industry (they sometimes wrote half the issue under pseudonyms), and their nerve carried it forward until they abandoned it in 1923 to launch the *American Mercury*.

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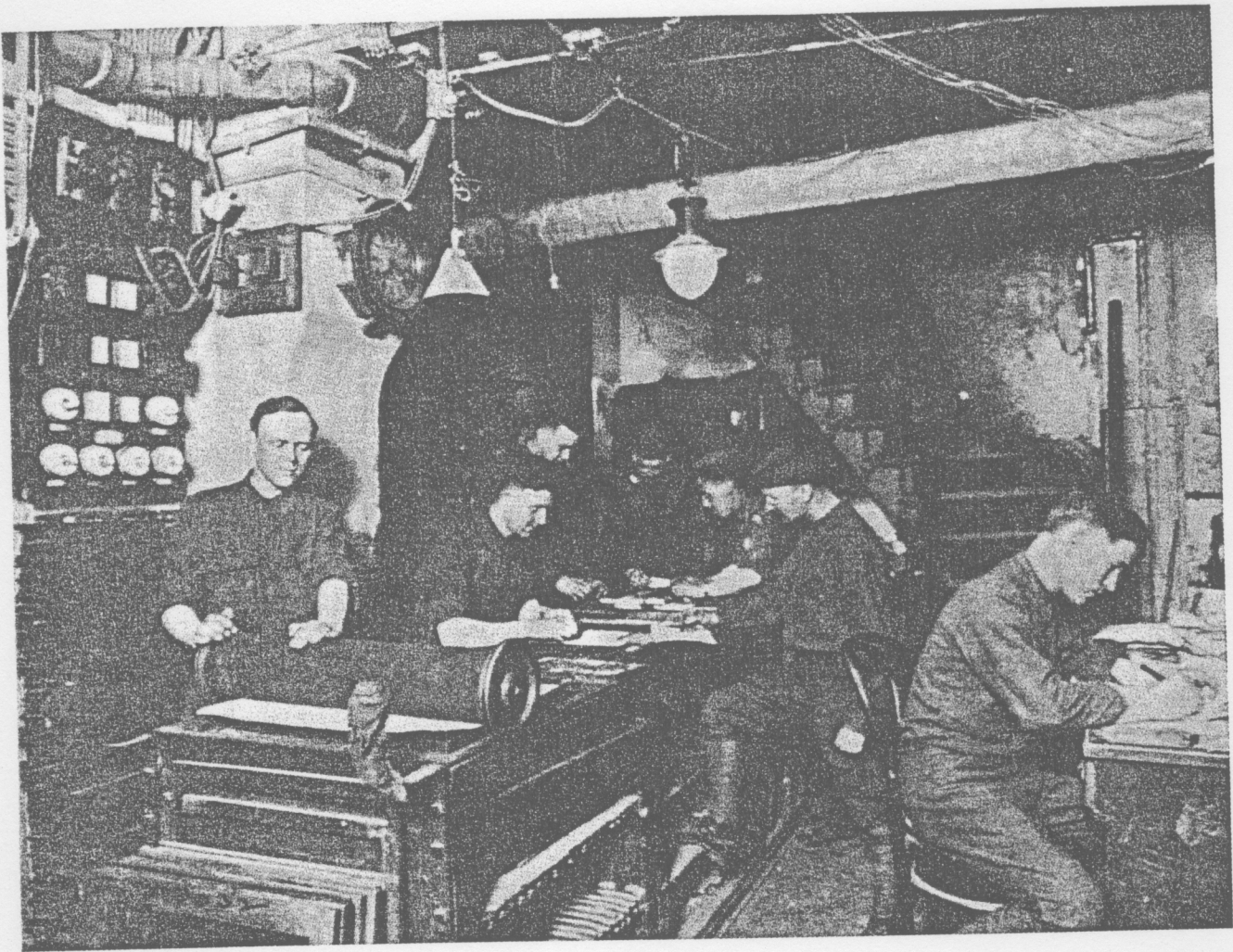
George H. Douglas, *The Smart Magazine: Fifty Years of Literary Revelry and High Jinks at Vanity Fair, The New Yorker, Life, Esquire, and The Smart Set* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Press, 1991);

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STARS AND STRIPES

Military Journalism. The nearly two million soldiers of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) frequently complained that they could get no reliable news from home. The Paris editions of the *New York Herald* and the *Chicago Tribune* printed society news rather than sports scores. AEF leaders saw an opportunity to disseminate information about military decorum and orders. Once it was determined that the costs of printing an eight-page weekly could be covered by selling subscriptions and advertising, the AEF began to publish its own newspaper, the *Stars and Stripes*, on 8 February 1918. It ran through June 1919, for seventy-one weeks, and eventually reached a circulation of more than one hundred thousand. Its staff swelled to more than three hundred.

Civilians in Uniform. The newspaper's foremost writers were journalists in civilian life and conducted the paper's business as ordinarily as possible. Harold Ross, who would later become the longtime editor of *The New*



The staff of *The Stars and Stripes* working on the "Victory Edition" of the newspaper

Yorker, became chief editor, and he was assisted by distinguished journalists Grantland Rice, Alexander Woollcott, and Franklin P. Adams. While one of the paper's chief purposes was to keep morale high among the troops — with stories selected and slanted in ways most favorable to the efforts of the United States — the quality of writing in the paper made it much more than a propaganda sheet. It provided useful information on everything from hygiene to grief, from politics to baseball.

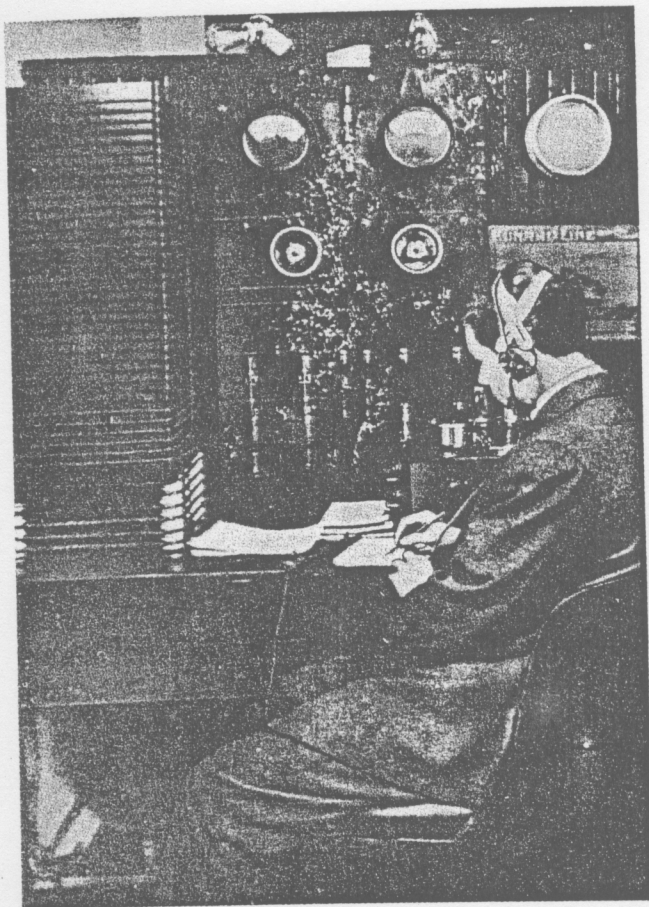
Doughboy Doggerel. The *Stars and Stripes* constantly printed light verse composed by the servicemen on every subject from death to beer. The difficulties of living in a foreign country made for some clever verse, as did the required deference to officers. These two topics combined in a typical (anonymous) poem titled "Its Pronounced Foch," about the French commander's name:

The French will think it is a joke
 When bungling Yanks pronounce it Foch,
 Yet we will make a sadder botch
 If we attempt to call it Foch;
 Nor can we fail to pain and shock
 Who boldly try to say it Foch.

In fact, we have to turn to Boche
 To find the word that rhymes with Foch.

War Orphans. The most touching project the *Stars and Stripes* undertook was a war orphans program. The brainchild of Harold Ross, it linked orphaned French children with American soldiers. For Fr 500 (about \$88 at the then current exchange rate) the Red Cross would provide and monitor the child's care and education. The soldier (or often unit) would receive a picture of the child and updates on his or her progress. The project generated tremendous goodwill with the French population and continued to do so as the children themselves came to maturity. People and companies in the United States also participated, and altogether Americans "adopted" thirty-five hundred children.

Something Human. Doughboys and officers praised the paper as something human in the dreary trenches, and as an efficient morale booster, as one small thing that made them feel closer to home. Newspapers in the United States also praised the paper for its high standards and service to the average soldier. *Stars and Stripes* veterans held high-ranking positions throughout the field of



An airbrushed photograph of David Sarnoff at a telegraph; the faked picture was used by the staff at RCA to back up the false claim that Sarnoff had been the only person to relay news of survivors in the *Titanic* disaster.

journalism, from the *New York Tribune* to the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and between them published dozens of books. A weekly *Stars and Stripes*, edited in Washington, D.C., was published for a few years after the armistice. The name was revived during World War II to denote a dozen publications for units all over the world. None matched the distinction of the first to use the name.

Source: Alfred A. Cornebise, *The Stars and Stripes: Doughboy Journalism in World War I* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984).

THE TITANIC AND THE RADIO ACT OF 1912

Unsinkable. On 10 April 1912 one of the largest and most luxurious ocean liners ever built sailed for New York from England. Full of prominent people whose pictures filled the newspapers in stories of this maiden voyage, the *Titanic* represented all the arrogance of technology and wealth. The captain, believing his ship impervious to the dangers of nature, sped through an ice field, an ice field through which other ships would have proceeded with extreme caution. On 15 April the *Titanic* struck an iceberg and began taking on water.

A WARNING FOR LUSITANIA PASSENGERS

On the morning that the British-owned passenger liner the *Lusitania* was set to sail from New York harbor, readers of several New York dailies found startling advertisements in their newspapers. The Imperial Germany Embassy had taken out full-page notices warning travelers that they boarded the *Lusitania* at their own risk.

In early 1915 the German navy had declared that all ships entering British territorial waters would be fired upon. Even unarmed passenger ships sailing the North Atlantic were at risk from German submarines, or U-boats. President Wilson found this an intolerable situation and vigorously defended freedom of the seas for neutral nations.

Several days after the *Lusitania* left New York, when the ship was just twenty miles off the British coast, a torpedo struck it and it sank like a stone, thanks in part to its illicit cargo of weapons. Of the 1,924 people aboard, 1,198 drowned, including 114 of 188 Americans. Despite obvious illegal aid to Britain by a supposedly neutral nation, the sinking of the *Lusitania* helped shift American public opinion toward war.

Source: Robert D. Schulzinger, *American Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

Distress Signals. Jack Phillips, one of the wireless operators on the *Titanic*, immediately began broadcasting distress signals and the ship's position. Tragically, most ships, including those closest to the *Titanic*, employed only one operator; when that man was away from his station, no one monitored the wireless. By sheer coincidence, Harold Cottam, the operator of the *Carthia*, had returned to his station to complete a "time rush" (in which two ships check the agreement of their clocks). The *Carthia* was fifty-eight miles away, and it took three and a half hours to get to the site of the disaster, by which time the *Titanic* was gone. The *Carthia* rescued seven hundred people, mostly women and children, who had made it into the insufficient number of lifeboats. More than fifteen hundred others died, including the wireless operator Jack Phillips, who remained at his station as the ship went down. The *California* was less than twenty miles away, but its wireless operator was asleep.

Confusion. Shortly after the initial distress message from the *Titanic*, wireless stations all along the East Coast of North America clogged the air with traffic. The Marconi Company complained about the interference, and out of this congestion finally emerged the false news that the *Titanic* was moving safely toward Halifax. In the

aftermath of the tragedy many people hoped the perpetrator of what they thought was a hoax would be caught and executed. One calmer explanation is that a message from the steamship *Asian*, "Towing oil tank to Halifax," was mistaken for a message about the *Titanic* passengers. Still, the press and government officials took this incident as an incentive to begin more-systematic regulation of the airwaves.

The Radio Act of 1912. In the aftermath of the disaster new regulations for shipboard wireless were proposed in Congress. The bill required that the wireless be manned at all times and that auxiliary power be available in the event of engine failure. It also called for implementation of a strict protocol for receiving distress signals; each ship radio had to have a range of at least one hundred miles. The Radio Act of 1912 also began to purge the airwaves of all the amateurs who had confused official operators on the night of 15 April. Operators had to be licensed and adhere to certain band widths, and large portions of the spectrum would be set aside for the navy. Amateurs could listen to any transmissions but

could not broadcast over them. They could only transmit on the shortest waves, considered useless.

Sarnoff Writes Himself a Hero's Role. David Sarnoff, a crack wireless operator for the Marconi Company atop Wanamaker's Department Store in New York City in 1912, went on to become chairman of the powerful Radio Corporation of America. He claimed to have heard the signal of the *Titanic*, given the information to the press, and alerted other possible rescue ships. How he learned of the disaster is not known, but he did rush to his station and spent a long vigil in contact with the *Carpathia*, getting the survivors' names to frenzied families and friends of the passengers assembling at Wanamaker's. He stayed at his post for seventy-two hours. Both Sarnoff and his boss Marconi were lionized for their roles in the *Titanic* disaster, and in two days the Marconi Company's stock zoomed from \$55 to \$255.

Sources:

Susan Douglas, *Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899-1922* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987);

Carl Dreher, *Sarnoff: An American Success* (New York: Quadrangle, 1977).

HEADLINE MAKERS

EDNA WOOLMAN CHASE AND CONDÉ NAST

1877-1957/1873-1942

EDITOR OF VOGUE/PUBLISHER OF VOGUE



Attracting the Gold Tips. Born in New York to parents whose social standing exceeded their accomplishments, the fastidious young Condé Nast attracted the notice of a wealthy aunt who put him through Georgetown University. As advertising manager for his friend Robert Collier's weekly *Collier's*, Nast pioneered several business strategies. He believed that advertisers would pay premium rates for the most affluent readership. He explained his approach with a metaphor of 2 million needles, only 150,000 of which had gold tips. Rather than searching through the pile, he proposed it would be more efficient to devise a magnet for gold. Just so with elite society publications, he concluded. In 1909 he purchased the small society gazette called *Vogue*, whose ad manager was already attempting to turn it into a fashion magazine and shopping guide in order to lure lucrative fashion ads. Here was his gold magnet. Readers were at least as interested in the ads as in any copy in the magazine. *Vogue* has since maintained a symbiotic relationship with its advertisers, highlighting their products in its features.

Fancy Dress Balls and Fashion Shows. Edna Woolman Chase came to *Vogue* in 1895 to address envelopes for three weeks. The child of divorced parents, raised by her maternal grandparents in Asbury Park, New Jersey, in her youth Edna emulated the

wealthy girls she read about in the society sheets. She became editor of *Vogue* in 1914, and over the course of her career she became the grande dame of American fashion. In 1911 she persuaded a reluctant Nast to allow *Vogue* artists to design gowns for fancy dress balls to accompany the photographs of women in their costumes borrowed from the Metropolitan Opera. The designs were a sensational hit. In 1914, when the outbreak of war disrupted the Parisian fashion industry, Chase proposed to stage the first New York fashion show. The leading design houses were happy to participate, but no one knew if the ladies of society would attend. Chase agreed to donate proceeds from the admission charge to the Committee of Mercy to aid women and orphans of the Allied nations. When Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish, the leading light of the social scene, agreed to participate after lengthy and fawning persuasion by Chase, the "Fashion Fete" became a success.

Arbiters of Expensive Taste. Nast liked to throw lavish parties at his Park Avenue triplex and mixed Astors and Vanderbilts with Groucho and Harpo Marx. He gave large bonuses to employees who pleased him, including \$100,000 to Chase to furnish a home she was building on Long Island. One Christmas she found a gold piece under every candy in a box of chocolates he gave her. *Vogue* became the fashion industry's bible, previewing forthcoming styles and shaping national tastes. Chase's presence at a showing made it an important event. Many people found her rigid and snobbish, which she was, but her exquisite taste and infallible editorial judgment served *Vogue* and Nast well.

Expansion. By 1913 Nast had acquired two other publications and found for them superb editors: Frank Crowninshield for *Vanity Fair* and Richardson Wright for *House and Garden*. In 1915 he launched a British edition of *Vogue*, followed by a French edition in 1920. His gold-tipped strategy was an unmitigated success. By 1926 *Vogue* had the highest income of all American magazines, even though its circulation was just 10 percent that of the largest publications. Nast lived to be sixty-nine, dying of a heart attack in 1942. Chase retired in 1952 at the age

of seventy-five; wrote her autobiography, *Always in Vogue*, with her daughter's assistance; and died on vacation in Sarasota, Florida, in 1957.

Sources:

Edna Woolman Chase, *Always in Vogue* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954);

Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964);

Caroline Seebohm, *The Man Who Was Vogue: The Life and Times of Condé Nast* (New York: Viking, 1982).

FRANK I. COBB

1869-1923

EDITOR



A Handpicked Successor. In 1904 Joseph Pulitzer, legendary publisher of the *New York World* and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, surveyed his editorial staff. While John Heaton, William H. Merrill, Horatio Seymour, and Pulitzer's own son Ralph were all able men, the publisher wanted to find

someone more like himself: a leader, a bold writer, and someone with deep knowledge of American history. He sent his personal secretary Samuel M. Williams on a nationwide hunt. In Detroit the editorials of the *Free Press* caught Williams's eye. They were clear and concise. He found that they were written by Frank Cobb, a man still in his early thirties. Over a series of lunches Williams quizzed Cobb on his knowledge of history and government and his views on journalism, and he assessed everything from his temperament to his table manners. Williams reported to Pulitzer that he had found his man. Born in rural Kansas and a veteran of Michigan sawmills and lumber camps before his twentieth birthday, Cobb had gone to Michigan State Normal School while supporting his wife and son. At twenty-one he was made superintendent of the high school at Martin, Michigan. He soon found work at the *Detroit Evening News* and then the *Free Press*. It took some persuading by Williams, but Cobb moved his family to New York City, unaware of Pulitzer's plans for him.

Harsh Standards. Determined to turn Cobb into the nation's outstanding editor, Pulitzer subjected the young writer to constant criticism. Not until he had been with the paper for five years did Pulitzer confide in Cobb that he expected him to represent the traditions of the *World* for the next generation. At one point the pressure became so intense that Cobb asked to be excused from his contract. He had an offer to return to the *Detroit Free Press* with an interest in the paper. By the time he met with Pulitzer, the old man had determined to sweet-talk Cobb into staying, and he apologized for his impossible standards. He explained that

he considered Cobb the best editorial writer in the country and was just encouraging him to fulfill his potential.

Ascendancy. Within a year of his arrival in New York City, Cobb became chief editorial writer for the *World*. At Pulitzer's death in 1911 he became the paper's editor, a post he held for twelve years. During that time the paper was the most important outlet for opinion in the nation. Cobb shared Pulitzer's belief that a great newspaper should serve the public interest first and that it should serve the interests of its owner only incidentally. He used his incomparable platform to campaign for human rights and to advocate political liberalism and freedom. During the first decade of the century the *World* campaigned against corruption in business and government, and in 1911 the paper successfully fought off a libel suit brought by Theodore Roosevelt for its investigations of improprieties in the construction of the Panama Canal. In a ringing defense of freedom of the press, Cobb wrote, "Long after Mr. Roosevelt is dead, long after all the present editors of this paper are dead, the *World* will still go on as a great independent newspaper, unmuzzled, undaunted and unterrorized."

Against Tyranny. Cobb's views on American entry into World War I were restrained. Though close to President Wilson, he retained his independence. He penned a lasting editorial for 1 August 1914 titled "An Indictment of Civilization." Noting that the fate of the world hinged on three men: a "doddering old man" in Vienna; a "weak, well-meaning neurotic" in Saint Petersburg, and a "brilliant, talented, ambitious manipulator" in Berlin, he concluded, "The thing would be laughable, ridiculous, if it were not so ghastly." Concluding that this state of affairs was an indictment of civilization itself, Cobb lamented that "Human progress is slow indeed when a whole continent is ready to fight for anything except the right to life, liberty, and self-government." Cobb was a member of the Inquiry, a group of analysts that advised President Wilson at the Versailles Peace Conference.

Impeccable Legacy. Cobb is credited with inaugurating the modern style of editorial writing. Florid, imprecise phrases gave way to direct expression of independent thoughts. He died young, on 21 December 1923, at the age of fifty-four. In his eulogy Woodrow Wilson said that Cobb had "a peculiar genius for giving direct and effective expression to the enlightened opinion which he held."

Sources:

William David Sloan, "Frank I. Cobb," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, volume 25: *American Newspaper Journalists, 1901-1925* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1984);

W. A. Swanberg, *Pulitzer* (New York: Scribners, 1967).

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

1864-1916

WAR CORRESPONDENT



Dashing. When World War I erupted in 1914, Richard Harding Davis was America's preeminent war correspondent. The son of an editor of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and the well-known writer Rebecca Blaine Harding Davis, Richard went to Lehigh University where he became a star half-back but neglected his studies. Asked to leave, he became a journalist. He had covered Cuban attempts to gain independence from Spain for two years before the United States intervened in 1898. His articles for the Hearst press, including the graphic "The Death of Rodriguez" — describing the execution by firing squad of a captured rebel — strengthened American opinion to come to the aid of the Cubans. Davis's good looks and personal flamboyance contributed in large measure to the romantic image of the war correspondent. H. L. Mencken called him the "hero of our dreams." In addition to the Spanish-American War, he covered the Boer War, the Russo-Japanese War, and the Mexican Revolution.

Out of Retirement. By 1914 Davis had retired to his home in Mount Kisco, New York, to write plays and stories, when the papers began telling of the mobilization in Europe. Davis was offered the princely sum of \$600 a week plus expenses by the Wheeler syndicate and \$1,000 apiece for four articles by *Scribner's*. He accepted both offers and took his wife to London. The Wilson administration refused to name him as the one American correspondent who would be allowed to accompany the British troops (Davis was a friend and supporter of Wilson's rival Theodore Roosevelt), so he went to Brussels, just in time to witness the entry of the German army into the defeated city. King Albert had ordered the Belgians not to oppose the occupation, and Davis's description of the stream of German soldiers as "one unbroken steel-gray column . . . twenty-four hours later is still coming . . . not men marching, but a force of nature like a tidal wave, an avalanche" became a classic of war reportage.

Arrested. Davis was arrested on three separate occasions for following the German army without proper credentials. In his passport picture Davis was wearing a (British) West African Field Force uniform. He persuaded a series of German officers that despite the uniform he was indeed American, but without credentials he would inevitably be detained again. Finally he proposed a plan: a German major would put a statement in his passport that he was a "suspected spy" and set him on the road to Brussels, fifty miles away. If he was found off the road, or failed to reach Brussels in two days, he was to be shot on sight. He bluffed his way past three guard posts and,

exhausted, flagged down a German car, prepared to be arrested. The driver was old and somewhat dense and simply delivered Davis to Brussels, where he arranged for better credentials.

The Western Front. Davis observed the utter destruction of cities such as Louvain and Soissons. In his 1914 book, *With the Allies*, he wrote of the unattended piles of bodies: "After death the human body is mercifully robbed of its human aspect. You are spared the thought that what is lying . . . in the wheatfields staring up at the sky was once a man. It appears to be only a bundle of clothes, a scarecrow that has tumbled among the grain it once protected." He found the deliberate shelling of the ancient cathedral at Rheims shocking. German officers claimed that the placement of French batteries had made it unavoidable, but Davis determined that the French positions were a mile away and that the Germans had methodically shelled the cathedral for four days. By the end of his first tour in Europe, Davis no longer saw the war as a conflict over imperial interests but as a clash between the forces of good and evil. He promoted American entry as a moral duty and became one of the foremost advocates of intervention.

Home, Briefly. In 1915, at age fifty, Davis returned home to see his newborn daughter and to train with the army at Plattsburgh in upstate New York. That experience weakened him physically, as he suffered from angina. He returned to Europe for the late fall and early winter of 1915-1916, spending time in France and Greece but, increasingly ill, returned home in February. On 11 April 1916, just short of his fifty-second birthday, he suffered a fatal heart attack in his study at Crossroads Farm. His reputation for both bravery and integrity assured the persistence of his reputation as one of the great war correspondents of all time.

Sources:

Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975);

Arthur Lubow, *The Reporter Who Would Be King: A Biography of Richard Harding Davis* (New York: Scribners, 1992).

RHETA CHILDE DORR

1868-1948

WAR CORRESPONDENT

Feminist. As a child in Nebraska, Rheta Childe routinely disobeyed her parents. At age twelve she sneaked out of the house to attend a women's rights rally led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Her parents found out when the newspaper printed the names of those who had joined the National Woman Suffrage Association. She began working at the age of fifteen, over the objections of her parents, so that she could become independent and prove her industry. She was conserva-

tive by nature but became a rebel upon viewing a tombstone inscribed "Also Harriet, wife of the above."

Self-Expression. In 1890 Childe went to New York City to study at the Art Students' League and decided that she would become a writer. When John Pixley Dorr, a man twenty years older than she, visited from Lincoln, they fell in love and were soon married. She was swept away by his good looks and love of books. They lived in Seattle for two years, where their son Julian was born. Rheta wrote articles for the New York newspapers, which her husband found an unacceptable activity. They soon parted by mutual consent, and Rheta returned to New York with their young son, determined to make a living as a journalist.

Cads and Editors. Dorr was shocked at how she was treated in New York City. Editors would not put her on staff simply because she was a woman, and when she complained that the rates they paid for freelance articles could not support a family, they said they could find other women to work for those rates. She finally got a break by persuading Theodore Roosevelt to be photographed (something he hated) and was rewarded with an ill-paying job on the *New York Evening Post*, which she left within a year. Her first overseas assignment was to cover the coronation of a new king in Norway, and on the way back she attended the International Woman Suffrage Alliance meeting in Copenhagen, where she met prominent British suffragists.

"The Woman's Invasion." Returning to New York almost penniless, Dorr resolved to be done with the society pages that passed for women's journalism. She proposed to the editor of *Everybody's* that she go underground as a worker and write about her experiences. She spent a year working in a laundry, a department store, on an assembly line, and as a seamstress but was often too exhausted to do more than make notes about her experiences. A cowriter named William Hard was assigned to help her, but Dorr resisted giving her notes over to him. She was shocked to see the magazine begin a series with her title, ideas, and experiences but with the byline of William Hard. She hired a lawyer and was at least able to prevent the publication of a book by Hard exploiting her work.

International Suffrage. In 1910, with the assistance of *Hampton's Magazine*, Dorr published *What Eight Million Women Want*, an account of the suffrage clubs, trade unions, and consumer leagues that had sprung up all over Europe and the United States. In 1912 she went to Sweden, Germany, and England to interview leaders in the women's movement, and she spent the winter of 1912-1913 in Paris assisting British suffragist Emmeline Pankhurst in writing Pankhurst's autobiography, *My Own Story*. When she returned to the United States she went to work for the *New York Evening Mail* and wrote a daily column, "As a Woman Sees It." Not everyone was moved by her arguments: interviewing President Wood-

row Wilson in 1914, she asked him about woman suffrage. He replied, "I think that it is not proper for me to stand here and be cross-examined by you."

The Russian Revolution. Having twice been to Russia, Dorr was anxious to observe the 1917 revolution. One night she lay in her hotel bed listening to the murder of a general in the next room. When she tried to leave the country after five months, all of her notes were confiscated by the authorities, so she wrote *Inside the Russian Revolution* (1917) entirely from memory. In her opinion, Russia had become "a barbarous and half-insane land. . . . Oratory held the stupid populace spellbound while the Germans invaded the country, boosted Lenin into power and paved the way for the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. . . . Russia was done."

War Correspondent. Since her son Julian was serving in the army in France, she asked her editors to send her back to Europe. When the French government refused to grant her press credentials because she was a woman, she signed on as a lecturer with the YMCA. She walked into a mess tent where her son was eating. Astonished, he cried, "Mother!" and no soldier would sit down until she had been found a chair. Mothers were unquestionably better received than female war correspondents. Later Dorr covered the Women's Death Battalion in Russia and described an incident in which fellow soldiers broke into their barracks in order to rape them but were held off by the women at gunpoint. In addition to her many wartime articles, she also wrote *A Soldier's Mother in France* (1918) for women on the home front. Dorr, along with Louise Bryant, Mary Roberts Rinehart, and Bessie Beattie, pioneered the way for women to become war correspondents. After spending many more years in Europe and writing more books, including her autobiography, *A Woman of Fifty*, Dorr died in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, in 1948 at age eighty.

Sources:

Rheta Childe Dorr, *A Woman of Fifty* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1924);

Julia Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents* (New York: Ivy Books, 1988);

Ishbel Ross, *Ladies of the Press* (New York: Harper, 1936).

GEORGE HERRIMAN

1880-1944

COMIC STRIP ARTIST

One of the Greats. Born to French-Creole parents in New Orleans, George Herriman grew up in the rich culture of the southern bayous. A lifelong animal lover and vegetarian, his comic strips usually featured talking animals. He began cartooning in 1901, and when "Krazy Kat" became an independent strip in 1913, he created one of the most enduring characters of the century. Herriman was the most celebrated, and in many people's minds the greatest, comic strip artist of his time.

Crusades. Herriman's characters often went on quixotic crusades, following their plans at the expense and ruin of everyone around them. From 1904 to 1910 he drew a strip for the *New World* called "Major Ozone's Fresh Air Crusade." In 1909 and 1910 he played with another called "Gooseberry Sprig." It featured talking animals, off-center plots, and barely sketched settings. In 1910 he began drawing "The Dingbat Family" for the *New York Evening Journal*. It included a substrip or parallel story that unfolded along the bottom with smaller characters making comic commentary. Krazy Kat began in the substrip of "The Dingbat Family."

A Wise Fool. The Kat spoke in obtuse near nonsense. He turned imbecilic phrases based on his own skewed logic. His nemesis was usually a mouse, and someone usually ended up with a rock or a brick to the head. Connoisseurs dubbed it a more "literate" version of Bud Fisher's "Mutt and Jeff" strip, where a confidence man always has his plans foiled by his nincompoop sidekick. Krazy Kat grew steadily more philosophical as the strip matured.

Cabinet Meetings. In 1916 William Randolph Hearst gave "Krazy Kat" a full page in his Sunday papers, but not in the comic section. He built a new section, a sophisticated arts supplement called "City Life," around it. President Woodrow Wilson took such delight in "Krazy Kat" that he read it to cabinet meetings. Herriman drew many other strips simultaneously, but none lasted as long or drew as much praise as "Krazy Kat." In 1927 Krazy Kat's most enduring adversary, Ignatz Mouse, came to life from a prehistoric cave painting. Herriman died in 1944 at the age of sixty-four.

Sources:

Arthur Asa Berger, *The Comic-Stripped American: What Dick Tracy, Blondie, Daddy Warbucks and Charlie Brown Tell Us About Ourselves* (New York: Walker, 1973);

Richard Marschall, *America's Great Comic-Strip Artists* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989).

JOHN REED

1887-1920

REPORTER



Busy at Harvard, and After. Born in Portland, Oregon, in 1887, John Reed entered Harvard University with the illustrious class of 1910 that included Walter Lippmann and T. S. Eliot. He studied writing and found time to write for the *Lampoon*, help edit the literary *Monthly*, captain the

water polo team, sing in the glee club, and write lyrics for Hasty Pudding theatricals. After graduation he traveled to Europe, settled among a bohemian circle in New York's Greenwich Village, and wrote for the muckraking

American Magazine and for the radical *Masses* after its founding in 1911.

The Stories of Workers and Peasants. Reed wrote with great passion about domestic social problems. His moving account of a strike by twenty thousand textile workers in Paterson, New Jersey, attracted widespread attention. In 1913 *Metropolitan* magazine sent him to Mexico to cover Pancho Villa's peasant revolution against the dictator Victoriano Huerta. When he found Villa's forces in the mountains of Chihuahua, Reed began to fight alongside them. His vivid dispatches inspired Walter Lippmann, who had also already achieved renown, to say that "with Jack Reed reporting begins." After returning from Mexico, he wrote an account of a miners' strike in Colorado that culminated in the "Ludlow Massacre," in which mine owners burned a tent city constructed by the strikers and twenty-five people died. Reed habitually stepped over the line between reporting and advocacy, a tendency that lent great power to his writing, even if it called his impartiality into question.

Russia, Portland, Provincetown. In 1914 Reed went to Europe with illustrator Boardman Robinson to report on the war for *Metropolitan*. They received a cool reception in czarist Saint Petersburg because of Reed's socialist views, which would become his ticket to great access to the leaders of the Russian Revolution three years later. In 1916, on a visit to his parents in Portland, he met the wife of a local dentist. Louise Bryant followed him back to New York, where they eventually married. They spent their time in Greenwich Village and Provincetown, Massachusetts, where Reed had helped to found the Provincetown Players.

Revolution. In 1917, as revolutionaries came closer to ousting Czar Nicholas from his throne, Reed decided to return to Russia. It took him six months to raise enough money and to secure the impractical sponsorship of the left-wing *Call*, *The Masses*, and *Seven Arts* magazine. Bryant earned accreditation from the Bell Syndicate. She and Reed arrived in Saint Petersburg in September, where they witnessed the October Revolution firsthand. Their best contact was Alexander Gumberg, a well-connected Russian. Reed kept a daily diary and spent every possible hour conversing with well-educated leaders and peasant radicals alike. He witnessed Vladimir Lenin's return and proclamation of the victorious "Workers and Peasants Government" at the Great Hall of the Smolny Institute. While some foreign correspondents were ignored or attacked, Reed was treated as a comrade and worked more effectively than his peers.

Troubles. Reed was not allowed to return to the United States in January 1918 because of a sedition charge. He stayed in Norway and wrote *Ten Days That Shook the World* (1919), an account of the revolution in Russia that stands as one of the great books of journalism. His close proximity to the events of the October Revolution makes it an indispensable guide, full of vivid