WAR OF THE WORDS: PROPAGANDA, PUBLIC OPINION AND REVOLUTIONARY MEXICO DURING THE GREAT WAR

by

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ABSTRACT

MATTHEW EDWARD NEEDHAM. War of the Words: Propaganda, Public Opinion, and Revolutionary Mexico during the Great War. (Under the direction of DR. JÜRGEN BUCHENAU)

In August 1914, Mexico was between war and revolution. The defeat of Victoriano Huerta marked a turning point in the Mexican Revolution as Venustiano Carranza came to power. At the same time, Britain severed German telegraph cables to the Americas. From that point forward, Mexico – as a neutral power – was caught in the middle of a propaganda war between the Allies and Germany. This thesis examines how the First World War was portrayed in Mexican papers from 1914 to 1919. I argue that the portrayal of the war was strongly influenced by forces outside of the control of the press. Through examining both pro-Ally (*aliadófilo*) and pro-German (*germanófilo*) papers, as well as other primary documentation such as State Department records, it is clear that foreign propaganda as well as censorship from the Carranza regime altered how the war was presented. In turn, foreign involvement and government censorship added to the growth of pro-German sentiments in the press as solidarity with the Allies dwindled. This work also challenges other notions such unified Constitutionalist support for the German cause, periodization, and the role of the U.S. blacklists in the press.

DEDICATION

To the many stones that make up the foundation of my life, thank you.

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CHAPTER 1: A FIESTA OF BULLETS AND A GREAT WAR

On 29 June, 1914, the Veracruz-based newspaper, *La Opinion*, ran the front-page headline "The Heir to the Throne of Austria-Hungary Assassinated." The article gave a synopsis of the previous morning's events and made note that Charles I had become the new heir to the Dual Monarchy.[1] At the same time, other front-page articles read "The Final Hour", "Volunteers and Spanish Defend S[an]. Luis," and La Bufa Is the Scene of a Bloody Epic."[2] It seemed as if the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was of little importance compared to the other articles, if it was not for the accompanying spread.[3] On 28 August, their front-page read "The Teutons [Germans] Advance Towards Paris" with subheadings stating, "They Take Longwy, But Suffer Heavy Losses at St. Die" and "Meanwhile, Russian Troops Invade East Prussia. Bloodied Europe Trembles."[4] Once again, news of troubles at home were juxtaposed alongside war reporting with headlines such as "The Parallelogram of Forces" and "How to Verify Federal Licenses in Xalapa."[5]

As war broke out across the Atlantic in August 1914, Mexico was embroiled in violence and upheaval. Although the nation remained neutral, the war made its way into

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[1] Translated from: "Fueron Asesinados Los Herederos Del Trono de Austria Hungría" *La Opinión* (Veracruz, México.) June 29, 1914. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.
[2] Translated from: "A Última Hora," "A Voluntarios y Españoles se Encargó la Defensa de S. Luis," and "La Bufa Fué Escenario de una Epopeya Sangrientísima" Ibid.
[3] The front-page spread included a picture of the gardens of Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, Austria, along with a picture of the royal family including the late Franz Ferdinand and a portrait of the aging Emperor Franz Joseph I.
[4] Translated from: "Los Teutones Avanzan Arrolladores Sobre Paris," "Toman Longwy Pero Sufren un Descalabro en St. Die," and "Mientras Tanto las Tropas Rusas han Invadido la Prusia Oriental. -Europa Tiembla Ensangrentada." *La Opinión.* (Veracruz, México.) August 28, 1914.
[5] Translated from "El Paralelogramo De Las Fuerzas" and "Como Se Verifico En Xalapa El Licenciamiento De Los Federales." Ibid.

the public consciousness through the press. Amidst headlines of revolutionary and reactionary strife, the press reported on events taking place in the battlefields of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Yet, war reporting was far from objective. The situation in Mexico did not allow unbiased coverage.

This thesis analyzes how the war was represented in Mexican newspapers amid revolutionary activity. It seeks to answer the following questions: how did the Mexican press represent "the war to end all wars" during the revolution; how did the United States and other foreign powers manipulate war coverage; and how did both revolutionary and reactionary leadership portray both Allied and Central powers. I argue that the portrayal of the war was strongly influenced by forces outside of the control of the press. The imperial rivalry between the United States and Germany, the censorship used by the regimes of both Victoriano Huerta and Venustiano Carranza, and the propaganda war between foreign governments created conditions that rendered the press unable to portray the war in objective terms. These forces caused the Mexican press which initially held pro-Ally (or at the very least Francophone) or neutral sentiments to slowly adopt a pro-German stance.

To show how the coverage of the war was presented by the press media, I will examine various articles on the war in newspapers from both Mexico City and Veracruz published from 1914 to 1919. This scope allows me to examine coverage of events from the final days of Huerta's regime to the Paris Peace Conference. I will also take into consideration who controlled the newspapers in these cities, whether they were pro-Ally or pro-German, and what aspects of the war these papers covered. My research shows that despite the seemingly pro-Ally sentiments in 1914, the press was divided between

aliadófilo and *germanófilo* by 1916. This reflects the growing involvement of foreign actors and the attitudes of revolutionary leaders towards the war in Europe.

1.1 The Revolution

The Revolution had its roots in the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz whose presidency started in 1876. The regime sought to modernize Mexico to the standards of Western Europe and the United States. His attempt to court the Great Powers and the United States found mixed successes, ultimately gaining favor with the U.S. and their industrialists. However, allowing foreigners to acquire and exploit land and natural resources from Mexico's rural and indigenous communities without their consent created issues. Land issues coupled with corruption within the *Porfiriato* accelerated the revolution. The breaking point came in 1910, when Díaz had his opponent, Francisco Madero, arrested on 13 June and "won" the election. However, it was clear that Díaz rigged the election. As a result, an insurrection broke out on 20 November, 1910, spearheaded by a collation of urban middle-class intellectuals, upper-class landowners, merchants, and revolutionary leaders including Emiliano Zapata and Pascual Orozco.[6]

After the revolutionaries captured the important border town of Ciudad Juárez in May 1911, Díaz went into exile in May 1911. Madero was inaugurated as president in November and remained in power until February 1913. In a series of events know as *La Decena Trágica*, General Victoriano Huerta rose to power following a coup against the

[6] Jürgen Buchenau and Gilbert Joseph have pointed out that the rather quick defeat of the *Porfiriato* and lack of consensus on goals in the 1910 uprising proved to be problematic. Comparing the 1910 revolt to those later in the century, they note that Madero's movement had "little sense of shared commonalities" and "broadly diffused notions of and imagined national community." Gilbert M Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2013), 38-46.

Madero administration that overthrew the president. On 21 February – a day after Huerta's swearing in ceremony– Madero and his vice president, José María Pino Suárez were assassinated by the order of Major Francisco Cárdenas.

Huerta ruled Mexico as a self-serving dictator until July 1914 and was not recognized by neither the Taft or Wilson administrations. Relations with both the U.S. and Germany worsened drastically, leading to the U.S. occupation of Veracruz and the withdrawal of German support for the regime. He faced resistance from within Mexico as well. Both the Constitutionalist movement under Venustiano Carranza in northern Mexico and Zapata's *Zapatista* movement in Morelos to the south waged a war against the regime. With Huerta's forces defeated and Huerta joining Díaz in going into exile in Europe, Constitutionalists tried to establish peace by means of the Convention of Aguascalientes. Unfortunately, infighting between Carranza and Villa led to a period of prolonged violence between the factions which lasted through 1915, when Carranza's primary general, Alvaro Obregón, defeated Villa in a series of battles. The U.S. government recognized the Carranza regime in October 1915 and following Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico in March 1916, invaded the country.

By 1917, the revolution was ending. In January, Germany made an offer to Mexico to join them in the war by offering to reclaim the U.S. Southwest. Carranza declined the offer. In February, his government ratified the new constitution, which promoted Mexican sovereignty in the face of foreigners who wished to exploit the country. The war between the factions was over yet violence persisted at the regional level. In April 1919, Zapata was killed by Constitutionalist forces after being tricked into meeting with a Constitutionalist general. Carranza's death came the following year after

opposing Obregón's candidacy. Obregón viewed the First Chief's lack of support as betrayal and decried Zapata's assassination as cowardly. Carranza was killed by assassins in Tlaxcalantongo on 20 May, 1920 after fleeing Mexico City in light of another coup. His death brought an end to the revolution as Obregón came to power.[7]

1.2 Neutrality in a World War

Mexico remained neutral throughout the World War despite pressure on both sides of the Atlantic. By August 1914 the country was in a state of disarray. Severe inflation, entire sectors of production being crippled or destroyed, foreign capital leaving the country, and portions of the population facing starvation made the possibility of joining the war impossible, even if desired.[8] Some sections of the economy such as the oil industry endured however it faced pressure from the U.S. over oil rights. Intervention on behalf of U.S. companies was considered on the grounds of possible German intrigue.[9] Blacklists were also a problem. Used by the British during the Napoleonic Wars, blacklisting aimed to discourage trade and any sort of economic support for France and their allies. This approach was adopted in the First World War as well. In 1912 the blacklists were resurrected in the form of the Trading with the Enemy Laws (TWEL). Enacted as the start of the war, the TWEL sought to curtail trade from Germany and prevent them from trading with neutrals by imposing penalties and restrictions.[10] In 1917,

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[7] Ibid., 84-85.
[8] Lorenzo Meyer, *Mexico and the United States in the Oil Controversy, 1917 - 1942* [México y los Estados Unidos en el conflicto petrolero, 1917 - 1942], trans. Muriel Vasconcellos (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1977; repr., English), 42.
[9] Ibid., 52-53.
[10] Phillip A. Dehne, *On the Far Western Front: Britain's First World War in South America* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2009), 35-36.

the U.S. compiled their own blacklist as a part of the Trading with the Enemy Act (TWEA). Both of these acts targeted neutral countries, representing attempts by foreign powers to extend their wartime policies on countries opting for neutrality.

The major figures of the revolution were not oblivious to the war and were divided on the topic. Although Huerta received support from Germany for a time, it was after his exile that revolutionary leaders grappled with the foreign pressure related to the war. Yet among members of the same faction opinions on the war differed. For example, Carranza was a *germanófilo* and flirted with the German Empire as a means to secure a counterweight against the United States. Obregón, on the other hand, was an *aliadófilo* who desired to fight for the Allies in France. Outside of revolutionary circles, civilians and foreign officials also shaped the war in Mexico.

Mexico in 1910 had approximately five thousand British and French nationals, as well as four thousand Germans. In addition to European immigrants, twenty-one thousand U.S. citizens lived in Mexico as well.[11] While some members of the European communities served overseas, others distanced themselves from the war or acted on behalf of their country in Mexico. Most notably the German enclave in Mexico City worked toward promoting pro-German attitudes with the help of the *Verband Deutscher Reichsangehöriger* (Union of Subjects of the German Empire or VDR). When the U.S. joined the war, the Committee on Public Information (CPI) funded pro-Ally and pro-U.S. propaganda in *El Universal*. The VDR was a known contributor to the official paper of the Carranza regime, *El Demócrata*, and promoted anti-American sentiments.

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[11] Jürgen Buchenau, *Tools of Progress: A German Merchant Family in Mexico City, 1865-Present* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 14.

Resentment towards the U.S. was nothing new but it intensified as result of the military interventions during the revolution. The Díaz regime passed legislation in 1883 and 1886 which redefined landownership and citizenship: the "Law of Baldios" and "Law of Foreignness and Naturalization." [12] These policies sacrificed land held by rural and indigenous communities and Mexico's own resources, in exchange for financial support and economic stimulation from the U.S. This allowed for the creation of an Anglo-American enclave in Mexico that utilized the land and resources with no regard to disputes between rural communities and the Díaz regime.[13] According to historian John M. Hart, by 1910, roughly 35 percent of Mexico's surface area was owned by foreigners and of that 35 percent, Anglo-Americans held about 27 percent. At the same time, just under 60 percent of Mexico's coastal and border areas were also held by Anglo-Americans.[14]

By the end of the war, only Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Venezuela, El Salvador, and Mexico remained neutral and maintained relations with the German Empire. Bolivia, Peru, Uruguay cut off diplomatic ties with Germany in 1917 but did not make an official declaration of war. Brazil, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Panama broke ties and declared war on Germany, with Honduras joining the war in the summer of 1918. Of these eight countries, Brazil was the only one to contribute any degree of manpower to the Allied war effort with roughly sixty

[12] The "Law of Baldios" gave foreigners the ability to acquire "public land" and rights to its resources, while the "Law of Foreignness and Naturalization" bypassed the 1857 Constitution's guidelines for citizenship, allowing citizenship to pass from male immigrants to their children. Ibid., 43.
[13] John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 261.
[14] Ibid., 260.

thousand Brazilian soldiers sent to France and the Brazilian navy deployed in the South Atlantic and southern Mediterranean.[15]

1.4 Sources and Organization

This thesis pulls from a variety of primary sources ranging from unpublished State Department records to the Mexican newspapers themselves. Archival material from the National Archives include the State Department records on the World War and the internal affairs of Mexico. This material included discussions of the TWEA, blacklists, as well as observations on revolutionary activity and perceived dangers towards U.S. influence. Other primary sources include the Robert Lansing and Woodrow Wilson papers, the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series, and George Creel's own account of the CPI.

The most important material for this study comes from the Mexican newspapers themselves. Although there were several newspapers in revolutionary Mexico, my thesis focuses only a small sample. Some of them, such as *El Liberal* and *La Reforma,* were attached to correspondences in State Department records. With a few exceptions, these papers remained untranslated by U.S. officials. Other papers such as *El Demócrata, El Universal, La Opinión,* and *Diario del Hogar* were referenced or cited in secondary scholarship rather frequently. Of them, *El Demócrata* and *El Universal* are cited the most in both Spanish and English-language scholarship. Unfortunately, this thesis will only touch the first few weeks of 1915 as covered by *La Opinión*. I will not be able to show

[15] Frederick C Luebke, *Germans in Brazil: A Comparative History of Culture Conflict During World War I* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 199.

the Mexican interpretation and reaction to events such as the botched landing at Gallipoli nor the use of chemical weapons during the Second Battle of Ypres. However; this is not to say that all reporting stopped for that year. In fact, other dailies such as *El Dictamen* and *El Demócrata* continued publication throughout the year.

The remainder of this work will be explored in the following chapters. Chapter two explores the historiography of Mexico in World War One while situating the discussion within existing historiographies. Chapter three, "Between War and Revolution," will explore the conflicting views of the Mexican press. This examination will be multifaceted, taking into consideration the split between the Constitutionalists, U.S. interventionism, and the propaganda war. Chapter four, "Mexico Responds," uses the Trading with the Enemy Act as a case study to show how the differing opinions of newspapers and imperial rivalries converge in the final two years of the war.

CHAPTER 2: FRAMING THE SCHOLARSHIP

Mexico and the First World War is a topic that stretches through multiple historiographies. This chapter aims to situate my examination of the Mexican press within multiple historiographies, primarily the First World War in Latin America and Mexican relations with Europe and the United States. It will show the continuity and changes within these areas of study while placing the study of public opinion as an extension of ongoing discussions on Mexico and the Great War. This chapter privileges English-language scholarship with some notable exceptions with Esperanza Durán, Yolanda de la Parra, Adriana Orozco, and Romain Robinet.

2.1 The World War: Latin America, Mexico, and Propaganda

The first histories of the First World War were conceived during the war and in the inter-war period. Traditional diplomatic and military histories that focus on the "great men" of the war – generals, diplomats, heads of state – were the primary focus and sought to explain and justify a country's involvement in the war. The first work examining Mexico and Latin America's place in the World War was *Latin America and the War* (1925) by Percy A. Martin. Drawing upon various archival sources from Latin America, as well as the *Foreign Relations* series, Martin provides the first diplomatic history of the Great War and its effects in Latin America. While noting that these countries contributed very little to the war in terms of manpower, Martin writes that these issues:

> Should not blind us to the tremendous significance of the Great War in the historical evolution of our southern neighbors. This is true of neutrals and belligerents alike; for it

is now recognized as all but axiomatic that in a struggle of such unprecedented proportions neutrality could in no wise spell immunity from the effects of the war.[16]

In addition, Martin notes throughout the work the role of public opinion and the relationship these countries had with the Great Powers. Unlike his contemporaries, Martin placed blame on Germany not for starting the war but for promoting neutrality in the global war. His ethnocentric attitudes also are readily apparent as well. This is very evident in his examination of Mexico. He stated that it was expected for Mexico to join the Allies or at least practice a "benevolent neutrality" and suggested that the Mexican administration "owed many favors, and in fact, its very existence, to the United States." However, Mexico instead opted for a neutrality that was "violated on a number of occasions" because of German subterfuge.[17]

Martin's work is republished in the 1960s; however, there was no new literature on World War One in Latin America published until the 1980s. The overall historiography of the war did evolve during this time though. The growth of social histories in the 1960s and 1970s moved the focus away from the "great men" approach by examining economics, class, and the role of civilians and soldiers. Greater access to archival material benefited historians as well. By the 1980s, the historiography expanded further by incorporating gender, memory, identity, and subaltern approaches to the war. Geographically, the study of the war was viewed less in terms of a simple European war and instead in a broader, global context.

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[16] Percy Alvin Martin, *Latin America and the War*, The Albert Shaw Lectures on Diplomatic History (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1925), 2.
[17] Ibid., 521-36.

There are several notable works to come out of the sudden boom of literature in the 1980s. Frederick Luebke's study on Teuto-Brazilians and the collaborative work by Bill Albert and Paul Henderson's economic history of the war in Latin America represent important works, as well as examples of how the scholarship on the war evolved. Luebke's *Germans in Brazil* (1987) illustrated the cultural conflict between Teuto and Luso-Brazilians during the World War through the examination of "the social structure, the institutions, and the attitudes and beliefs of the immigrants, in addition to the responses of the most or receiving society to these strangers in their midst."[18] Albert and Henderson's *South America and the First World War* (1989) focuses on Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru and examines their economic development during the war. Their work argues that the war was a catalyst that shaped the economic landscape of these countries leading to the "export boom." However, they do not make a direct connection between the war and the boom by stating that many of these developments had pre-war roots.[19]

While their works remain an important aspect of the changing historiography, the most relevant pieces on the war and Mexico appeared in 1981 and 1985. Friedrich Katz's *The Secret War in Mexico* (1981) and Esperanza Durán's *Guerra y revolución* (1985) are two of the most important works that this thesis draws upon. Both Katz and Durán emphasize the global dimensions of both the Mexican Revolution and the First World War. Katz argues that by using both direct and indirect means, the Great Powers

[18] Luebke, *Germans in Brazil*, 3.
[19] Bill Albert and Paul Henderson, *South America and the First World War: The Impact of the War on Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Chile*, ed. Simon Collier, vol. 65, Cambridge Latin American Studies (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5.

attempted to pit the different factions of the revolution against each other. At the same time, the revolutionaries manipulated the Great Powers to their own benefit as "a weapon that necessarily altered the posture of its possessor."[20] Additionally, Katz suggests that the Constitutionalists were universally pro-German, citing foreign policy towards the U.S. and *germanófilo* propaganda disseminated through the press.

Durán's monograph expands upon Katz's argument by examining the actions of the Great Powers in Mexico as a transnational study of the war. Her work is also one of the first to examine the Mexican Revolution within the context of the World War specifically. The decision to change the scope of the work to look at the period from 1914 to 1918 as opposed to the entirety of the revolution leads to a different examination from Katz. Compared to Katz who emphasizes the wartime policies of the U.S. and Germany later in their work, the war is central to understanding the economics and cultural dimensions of the final years of the revolution. Durán's work aims to illustrate the nature and scope behind the intervention of the Great Powers in Mexico by through examining "interactions between international incidents and internal events in Mexico, during these years of conflict and change, which coincided with the most violent and confusing stage of the Mexican Revolution."[21]

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[20] Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981), x-xi.

[21] Translated from: El propósito de este libro es evaluar la intervención de las grandes potencias en México Duránte la Primera Guerra Mundial – su motivación, naturaleza y alcance – y examinar las interacciones entre los incidentes internacionales y los sucesos internos en México, Duránte estos años de conflagración y cambio internacional, que coincidieron con la etapa más violenta y confusa de la Revolución mexicana. Esperanza Durán, *Guerra y revolución: Las grandes potencias y México, 1914-1918* (District Federales, Mexico: El Colegio de Mexico, 1985), 13.

Additionally, Durán's work draws off a model created by political scientist Graham Allison referred to as the "bureaucratic policy paradigm." This model, as she applies it to her study, attempts to "emphasize the weight that the individuals had in the decision making made by the Great Powers with respect to Mexico" noting that a large number of Mexican actors – both official and private – played a role in shaping attitudes surrounding the revolution.[22] This approach lends itself towards refuting Katz's claim about the Constitutionalists universally supporting the Germans. Individuals within the Constitutionalists, especially Obregón, maintained pro-Ally sympathies.

Durán also argues that foreign intervention in Mexico during this period is "more complex than it appeared" due to the number of actors involved and how intervention was represented. She notes that many times, unarmed intervention succeeded in influencing the country versus armed intervention. The Great Powers applied several means of intervening in Mexico during the war ranging from traditional means through sanctions, diplomatic recognition, sabotage, and destabilization. Additionally, they also used espionage, blackmail, and bribery to achieve their goals, whether they be to protect economic holdings, maintain neutrality, or foster animosity.[23]

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[22] Translated from: Es decir, el presente estudio intenta destacar el peso que tuvieron los individuos en la toma de decisiones efectuada por las grandes potencias respecto a México. A lo largo de investigación se hecho evidente que, en efecto, la maquinaria burocrática no es en absoluto monolítica, y que en la toma de decisiones hacia México influyeron una gran cantidad de actores oficiales (y también privados) que tenían diferentes apreciaciones sobre la Revolución mexicana y sus líderes, y abogaban por aquellas políticas que más convenían a sus propios intereses. Ibid., 16-17.

[23] Translated from: El tema de intervención extranjera en México, Duránte este periodo, es más complejo de lo que parecía vista, pues tomó distintas apariencias e involucró a una gran cantidad de actores. La forma de intervención más estudiada es la armada, pero no es la más común ni, en la mayoría de los casos, necesaria. En efecto, la intromisión de un país en los asuntos internos de otro puede ser de diversos tipos, en ocasiones más efectivos aun que la intervención armada. Estas formas de injerencia van desde métodos convencionales, como sería el reconocimiento diplomático, hasta las sanciones comerciales, financieras u otras, e incluso los métodos subrepticios como el sabotaje o los intentos de desestabilización de un gobierno hacia otro. Finalmente, otras formas de intervención son aquellas perpetradas por el individuos o

With the centennial of the World War in 2014, historians still continue to expand the study of the war. As with the study of non-European theaters of combat such as Africa, there is an increase of interest towards neutral countries and areas outside of the traditional spheres of scholarship on the war. Mexico and other Latin American countries fall into this category. Newer monographs, journal articles, and chapters in edited works show an increased interest in the ways which the Great War shaped Latin America and continue framing the war as a truly global one. Works such as Phillip Dehne's *On the Far Western Front* (2009) examines Britain's policy of economic warfare against Germany through the Trading with the Enemy Laws and their implementation in South America. His work is vital for contextualizing the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917 and allied interests in South America. Others, such as Jane Rausch's *Colombia and World War I* (2014) explore the politics of neutral Colombia during the war and illustrates another case of the Great Powers attempting to shape public opinion.

Friedrich Schuler's *Secret Wars and Secret Policies in the Americas* (2010) contextualizes the secret war policy used by Germany and other countries in the Americas before the 1930s. Schuler's work encompasses more than just Mexico and discusses the role that foreign communities of German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish immigrant communities played in foreign policy. He argues that "the fascist fight against democracy and the U.S. did not begin in 1933" but instead was "a continuation of

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grupos privados que actúan con o sin el consentimiento de sus respectivos gobiernos. Éstas abarcan una gama muy sutil de matices que van desde la influencia política personal hasta el uso del chantaje o del soborno. Duránte el periodo de la Gran Guerra, los políticos norteamericanos y europeos utilizaron o sancionaron varios de estos métodos para influir en la situación interna de México. Ibid., 18-19.

practices and culmination of processes that had developed since before 1900."[24] The practices and processes he references are the exploitation of these communities and their use to further imperial policies abroad. Propaganda, espionage, and sabotage are a just a few ways that these communities were used for the gain of their home country. Schuler's work stands out when compared to Katz and Durán's work as it encompasses more than just the years of the revolution and the World War. Additionally, by including Italy, Spain, and expanding on the Japanese role in the secret war, Schuler ties these seemingly disconnected threads together with Germany's policies in the Americas.

The most important scholarship on the war in Latin America is Stefan Rinke's *Latin America and the First World War* (2017). Originally published in German in 2015, his monograph represents a major departure from previous works by showing the global dimension of the war as it relates to Latin America. His work aims to "cover the range of Latin American experiences at least *pars pro toto*" and "analyze the global dimension of the history of the First World War from a perspective of a continent, which may have existed at the margins from a European standpoint, but nonetheless experiences lasting changes due to the conflagration in Europe."[25] Instead of privileging hemispheric giants such as Mexico or Brazil, he examines all nineteen republics and comments that the lesser studied nations such as Guatemala for example bear importance because

[24] Friedrich E. Schuler, *Secret Wars and Secret Policies in the Americas, 1842 - 1929* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 3.
[25] Stefan Rinke, *Latin America and the First World War* [Im Sog der Katastrophe: Lateinamerika und der Erste Weltkrieg], ed. Erez Manela, John McNeil, and Aviel Roshwald, trans. Christopher W. Reid, Global and International History (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 10.

"important ideas and stimuli frequently came from these less affected countries that conveyed changing trends in the predominant world view."[26]

The study of propaganda and public opinion is another avenue of World War One historiography that plays an influential role in the work. The majority of these works focus on Allied propaganda efforts, specifically American efforts. The first major study was Harold D. Laswell's *Propaganda Technique in World War* (1927). His examination framed propaganda as "the war of ideas on ideas" and aimed to examine the technique of American, British, French, and German propaganda campaigns and how they utilized hate, morale and demoralization, and cementing "the friendship of neutral and allied people."[27] In 1968, H.C. Peterson published *Propaganda for War* which explored Allied efforts to draw the U.S. into the war. Examining American attempts at swaying public opinion in neutral countries is an important part of this thesis as well. Of all the wartime committees established, the Committee on Public Information remains the most vital one for this work. As such, most works on American propaganda center around the CPI. Stephen Vaughn's *Holding Fast the Inner Lines* (1987) and Alan Axelrod's *Selling the Great War* (2014) provide insight to how the CPI functioned and their aims. These are supplemented by George A. Creel's own account of the CPI published after the war.

2.2 Mexican, European, and U.S. Relations

The literature on Mexican, European, and U.S. foreign relations typically focuses on major themes of imperialism and imperial rivalry, hegemony, and resistance. Early

[26] Ibid., 11.
[27] Harold D Laswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York, NY: A.A. Knopf, 1927), 12.

diplomatic histories from the 1920s through 1950s emphasized the justification for overseas imperialism by the United States – often with blatant racialized and ethnocentric commentary. Percy Martin's comment on Mexico "owing" the United States their existence is just one example. Other diplomatic historians such as William Spence Robertson and Samuel Flagg Bemis justified U.S. imperialism by branding it as "protective imperialism." Many historians departed from this perspective since and provide fare more critical studies of U.S. foreign policy. For many of these works, the role of public opinion is minimized yet they further contextualize how the divided press portrayed the war.

Robert Freeman Smith's *The United States and Revolutionary Nationalism in Mexico, 1916-1932* (1972) argues that attempts to control and dominate underdeveloped countries causes more problems than solutions, citing the multiple times the U.S. intervened in Mexican affairs during the revolution.[28] Both Michael Desch and Lars Schoultz note on the role of hegemony in U.S. policy towards Latin America. Desch's *When the Third World Matters* (1993) devotes a chapter to how Latin America, specifically Mexico, became an important asset to U.S. grand strategy during the Great War. Schoultz's *Beneath the United States* (1998) introduces the idea of "hegemonic creep" as the means through which the United States preserves their interests in these countries. Furthermore, he points out the prevailing notion of Latin American inferiority which he discerns as the "essential" core of U.S. policy in the region.[29] In addition, the

[28] Robert Freeman Smith, *The United States and Revolutionary Nationalism in Mexico, 1916-1932* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), xii-xiii.
[29] Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), xiv-xv.

works of Emily Rosenberg explore the role of dollar diplomacy and its cultural and political implications. John Mason Hart's *Empire and Revolution* (2002) explores another dynamic of relations by turning the focus to civilian actors as opposed to diplomats and other politicians. He notes that despite a long history of interaction, the indifference the majority of Americans have toward Mexico "left bilateral affairs in the hands of economic and political elites who are less than representative of American diversity, especially in the development of democratic institutions and respect for Mexican sovereignty."[30]

The imperial rivalry between the United States and European powers is also explored by multiple historians. Of the Great Powers, Germany's interests in Latin America remain a point of interest for many historians of the 1910s. The German presence in Mexico – both politically and culturally – is also another area that is widely explored. In addition to Martin and Katz who both studied the implication of German intervention in Latin America, other historians examined the broader narrative. Nancy Mitchell's *The Danger of Dreams* (1998) is one such monograph with her focus on the competing aims of Germany and the United States throughout Latin America from the late nineteenth century through the start of the Great War. Mitchell argues that there was no true German threat to the Americas during the early twentieth century and comments that "it is important not to conflate policy and dreams, the official and the personal; it is important not to emphasize rhetoric while downplaying the record of what was actually

[30] Hart, *Empire and Revolution*, 3.

done."[31] Her monograph acts as "a case study in threat perception, the study of the subtle tug-of-war waged between capabilities and desires" and an examination of imperial rivalry.[32] She illustrates this through examining the Venezuelan blockade in 1902-1903, the German colony in Brazil, and the relationship between Wilson, Huerta, and Wilhelm, cutting her study short before Carranza takes power.

Not all European interactions with Mexico or Latin America carried imperialist or expansionist undertones. Jürgen Buchenau's *Tools of Progress* (2004) focuses on the German enclave in Mexico City through the lens of the Boker family. He illustrates that the Bokers were not "shrewd opportunists" nor were they servants of the German Empire in any capacity. Instead, they are simply an entrepreneurial merchant family that owned a hardware store in the Mexican capital. The Bokers were targeted by the Trading with the Enemy Act and allowed their building to house the VDR; however, even amid the turmoil of the revolution and World War, they remained distant from the imperialist rhetoric of Berlin. By doing so, they represent a unique aspect of life in the German enclave during a troubled decade.

While most diplomatic histories examine these issues from an American perspective, others approach it from Mexico's position. For example, Josefina Zoraida Vázquez and Lorenzo Meyer's *The United States and Mexico* (1985) touches on the ongoing issues between both countries since the Mexican-American War and how these discrepancies affect their relationship. They note in their introduction that a "lack of

[31] Nancy Mitchell, *The Danger of Dreams: German and American Imperialism in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 6.
[32] Ibid., 7-8.

symmetry is the basics characteristic of contemporary United States-Mexican relations." A history of conflict between both countries, according to Vázquez and Meyer, "still shapes the Mexican responses to U.S. action, but not the other way around." They argue it by describing how both countries view their relations in terms of the Mexican-U.S. war. Mexico views the war as a reminder that conflict is an integral part of relations with the United States. Conversely, the U.S. views it "as dead and irrelevant to the present as the French and Indian war."[33]

2.3 Framing Public Opinion in the Scholarship

A breadth of information is provided by historians of the First World War that summarize or provide case studies of propaganda and public opinion in national contexts. Many of these works are fairly Eurocentric, focused on propaganda within the borders of the European empires and the United States. A much smaller amount focuses on this sort of pressure in Latin America and when discussed, it is fairly brief and in the form of chapters or articles. For example, María Inés Tato's chapter in *World War I and Propaganda* (2014) describes the challenges faced by Argentina when bombarded by propaganda from both sides with underlying imperialist aims. Yolanda de la Parra's 1986 article on *aliadófilo* and *germanófilo* newspapers and the 2017 article by Adriana Ortega Orozco and Romain Robinet on the divided sentiment in Mexican public opinion give greater emphasis on the press and propaganda.

[33] Josefina Zoraida Vàzquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *The United States and Mexico*, ed. Akira Iriye, The United States in the World: Foreign Perspectives (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 2.

This thesis differs from existing scholarship by addressing several aspects of the English-language historiography. First is by placing greater emphasis on the Mexican press. This break is significant because although much of the current discourse emphasizes the fact that foreign propaganda made its way to newspapers as "official coverage," the exact details of what the propaganda actually tried to convey is rarely mentioned. Both *aliadófilo* and *germanófilo* publications reported on the major diplomatic and military actions of the war in different terms and the tone shifted as the war continued.

Another major break this work has with existing scholarship is regarding the Constitutionalists and *germanófilismo*. Katz suggested that the Constitutionalists were unified in their support of Germans but maintained neutrality out of circumstance. Through an examination of the Constitutionalist press – which includes both *aliadófilo* and *germanófilo* papers – there is evidence that shows the Constitutionalists were not unanimously supporting Germany. Articles covering many of the battles of the war such as the Marne and Verdun, as well as the peacemaking process reveal drastically different interpretations of major events. This division in the faction is more in line with Durán, de la Parra, and Buchenau's understanding of the Carranza government and the dynamic between Carranza and Obregón.

The blacklists are another area that this work expands upon. Although mentioned in terms of trade and foreign policy, they are barely mentioned in relation to the press. In the months after the passing of the Trading with the Enemy Act, many newspapers published articles decrying the act and the blacklists. At the same time, both *aliadófilo* and *germanófilo* newspapers published updates surrounding the lists such as the addition

and removal of companies and individuals. Finally, periodization is another issue that is overlooked by many, especially with the start of the propaganda war. Katz and Durán start their examination of propaganda in 1916 with the creation of *El Universal*. This overlooks the fact that at the start of the war, Britain severed Germany's overseas cables as the opening move in the propaganda war. Furthermore, it overlooks that in the wake of Huerta's fall, the press was already fairly censored and had Francophone attitudes. The following chapters will illustrate and contextualize the types of sentiments that were expressed during this period and the responses on both sides of the Atlantic.

CHAPTER 3: PROPAGANDA AND WAR REPORTING

In August 1914, Mexico was caught between war and revolution. The defeat of Victoriano Huerta marked a turning point in the revolution as Venustiano Carranza, the First Chief of the Revolution, came to power. At the same time, Britain severed German telegraph cables to the Americas. From that point forward, Mexico – as a neutral power – was caught in the middle of a propaganda war between the Allies and Germany. The press was heavily censored under Huerta and Carranza and also reflected their attitudes towards the revolution and in Carranza's case, the war. Government censorship coupled with the influx of foreign propaganda meant that the likelihood of objective coverage was minimal.

The rivalry between the German Empire and the United States adds another dimension to the propaganda war. Both countries had competing diplomatic and economic interests in Mexico during the *Porfiriato* but according to historian Friedrich Katz, "the areas of friction between the two were not yet very great."[34] However, as the revolution and World War took center stage, Mexico turned into not only a source of profit but a strategic asset. The attitudes of Mexican leadership and the literate masses was as valuable as their oil.

This chapter examines the interplay of revolutionary leaders and imperial rivalries in manipulating press coverage of the World War from 1914 to 1916. With the press growing heavily divided by sympathy and support of the different sides, the Mexican press drifted away from objectivity. The press was initially neutral-leaning with some

[34] He mentions that there were common interest between investments from both countries; however, the raw materials and railroad sectors show the sharpest differences. Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico*, 58-59.

sympathy expressed for the Allies. From 1916 onward, the stark contrast between *aliadófilo* and *germanófilo* presses was clear as the propaganda war in Mexico reached its height. This chapter privileges three newspapers: *La Opinión* in Veracruz and *El Demócrata* and *El Universal* in Mexico City.

3.1 Relations and Rivalries

The Madero years brought noticeable changes to both U.S. and German investments. As the U.S. dealt with property damage and rising anti-U.S. attitudes, Germany saw the decline of the banking and arms industries decline under the new government. German investors attempted to get Madero's support for German military arms and training but was turned down based on potential backlash from the U.S. and Britain, as well as logistical issues.[35] German banks, specifically the Deutsche-Südamerikanische Bank, had ties with the Madero family and sought to exploit them. In 1913 however, the Deutsche-Südamerikanische Bank pulled out of Mexico after continued unrest and moved operations to Argentina because of the political instability.

The Huerta regime was hailed as a possible return to Porfirian policy by foreign investors. Unlike the Taft and Wilson administrations, the U.S. agricultural and oil industries hoped to benefit from his regime. However, Katz noted that American business interests "by no means possessed monolithic policy" and at times were opposed to each other.[36] The German consuls in Mexico were either coffee *fingueros* or businessmen, allowing for a greater cohesion between politics and business ventures. German arms

[35] Madero was interested in military support but turned down direct guidance. Although an effort was made on 13 September 1912 by a Mexican military attaché in Santiago, Chile, the plans never came to fruition nor did the attempts to acquire equipment from Krupp and Vulkan. Ibid., 84-85.
[36] Ibid., 159.

manufacturers such as Krupp, Mauser, and the Deutsche Waffen- und Munitionsfabriken supplied guns and ammunition to both the *Huertistas* and Constitutionalists. Of them, Krupp benefited the most, acquiring a contract with Huerta's regime in March 1914.[37] Some German investments worsened under Huerta. The Deutsche Bank's failure to obtain oil rights through a subsidiary of theirs played a role in worsening the German financial sector.

The political reality was very different. Relations worsened after *Huertista* forces detained a group of U.S. sailors at Tampico, leading to the bombardment and occupation of Veracruz. The affair increased anti-American sentiment with one historian stating that "His [Wilson] ham-handed intervention antagonized Mexicans of all stripes and did little to endear the United States, and Wilson himself, to Mexican liberals."[38] German relations also worsened from February 1913 to July 1914. Toward the end of the regime, there were proposals of a European coalition to maintain Huerta's leadership as strongman and a counter to possible U.S. intervention. But by mid-1914 the possibility of a joint action was minimal. The tensions growing in Europe, especially after the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Archduke, shifted interests away from preserving *Huertismo*. Furthermore, Huerta was fighting a losing war against the Constitutionalists and faced greater pressure from the U.S. because of the *Ypiranga* incident. The last bit of support the German Empire provided Huerta was transport out of Mexico aboard the *Dresden.*

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[37] Ibid., 208.

[38] Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 32.

3.2 Reporting During Revolution

Under Huerta, the press was heavily censored and information was routinely manipulated. The Huerta regime was supported by the largest Mexican dailies, which were controlled through intimidation. In cases where an article or editorial was critical of *Huertismo,* its author will be replaced "with a more 'obsequious' employee."[39] In other cases, the directors of newspapers would be arrested or entire publications shut down, as was the case with *El Dictamen* and *La Unión* in Veracruz and *La Voz de Juárez* in Ciudad Juárez.[40] In his war against the Constitutionalists, the *Huertista* press exaggerated victories and downplayed or ignored any setbacks in the field. This is especially true with major the loss at Zacatecas, a battle which historian Alan Knight referred to as "the last stand of *Huertismo*."[41]

On 24 June, 1914 – the day after the defeat at Zacatecas – *La Opinión* ran a series of articles covering the fighting on the Constitutionalist and *Zapatista* fronts. Headlines including "On Saturday, the *Zapatistas* Occupied Xochimilco, On the Outskirts of the Capital," "Yesterday, The Secretary of Don Venustiano Carranza Declares Revolutionaries Will Not Go to the Conference," and "Reconcentration of *Federales* in Cordoba, Soledad, Purga and Tejeria" appeared on the first two pages. However, the first mentioning of the battle appeared on the fourth page in the brief column "General Huerta

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[39] Mark Cronlund Anderson, *Pancho Villa's Revolution by Headlines* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 82.
[40] Anderson lists *La Opinión* as closing its doors under Huerta. However, *La Opinión* continued to publish papers through the first weeks of January 1915. Ibid.
[41] Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution: Counter-Revolution and Reconstruction*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 169.

Desperately Defends the Plaza de Zacatecas."[42] In addition, this brief column is devoid of any details of the fighting, much less the defeat of *Huertista* forces, instead opting to describe the movement of troops into Zacatecas in preparation for a Constitutionalist attack. Even more glaring is the fact that the column itself was published on the day of the battle.[43]

The Tampico affair was also covered by *La Opinion.* In the 20 April, 1914 issue, "The United States Seeks to Neutralize Tampico" shared space on the front-page with "The Zapatista Plans for Assaulting Acapulco."[44] The article recounts the challenge of the U.S. ultimatum to the Mexican government after arresting sailors from the U.S.S. *Dolphin*. However, Huerta's control of *La Opinión* in 1914 allowed him to also emphasize his refusal to abide by Admiral Mayo and President Wilson's demands. The author of the article noted that the Huerta government did not comply because "saluting the flag would damage our decorum and national dignity."[45]

The Constitutionalist split led to divisiveness in the Mexican press. Compared to Villa and others, Carranza had a larger breadth of publications serving him. *La Opinión, El Demócrata, El Imparcial, El Pueblo, El Universal, El Liberal,* and other papers held a

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[42] The conference referred to in the issue is the Niagara Falls Peace Conference, started by the U.S., Argentina, Brazil, and Chile in the aftermath of the Tampico Crisis to avoid another war between Mexico and the U.S. Translated from: "El Sábado Fue Ocupado Por Los Zapatistas Xochimilco, En las Goteras De La Capital," "Ayer Declaró el Secretario de D. Venustiano Carranza, que los Revolucionarios no lrán a las Conferencias," "Reconcentración De Federales En Córdoba, Soledad, Purga, Y Tejeria," and "El General Huerta Defiende Desesperadamente la Plaza de Zacatecas." *La Opinión* (Veracruz, México). June 24, 1914.
[43] The column states that the date of publication is 23 June.
[44] Translated from: "Los Estados Unidos Pretenden "Neutralizar" A Tampico" and "Entra en los Planes de los Zapatistas asaltar á Acapulco." *La Opinión*. (Veracruz, Mexico). April 20, 1914.
[45] Translated from: "El Gobierno mexicano, considerando que tales pretensiones no las apoyaba ninguna práctica del derecho internacional no accedió a obsequiarlas, porque llegar hasta semejante cortesía de saludar la bandera, seria lesión nuestro decoro y dignidad nacional." Ibid.

strong *Carrancista* stance.[46] Propaganda initiatives through the press were not only to gain support from Mexicans, but from Americans and their government as well.

Villa's raid in March 1916 provided an opportunity for the pro-Carranza press to galvanize support for the First Chief amid tense relations with the United States. The headline of *El Demócrata*'s 12 March issue, "Bandit Francisco Villa Commits Grave Crimes in U.S. Territory," decried Villa's actions. Both he and the *Villistas* were framed as simply being nothing more than bandits which "exhibit degeneracy of the worst kind."[47] The author continues by stating that the *Villistas* are traitors and criminals to Mexico who "compromised the country."[48] Pershing's expedition was also covered by the press. Most articles relating to the Punitive Expedition were less critical of the presence of U.S. soldiers in Mexico and more damning of Villa and his men. In their 21 May issue, *El Demócrata* reassured the Mexican public that the Punitive Expedition was not a true invasion with an article stating that American troops did not occupy villages, but in fact retreated ninety miles.[49] However, this did not prevent criticism of U.S. intervention.

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[46] Anderson, *Pancho Villa's Revolution by Headlines*, 103.

[47] Translated from: "Tenemos que informar a nuestros lectores, de serios acontecimientos ocurridos en Columbus, Nuevo México, E. U., y en los que Francisco Villa y la pequeña pero feroz horda de bandoleros que capitanea, ha exhibido, a la vez que la carencia total de amor patrio, sus instintos bestiales que los exhiben como degenerados de la peor calaña." "El Bandolero Francisco Villa se Entregó a la Comisión de Graves Crímenes en Territorio de Estados Unidos." *El Demócrata.* (Ciudad de México, México). March 12, 1916.

[48] Translated from: "En efecto, estos hombres, que se encuentran fuera de la ley, han llegado hasta convertirse en los más viles seres que pueden exaltar: los traidores a su Patria, que por saciar instintos de odio y de venganza, no se detienen ante ningún crimen y tratan de comprometer gravemente al país en donde nacieron." Ibid.

[49] Translated from "No Ocuparon Poblados Las Tropas De EE. UU., Y Se Replegaron Retrocediendo Noventa Leguas." *El Demócrata.* (Ciudad de México, México). May 21, 1916.

The expansion of radio use allowed for news to be spread quicker. Unlike telegraphs and telephones that had lines that were easily disrupted, radios provided a more secure means to disperse information. Under Huerta, radio was used for military communication and a myriad of other functions of the regime. However, a myriad of issues ranging from foreign support from the Constitutionalists and the opposition to Huerta from the United States. In terms of civilians, radio use very limited. Civilians who were transmitting via radio were branded as spies.[50]

3.3 Propaganda Machines

The competition between the Allied and German propaganda started in Europe and moved outward. Rumors of German atrocities in Belgium at the start of the war became a focal point of propaganda campaigns by the British and the other Entente countries. In Britain's case, the propagandists main task was to "make an ordinary political power struggle appear to be a fight between the forces of good and evil."[51] In Germany, the propaganda campaigns began shortly after the invasion of Belgium with the collaboration between different political offices and the military. With the oversight of the *Oberste Heeresleitung* (Supreme Army Command or OHL), the propagandists in the Foreign Office were to disseminate to neutral countries "the German version of the causes of the war, and the hostile intentions of its enemies."[52]

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[50] J. Justin Castro, *Radio in Revolution: Wireless Technology and State Power in Mexico, 1897-1938* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 46.
[51] H.C. Peterson, *Propaganda for War: The Campaign against American Neutrality, 1914-1917* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1968), 33.
[52] David Welch, *Germany and Propaganda in World War I: Pacifism, Mobilization, and Total War* (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 24.

Britain's blockade of Germany and cutting of German telegraph cables to the Americas damaged initial propaganda efforts. Cutting the cables early in the war meant that for neutral countries, the news was being suppressed at what H.C. Peterson discerned as "the most crucial time in the history of the war – the time when first impressions were being made, when opinions were being established."[53] The destruction of the German cables meant that all of Germany's colonies overseas were removed from communication with Berlin.[54] For the enclaves in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America, coverage of the war thus came from sources such as the Associated Press and Reuters.

On 9 August, Counselor for the Department of State Robert Lansing addressed the issue of neutrality and on 12 August addressed the issue of belligerents using cables and wireless services in neutral countries. Lansing stated that the press is not doing its duty if their columns are open to "unneutral and partisan expressions of opinions" that may antagonize Americans of foreign birth or belligerent nations.[55] Lansing also reiterated Article 3 and 8 of The Hague Convention of 1907, noting that neutral countries should take a moral route and not allow belligerents on either side to gain an advantage of a neutral country's cable and wireless services. "Impartiality," he writes, "and, as far as possible, equal treatment should determine the policy of this Government in dealing with

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[53] Peterson, *Propaganda for War*, 12.
[54] Heidi J.S. Tworek, "Magic Connections: German News Agencies and Global News Networks, 1905–1945," *Enterprise & Society* 15, no. 4 (2014): 681.
[55] Lansing would replace William Jennings Bryan as the Secretary of State in early 1915. Memorandum by the Counselor for the Department of State (Lansing) on the Preservation of Neutrality by the People of the United States, August 9, 1914. J.S. Beddie, ed. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Lansing papers, 1914-1920 (in Two Volumes)*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1939), 151.

this question."[56] The United States did not join the propaganda war until 13 April, 1917 with the creation of the Committee on Public Information (CPI) headed by George Creel.

[56] Article 3 states that belligerents are forbidden to erect wireless telegraphy or other similar structures in a neutral country to communicate with military forces and use for military purposes before a war and service of public messages. Article 8 states that neutral powers are not allowed to forbid or restrict use on behalf of belligerents or cables by companies or private individuals. Memorandum by the Counselor for the Department of State (Lansing) on the Use by Belligerents of Wireless Stations and Submarine Telegraph Cables on Neutral Territory, August 12, 1914. Ibid.

3.4 The Propaganda War from September 1914 to January 1915

On 20 December 1914, a reproduction of Ridgway Knight's "Brave France!" for the Paris edition of the New York Herald appeared in the 20 December issue of *La Opinión*, with a brief set of praises for France and their relationship with the United States.[57] This expression of pro-French, pro-Ally sentiments was not uncommon in Mexico by the latter half of 1914. With the German cables to the Americas cut, Mexican newspapers obtained their news from the same agencies that the Entente powers used. Furthermore, the elites in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America involved in media outlets were Francophiles, allowing a prevailing pro-Ally voice in terms of framing the news.[58] This was evident with how battles were reported during the first months of the war.

From 5 September through 13 September 1914, the front-page headlines for *La Opinión* emphasized British and French contributions at the First Battle of the Marne while simultaneously villainizing the Germans as they retreat. This was even more apparent after the Allied victory at the Marne. Headlines such as "The French Triumphant at Compiegne and the German right [flank] Retreats in Complete Disorder at Saint Quintin"; "The Prussians Surrounded in the East and West by French and English Soldiers"; "The German Troops Continue to Retreat to Reims" appeared on the 5

[57] The image is of France depicted as French Liberty bearing a sword amid ruins as Lady Columbia as the U.S. approaching and saying "Brave France! You have my grateful and sisterly sympathy." It is worth noting that the cartoon is remains in English for the reproduction. The original appeared in the 16 November, 1914 issue of the New York Herald. "Brave France!" *La Opinión* (Veracruz, México). December 20, 1914.
[58] Rinke, *Latin America and the First World War*, 84.

September, 7 September, and 9 September issues of *La Opinión* as the Allies advanced.[59] On 13 September, they published a brazenly pro-Ally piece titled "¡Vae Victis! The German Conqueror of the Twentieth Century."[60] The column, supposedly penned by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, promoted a strong anti-German stance, with Doyle writing that "I am one of them men who stubbornly refused to acknowledge the intentions of Germany. I argued. I wrote. I joined an Anglo-German friendship society."[61] The remainder of the column discussed his distaste of German imperialism and the danger it posed toward civilization.

The Battle of the Falkland Islands on 8 December 1914 was also reported by the Mexican press. Although the battle took place early in December, coverage did not appear in *La Opinión* or their other publication, *La Opinión: Diario de la Mañana,* until days after the battle. Even then, the coverage was brief at best. In the 12 December issue of *Diario de la Mañana,* the Battle of the Falkland Islands accounted for one paragraph.[62] In the 28 December issue of *La Opinión*, the battle graced the front-page, but only as a brief spread and a small column, "Naval Disaster Near the Falkland Islands."[63]

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[59] Translated from: "Los Franceses Triunfan en Compiegne y la Derecha Alemana Se Retira en Completo Desorden Rumbo á Saint Quintin" *La Opinión* (Veracruz, México), September 5, 1914.; "Los Prusianos Están Rodeados de Este á Oeste por Soldados Franceses é Ingleses." *La Opinión* (Veracruz, México), September 8, 1914.; "Siguen Retrocediendo Las Tropas Alemanas Hasta Reims." *La Opinión* (Veracruz, México), September 9, 1914.

[60] Vae Victis is Latin for "woe to the conquered."

[61] This column was originally published in the 25 August issue of the Philadelphia Record. Translated from: "A menudo parece increíble tal o cual disposición mental, cuando se le recuerda desde algún Nuevo punto de vista. Yo soy uno de los hombres que obstinaban en no querer reconocer las intenciones de Alemania. Argumenté. Escribí. Formé parte de una Sociedad de Amistad anglo-germana. Hice todo cuanto pude en pro de fé que abrigaba en mi alma." "¡Vae Victis! La Alemania Conquistadora del Siglo XX." *La Opinión.* September 13, 1914.

[62] "Boletín número 162." *La Opinión: Diario de la Mañana* (Ciudad de México, México), December 12, 1914.

[63] The spread features a map indicating where the Falklands are, images of the British Vice Admiral Sturdee and the German Admiral von Spee, and the German vessels sunk in the battle. Translated from "Desastre Naval Cerca De Las Islas Falkland." *La Opinión* (Veracruz, México), December 28, 1914.

La Opinión's 1 January, 1915 issue published a front-page piece simply titled "1915." The spread included the Roman god Mars, wearing armor and wielding a short sword in one hand while a vulture roosts on his shoulder. Accompanying this ominous imagery was a haunting description of the world at the start of the year:

> The first glimmers of the new year bathed pale the red stage of the war. Mars runs formidable and tragic, with the vertiginous passage of light, on all the continents and in all the ground drops a spark of the great tea that shakes his convulsive hand. Mars, the old symbol of Greek mythology, the man with the iron muscles in whose mouths of a smile, said with a demonic gesture to passionate and violent humanity, "you are doomed to be a priestess of my business."[64]

Despite the grim message, the author continues their commentary, allowing the new year to come only if it is a year of peace, citing many times the sufferings of people at home and abroad. This article is juxtaposed with reports from the Eastern Front stating that the Germans have captured over 130 thousand prisoners in Poland and the possibility that the Japanese will reinforce the Russians.[65]

For the 2 January issue, the sinking of the HMS *Formidable* and its crew on 1 January were covered in different stories. A German submarine sank the vessel off the coast of England and six hundred crewmen died in the attack.[66] The other story titled "The Admiralty and the *Formidable*" provided hardly any new details on the attack.

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[64] Translated from: Los primeros resplandores del nuevo año bañan pálidos el rojo escenario de la guerra. Marte, corre formidable y trágico, con el vertiginoso paso de la luz, sobre todos los continentes y en todos los suelos deja caer una chispa de la gran tea que sacude su mano convulsa. Marte, el viejo símbolo do la mitología griega, el varón de músculos férreos en cuya boca de cuaja una sonrisa parce decir con este gesto demoniaco a la humanidad pasional y violenta "estás condenada a ser entorna sacerdotisa de mis atarea. "1915," *La Opinión* (Veracruz, México), January 1, 1915.

[65] Translated from: "Los Alemanes informan haber hecho en Polonia más de ciento treinta mil prisioneros", "Los Japoneses Reforzarán a los Rusos," Ibid.

[66] "Seisceintos tripulantes de "El Formidable" se ahogaron en el canal," *La Opinión*, (Veracruz, México), Janurary 2, 1915.

Additionally, this issue was also one of the few to report on any of the events taking place in Africa. However, the report was not about combat in the colonies and instead covered the execution of a Boer rebel in British South Africa.[67] Another story that stood out in this issue was "The European War Ends this Year." French president Raymond Poincaré expressed hope that there would be peace in 1915, stating with some degree of certainty that the World War would end that year. Unfortunately, that was not the case at all.

1915 was a devastating year of the First World War. In February, the German navy implemented its unrestricted submarine warfare policy, allowing it to attack Allied and neutral ships, leading to the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May. It brought the first use of chemical weapons during the Second Battle of Ypres in April and the disastrous Gallipoli campaign. In Mexico, the violent stages of the revolution continued as the war between the factions raged on.

3.5 Carranza and the Propaganda War in 1916

By 1916, the Carranza regime solidified their hold over both Mexican politics and the press media. Certain publications received subsidies under Carranza and others became official presses monitored by the Ministry of Interior. He staffed numerous publications with middle-class writers who were loyal to the Constitutionalist cause.[68] Of Mexico's many newspapers, *El Pueblo, El Demócrata,* and *El Imparcial* were beneficiaries of the government and became official presses of the Carranza regime,

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[67] "Ejecución de un Rebelde Boero," Ibid.

[68] Unlike Huerta, who would remove an editor for the slightest criticism, Carranza allowed criticism in certain limits. At a point, he would remove them if the attacks became "particularly annoying." Douglas W. Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist Struggle, 1893-1920* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 179-80.

promoting his policies at home and abroad.[69] Carranza also extended his relationship with the press to the U.S. as well, providing funding in exchange for positive stories.

Carranza's foreign policy is important to understand the final years of German and Allied propaganda in Mexico. In light of worsening relations with Washington, Carranza sought to strengthen Mexico by removing its dependence upon the U.S., thus pursing non-Allied nations for the defense of Mexican neutrality.[70] Carranza reached out to Germany following the Punitive Expedition and gained as much German support as they could have asked for while remaining neutral in the war. Furthermore, his pro-German attitude made it easier to mask propaganda, especially in *El Demócrata*, the official paper of the Carranza regime. The *germanófilo* attitude of *El Demócrata* was more apparent by June 1916. According to Katz, a meeting between Carranza and editor Rafael Martinez pushed the paper to become more pro-German, keeping it in line with Carranza's policy of a German counterweight to the United States.[71]

A contributing factor to the pro-German slant was that many of *El Demócrata*'s reports – regardless of origin – were purchased through the German firm Transozean GmbH and thus were monitored by the *Zentralstelle für Auslandienst* (Central Office of Foreign Intelligence, or COFS). The involvement of Transozean GmbH became an important asset for the COFS. They were trusted with the supervision of Germany's news outlets overseas and were paid with one million marks annually. In exchange, all telegrams by Transozean were monitored by the Foreign Office.[72]

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[69] Durán, *Guerra y revolución*, 257.
[70] Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist Struggle*, 203.
[71] Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico*, 448.
[72] Ibid., 444-45.

In addition to the press, Germany made attempts to reestablish radio connections to Germany and utilize radio as a means to spread propaganda through Mexico and Latin America, which in turn Carranza intended to use for extending his government's presence. Although the radio stations were not finished until the last years of the war, they provided a powerful outlet for control by Carranza and his successors.[73]

Although specific organs catering to neutral countries existed in 1914, the abundance of propaganda aimed at Mexico and Latin America did not truly start until 1916. From 1916 onward, the COFS efforts was aided by groups in Germany such as the Ibero-American Association in Hamburg and the *Nachrichtendienst für die Länder spanischer und portugiesischer Zunge* (News Service for Spanish and Portuguese-Speaking Countries) in Frankfurt am Main aided the COFS with distributing propaganda, aiding the efforts taking place in Mexico by those living in the German enclaves.[74]

The prevalence of *germanófilismo* in the Mexican press is not only attributed to actors in Berlin. The promotion of *Deutschtum,* the German element, prevailed in making the German community in Mexico insular through institutions such as churches and schools.[75] Patriotic societies such as the Pan-German League and German Navy League promoted German foreign policy and provided a space to discuss Germany's "place in the sun." The number of clubs in Mexico from 1904 to 1913 went from just one club

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[73] Castro, *Radio in Revolution*, 86-99.

[74] Katz notes that propaganda efforts in 1915 were met with limited success, despite the efforts of the VDR and other organizations. Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico*, 442-46.

[75] The Colegio Alemán was another place of nationalist fervor. Originally created to help educate German children about both Germany and Mexico in the late 1880s, it was transformed by Principle Max Dobroshcke in 1915 into an outlet for German propaganda. A final exam question posed to students asked students to "Describe all that has been done by the German colony in Mexico to help their native country in the European War." Buchenau, *Tools of Progress*, 81.

(Mexico City) to four (Guadalajara, Mazatlán, and Monterrey). The Navy League reached by a peak membership of 250 in 1911.[76]

Historian Yolanda de la Parra notes that German immigrants that arrived in Mexico after the United States joined the war took an active part in the production of propaganda. Groups such as the VDR took an active stance in fostering *germanófilismo*. The German Ambassador to Mexico Heinrich von Eckhardt was a principle agent responsible for any espionage that benefited Germany.[77] Furthermore, individuals in the Carranza government were *germanófilos,* including the First Chief himself.

Aliadófilismo was prevalent among Carranza's opposition. Most notably, the strongest pro-Ally sentiment came from Obregón. Obregón was a keen observer of the war in Europe and as a general in the fight against Villa, he utilized many methods that were used in France and Belgium. Entrenched positions with barbed wire and machine gun emplacements made for one sided battles. This was especially true at Celaya in April 1915 against Villa's men.[78] In 1916, despite being the Secretary of War for Carranza, his support for the Allies and ability to cooperate on some level with the Wilson administration led to uneasiness from the First Chief. During the Punitive Expedition, Obregón met with Generals Pershing and Hugh I. Scott with the offer to pursue Villa personally if they gradually withdrew troops. Although Carranza altered the terms of the agreement, the meeting indicated a different level of cooperation. Obregón was also

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[76] Stefan Manz, "Nationalism Gone Global: The *Hauptverband Deutscher Flottenvereine Im Auslande*, 1898-1918," *German History* 30, no. 2 (2012): 210.
[77] Yolanda de la Parra, "La primera guerra mundial y la presna mexicana," *Estudios de historia moderna y contemporanea de Mexico* 10 (1986): 160-61.
[78] The losses sustained by the *Villistas* effectively crippled them. Villa's men repeatedly charged Obregón's position and by the end of the battle, thousands of *Villistas* were dead compared to only mere hundreds of Obregón's. Joseph and Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution*, 73.

noted for wanting to join the French in the war in Europe after the defeat of the *Villistas*, indicating a strong support for the Allied war effort and a willingness to fight.[79]

3.6 Reporting on Verdun

El Demócrata's coverage of the Battle of Verdun in 1916 reflected the growing pro-German sentiment of the official press. The nine-month long battle, starting on 21 February, 1916 and ending on 18 December, 1916, provided a unique frame of reference to gauge the development of pro-German attitudes from the opening artillery barrage to the French counter-offensive. Branded as exclusive for *El Demócrata*, the initial report of action at Verdun appeared in the 23 February issue. Two headlines, "The Crown Prince Directs Furious Attacks at the square of Verdun" and "Germans Occupy a Trench in Artois," came from two separate sources: the first article from a report in England and the other from Berlin. In "The Crown Prince," praise is given to Crown Prince Wilhelm for ordering an artillery barrage on the French lines for twenty-four hours. The author describes attacks by both sides as "furious" and invokes ancient imagery, referring to the French soldiers as "Gallic" and the Germans as "Teutons."[80] The allusion to both makes an appeal to history, or at least the very least, an appeal towards the national myths of both France and Germany. The other article is brief and is while not entirely related to

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[79] Jürgen Buchenau, *The Last Caudillo: Alvaro Obregon and the Mexican Revolution*, ed. Jürgen Buchenau, Viewpoints/Puntos De Vista (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 87-88; 96-97.

[80] Translated from: "Informes procedentes de París, dicen que el ejército alemán, mandado por el Kronprinz Federico Guillermo, este atacando furiosamente las líneas francesesas en los alrededores de Verdún y en el sector de Saint Mihiel, adivindaodres claraments sus dianes, que son forzar a las tropas galas a retirarse de las posiciones que ocupan en esa región, para dejan aislada la Fortaleza de Verdún. La artillería ha funcionado con extraordinaria actividad en las últimas veinticuatro horas, siendo muy certeros los disparos de los franceses que han logrado rechazar todos los furiosos ataques de las columnas tuetonas, las cuales fracanado hasta ahora en su intent ofensivo, se han visto obligadas a retirarse después de servir considerables pérdidas." "El Kronprinz dirige furiosos ataques sobre la plaza de Verdún." *El Demócrata* (Ciudad de México, México), February 23, 1916.

Verdun, provides insight on how German soldiers were portrayed in the official press. The article refers to the German soldiers as "our troops," and emphasized the importance of capturing a trench at Artois.[81]

The next day another article, "The Teutons Continue Attacking Furiously at Verdun Front," continued the coverage of the battle. The article, which originated from a report from Paris, takes a French stance yet still provided superficial praise for the Germans. The article praised the effectiveness of German artillery and the resistance of the French while taking into account the losses experienced on both sides. The coverage used much of the same conventions as the previous article, including framing the battle as one between "Teuton" and "Gaul." A striking element of this article though is the last comment, which weighs French losses against the Germans, simply stating that theirs were far less than the enormous ones experienced by the Crown Prince.[82]

Although *El Demócrata* remained pro-German in its reporting, it did not shy away from Germany's losses as the battle continued. The 12 March issue provided reports from the Netherlands and France on continued to describe the French at Verdun, as well as the movement of troops from the Eastern Front to France as the Germans continued to accumulate losses.[83] A German push on 20 May was a major headline in the newspaper's world news section the following day. It described how 1,500 artillery

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[81] Translated from: "Nuestras tropas que operan en el frente batalla de Francia lían alcanzado un importante triunfo en el sector de Artois, donde después de furiosos ataques protegidos por el fuego de nuestros cañones de grueso calibre, lograron apoderarse de una importante posición enemiga que mide triste un kilómetro de largo." "Los Alemanes Ocuparon Una Trinchera En Artois." Ibid.
[82] Translated from: "Las pérdidas de nuestras tropas son de bastante consideración: pero muy inferiores a las enormes que ha experimentado del ejército del Kronprinz." "Los Teutones Siguen Atacando Furiosamente en el Frente de Verdún" *El Demócrata* (Ciudad de México, México), February 24, 1916.
[83] Translated from: "La Prensa Gala Hadla De Triunfos Franceses" and "Siguen Trasladando los Teutones Contingentes de Polonia a Verdun" *El Demócrata* (Ciudad de México, México), March 12, 1916.

batteries shelled the French position at Hill 304, relating the destructiveness to the Austro-German offensive in the east at Dunajec and the German army relying on artillery barrages to achieve their desired effect. The same article included an updated report from the battle that mentioned fighter engagements above the trenches. The report concluded with the author stating that it was one of the worst and horrifying days of the battle since the opening shots on 22 February.[84] The report praised the German artillery, noting how despite the work of French guns, their positions will be "wiped" by "German metal." It also extended praises for the success on the Eastern Front, a topic which this article dwells on a considerable bit.

As the fighting at Verdun continued on into summer, another area of fighting opened up in on 1 July by British and French troops at the Somme. On 2 July, *El Demócrata* published an article emphasizing the push of British and French forces at the Somme, stating how the Allies have captured Serre, Montauban, La Boiselle, Curlu, and Favieres.[85] In the same issue, there is also more coverage on Verdun, supplied from both the French and Germans. The occupation of the fort at Thiaumont was the focus of the German report, remarking on the French defenders being captured by Germans as prisoners. The French report recounted the German assault, nothing the ferocity of the German attack.[86] After July, coverage of Verdun dwindled. By December 1916, reports

[84] Translated from: "Parece ser que la de hoy, ha sido una de las jornadas más terribles que se han librade junte al cerro 304, y se cree que esto es el comienza de un Nuevo periodo de lucha, más horroroso al sabe, que los habidos donde el 22 de febrero, en que dio comienzo el ataque la plaza." "Los Teutones Vuelven al Ataque en Verdun" *El Demócrata* (Ciudad de México, México), May 21, 1916.
[85] Translated from "¿Los Ejércitos Aliados Han Iniciado la Ofensiva en Francia?" *El Demócrata* (Ciudad de México, México), July 2, 1916.
[86] Translated from: "Los Alemanes Avanzan Sobre La Altura 304" *El Demócrata* (Ciudad de México, México), July 2, 1916.

from Verdun were all but non-existent as the Germans started to lose ground. The last report related to the battle appeared in the 19 December issue – a day after the French victory – stating the French took prisoners at Verdun and paralyzed enemy movement.[87] The report mentioned nothing that sounded like a loss.

In contrast, the final days at Verdun as reported by the *aliadófilo* paper *El Universal* presented the coverage differently. Their 16 December issue had a headline claiming that 7,500 German soldiers were captured as French forces advanced. The article included two reports – from Paris and Berlin respectively – that described their push. The one from Paris described the French advance as a "brilliant action," pushing the line ahead by 10 kilometers. The report from Berlin described the loss of ground as Germany's "newest failure." The author of the report concluded their brief update by stating simply that "the battle is not over yet."[88]

Running parallel to *El Demócrata*'s 19 December issue was *El Universal*'s summarization of the last day of battle. "New Victory for the Valliant Gauls at Verdun" described how French soldiers and pilots pushed the line towards the original positions lost in February. While the soldiers were praised for their valiant efforts, the pilots received significant praise too. The article briefly described how the pilots performed accurate reconnaissance, as well as "great feats" such as "chasing and machine gunning" the Germans as they retreat from a height of 700 feet.[89] It ended with the author claim

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[87] Translated from: "Los Prisioneros Hechos en Verdun" *El Demócrata* (Ciudad de México, México), December 19, 1916.

[88] Both reports were provided by the Associated Press and were issued on 15 December. Translated from: "Siete mil quinientos Alemanes Capturados por los franceses en el Fte. de Verdun" *El Universal* (Ciudad de México, México), December 16, 1916.

[89] Translated from: El día fue glorioso para los aviadores franceses, pues volaron a poca altura sobre las posiciones enemigos, regresando con informaciones exactas de su situación para que el ataque pudiera

that the French victory at Verdun was a strategically important one because the German's lost their "most valuable" observation posts.[90]

3.7 Allied Efforts, 1916-1917

El Universal was one of the most notable pro-Ally, pro-U.S. papers published in Mexico. Founded by Félix Palavicini in late 1916, it was the most important daily in the fight against German propaganda in Mexico. Surprisingly, despite *El Universal*'s *aliadófilo* stance, Carranza did not view the publication as a threat. Instead he provided the means and facilities to allow Palavicini to publish pro-Ally pieces.[91] Furthermore, the First Chief showcased the peaceful co-existence of both papers as an example of Mexico's dedication to neutrality in the war.[92] However, *El Universal* did not simply repeat Allied propaganda, it generated public debate. Orozco and Robinet cite a survey performed by the paper in 1917 that polled roughly twenty-four people in an attempt to make the general public sympathetic to the Allies. It was met with backlash by the *germanófilo* press with *El Demócrata* and *Excélsior* issuing their own in response.[93]

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progresar debidamente. También realizaron grandes proezas persiguiendo y ametrallando a los alemanes en su fuga desde una altura de setecientos pies. "Nuevo triunfo de los valientes galos en el frente de Verdun" *El Universal* (Ciudad de México, México), December 19, 1916.

[90] Translated from: La victoria del ejército francés en el Verdun, es de una gran importancia estratégica, pues quita al enemigo sus más valiosos puestos de observación sobre el campo atrincherado de Verdun. Ibid.

[91] De la Parra, "La primera guerra mundial y la presna mexicana," 162.

[92] Katz also notes that the reason he allowed it was possibly to avoid allowing the Germans to maintain a monopoly on the press and wartime propaganda. Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico*, 458.

[93] *El Universal*'s participants were all intellectuals living within Mexico City and had bourgeois professions such as historians, doctors, and politicians. Some of the participants knew they were going to be polled as well. Adriana Ortega Orozco and Romain Robinet, "Aliadófilos, germanófilos, y neutralistas: la opinión pública mexicana ante la Primera Guerra Mundial," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 33, no. 2 (2017): 232-33.

Both publications had their share of similarities. Their reports mirrored *El Demócrata* in similar ways by focusing on the heroic actions of soldiers, using historical terms (Gaul and Teuton respectively), and emphasizing successes. They differed in several ways as well. *El Demócrata* downplayed losses and shortcomings on the battlefield similar to official German presses, attempting to mask failure with the possibility of success. In the case of Verdun, *El Universal* published an article in their 19 December issue that claimed news of the German defeat reached British forces in Athens before civilians in Germany. It suggested that the German newspapers "are disturbed by the military importance of the disaster" and potential exploitation of this loss by the Allied powers.[94] Another major difference between both publications is that unlike *El Demócrata* which solely relied on other agencies for their reports, *El Universal* actually had a correspondent in Europe.[95]

When the U.S. joined the war, the Committee on Public Information devoted a considerable amount of time and effort to promoting a benevolent neutrality in Mexico. The Mexican Section of the CPI, operating out of Mexico City, focused only news management in an attempt to prevent further exploitation from German agents.[96] Creel noted that German propaganda "thrived upon fruitful soil" and that it "appealed to a ready-made, receptively sympathetic audience."[97] In addition, the CPI also utilized Mexican citizens to help spread their counterpropaganda. Literature promoting pro-

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[94] Translated from: "Por más esfuerzos que se han hecho para ocultar la verdad, en Atenas se sabe ya la victoria francesa en Verdun" *El Universal* (Ciudad de México, México), December 19, 1916.
[95] Orozco and Robinet, "Aliadófilos, germanófilos, y neutralistas," 232.
[96] Alan Axelrod, *Selling the Great War: The Making of American Propaganda* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 190.
[97] George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York, NY: Arno Press, 1920; repr., 1972), 304.

American sentiments was spread throughout the middle and upper classes and propaganda posters were widely circulated. A striking element of the Mexican Section's efforts is that the CPI did not deny any involvement. After the war, Creel recounted this in his history of the CPI:

> No literature was issued anonymously. We officially stood sponsor for everything. Each piece of printed matter bore the imprint of the Committee and the slogan of the office: "The War: Remember, the United States *Cannot* Lose!" Constant and indefatigable reiteration of this phrase eventually elevated it to the dignity of an impressive and confident prophecy. It was effective – so much so that for a time it enjoyed ephemeral life as a popular catchword in the streets and on the stage of the capital. In their heyday the Germans made it the subject of sarcastic jest.[98]

The United States was not the only Allied country pumping money into Mexican newspapers. The British funded and backed *El Progreso* marks a notable non-U.S. attempt to curtail German efforts through the press. Based out of Monterrey, *El Progresso* published pro-Ally, pro-British propaganda. It also published false news stories and distorted information by "advancing German victories in the war" and went far enough to "publish news of the German defeat four days before the Armistice."[99]

Despite the attempts of the CPI and *El Universal,* the German propaganda campaign in Mexico flourished and exploited the worsening relations between the United States and Mexico. This problematic relationship came to head in October 1917 with U.S. Congress passing the Trading with the Enemy Act. The act represented a challenge to Carranza and the Mexican response created a challenge for Wilson. At the same time,

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[98] Ibid., 312.

[99] Translated from: "Este periódico se dedicaba no sólo a labors de propaganda, sino que para confundir a los alemanes, publicaba falsas noticias adelantando victorias inglesas en la guerra. Llegó incluso a publicar la notice de la derrota alemana en la guerra cuatro días antes del armisticio, con lo cual concluyó sus actividades para el service secreto inglés en México." Durán, *Guerra y revolución*, 259-60.

German interests in Mexico were on the line as well, as firms and businesses were placed on blacklists. Mexico's response reflects how public opinion is shaped by decades of imperial rivalry in the Americas.

CHAPTER 4: BLACKLISTS AND MAKING PEACE

The propaganda war in Mexico continued from 1917 to 1919 as the Mexican press covered the final years of the war. The press remained highly divided as the war across the Atlantic carried on. The divide between *aliadófilo* and *germanófilo* papers was especially pointed in the wake of the United States joining the war in Europe on 6 April, 1917. When the Trading with the Enemy Act (TWEA) and War Trade Board (WTB) were established in October 1917, another element was added to the propaganda war: the blacklists. The TWEA targeted businesses and "enemy" nationals in neutral countries that were believed to be supporting the German war effort. Mexico was under the greatest scrutiny. Unsurprisingly, the TWEA was met with backlash in the Mexican press. The Armistice and Paris Peace Conference also added another dimension to war reporting. Although both *El Demócrata* and *El Universal* reported on the same events, their interpretations were vastly different.

This chapter explores the press's response and interpretation to the blacklists and peacemaking in the final years of the Great War. Both *aliadófilo* and *germanófilo* presses reacted to the events differently. The blacklists provided fuel for *germanófilo* publications to attack the U.S. for attempting to violate Mexican sovereignty by enforcement of wartime policies. Additionally, coverage surrounding the end of the war reflected the attitudes of both the Allies and Germany.

4.1 Wartime Policies and Mexican Sovereignty

German activity in Mexico was one of the greatest concerns of the State Department before 1917. As early as August 1914, the German General Staff's intelligence department tried to gain Mexico as an ally if the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies.[100] In 1915, the Germans were assumed to be involved in some capacity with a proposed Latino uprising called the "Plan de San Diego" as well as a possible return of the disposed Huerta.[101] The firm C. Holk & Co., owned by the German consul in Monterrey, was accused of providing financial support, arms, and ammunition to rebels associated with the plot. Texas Ranger Tom Mayfield speculated German involvement based on the weapons and an Iron Cross obtained from a dead bandit in a raid along the border. Despite these claims and speculation, there was no real evidence showing direct involvement from Berlin.[102] This is especially true with military surplus stores being advertised in major newspapers at the time.[103] The State Department's fear of German subversion in Mexico reached a point that even the Constitution of 1917 was framed as a German construct.[104]

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[100] Michael C Meyer, "The Mexican-German Conspiracy of 1915," *The Americas* 23, no. 1 (1966): 81.
[101] The "Plan de San Diego" called for the annexation of territory lost to the United States, the return of land to the Apache nation, liberation of black Americans, as well as the execution of any possible prisoners, Anglo-American men, and armed strangers regardless of race. Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler, *The Plan De San Diego: Tejano Rebellion, Mexican Intrigue.* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 1-5.
[102] According to Harris and Sadler, the presence of German-made weapons, especially those produced by Mauser was not uncommon as they were the standard issue rifle of the Mexican Army. The origins of the Iron Cross remain debatable since they note it was either "conferred by the Kaiser himself or purchased at some army surplus store." Ibid., 97-99.
[103] An example can be seen in the 13 March 1916 issue of *El Demócrata* with an ad for a military surplus store called "La Internacional." *El Demócrata* (Ciudad de México, México). March 13, 1916.
[104] Not only was this accusation completely false, the Constitution also hindered other foreign influences as well, Germany included. Buchenau, *Tools of Progress*, 81.

In the aftermath of the Zimmermann telegram, the WTB and other wartime administrations were very concerned with the possibility of "enemy aliens" sabotaging the Allied war effort or procuring funds or supplies to help Germany. Acts of sabotage such as Black Tom explosion on 30 July 1916 only reinforced suspicions about German activity, as well as the loyalty of German-Americans. After joining the war, the TWEA was implemented as a method of economic warfare against Germany by targeting their enclaves in neutral countries. This only generated further anti-American attitudes when the act was slowly being implemented in Mexico. The act itself represented a direct challenge towards Carranza's leadership and to his position of neutrality in the war. Furthermore, while the TWEA targeted German-Mexicans, the blacklists affected Mexican civilians as a whole.

The ratification of the Constitution of 1917 provided the greatest challenge to the hegemonic relationship between the United States and Mexico. The Constitution addressed the problems created by Diaz's policies and other major concerns leading to the Revolution. It also highlighted the major concern of land ownership and resource rights. Article 27 of the Constitution addressed this at length. While it broke up large landed estates and provided further support for rural communities, it also declared state ownership of natural resources and defined who could own land in Mexico:

> Only Mexicans by birth or naturalization and Mexican companies have the right to acquire ownership in lands, waters, and their appurtenances, or obtain concessions to develop mines, waters or mineral fuels in the Republic of Mexico. The Nation may grant the same right to foreigners, provided they agree before the Department of Foreign Affairs to be considered Mexicans in respect to such property, and accordingly not to invoke protection of their Governments in respect to the same under penalty in case of breach, of forfeiture to the Nation of property is acquired. Within a zone of 100 kilometers from the frontiers and 50 kilometers from the sea, no

> foreigner shall under any conditions acquire direct ownership of lands and waters.[105]

The decision that only Mexican citizens and Mexican companies could own land and that the ownership of resources resided with the state created problems with U.S. interests. Furthermore, the constitution also clearly stated that "No Foreigner shall meddle any way whatsoever in the political affairs of the country."[106] While Wilson on one hand respected the Constitution and the prospect of democracy establishing itself in Mexico, on the other, the restrictions imposed could only hinder U.S. interests, not to mention German interests as well.

4.2 Targeting Civilians

The TWEA and blacklists targeted the German-Mexican community on the assumption that this community, primarily made up of merchants, represented a source of anti-American sentiment that aimed to shift Mexico into a more outspoken "pro-German" stance despite neutrality. This concern was motivated by the existence of German organizations that, on varying levels, promoted Wilhelm II's policy of *Weltpolitik*. In Mexico City, the German enclave became an outlet for pro-German sentiments during the war. The VDR was very much active in this endeavor by not only promoting German propaganda in the enclave's newspaper (*Deutsche Zeitung von Mexico*) but the mainstream Mexican press as well. Additionally, the VDR's hand in both presses "helped

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[105] Mr. Parker, representing American interests, to the Secretary of State, February 7, 1917. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States with the Address of the President to Congress December 4, 1917*. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1926), 955.
[106] Ibid., 959.

enforce political conformity among the German colony."[107] In the pro-business, pro-American publication *The World's Work*, they comment on the VDR's propaganda campaign:

> Efficient and shrewd are the United Subjects of the Empire. They are back up their news in the practical way of encouraging their own and other businessmen to advertise in the Mexican papers which print their propaganda…Every Mexican town is similarly plastered. You wonder where they get the money, but even in your wrath you can't help but admiring the effective way in which the money is spent.[108]

While their observations may come off as petty and belittling, it is clear that even U.S. periodicals were aware of the VDR's propaganda campaign in Mexico.

The initial blacklist published in October 1917 named over two hundred different individuals and businesses in Mexico that were believed to be supporting the German war effort or their allies.[109] Individuals were blacklisted out of suspicion that they held sympathetic views toward Germany or showed interest in promoting neutrality. The most targeted institutions were banks, factories, plantations, and ore related companies; however, other businesses and organizations were targeted out of suspicion as well. Breweries, pharmacies, hardware stores, recreational clubs, hotels, and newspapers. Although many of these businesses did not contribute directly to the war in Europe, they still provided financial backing for the German Empire.

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[107] Jürgen Buchenau, "Blond and Blue-Eyed in Mexico City, 1821 to 1975," in *The Heimat abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, ed. Krista O'Donnel, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin, Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 96.
[108] Arthur W. Paige, "German Efforts in Mexico," *The World's Work: A History of Our Time, November 1917-April 1918*1918.
[109] The TWEA and WTB were primarily concerned with Germany as opposed to the rest of the Central Powers.

Non-German Mexicans also felt the effects of the blacklists. Ismael Gonzalez, a Cuban-born grocer living in Mérida, Yucatán was one of many Mexican nationals being profiled. In a telegram from the American Consul in Progresso, Yucatán to Lansing, O. Gaylord Marsh wrote that Gonzalez claimed he was "Pro-Ally," working as a grocer for thirty-one years, and registered at the Cuban Consulate. He also wrote that "No doubt Mr. Gonzalez has done some act which he has not fully disclosed," bringing into question Gonzalez's sympathies toward the Allied cause.[110] Another example is seen with the case of Jacob Granat. Granat, an Austrian "moving-picture dealer," was suggested to be blacklisted for multiple reasons. First, he and his brother, and nephew were Austrian.[111] Secondly, he published in *El Demócrata* – which the Consul General in Mexico City deemed as "the most pernicious enemy propaganda publication in Mexico." Finally, he rented an adaptation of "Snow White" to present to the German school in the enclave.[112]

The question of what defined "German sympathy" and "open hostility" came up in some correspondences between consuls and Lansing. The case of Manuel Victor Revuelta alludes to this issue. Although blacklisted in Cuba, his friends and family issued declarations stating why he should not be blacklisted. His sympathy towards Germany was framed to mean that he would not "carry into effect any act of open hostilities against the allied nations, that that he will contribute morally or materially to the success of the

[110] O. Gaylord Marsh to Lansing, Dec. 17, 1917, Yucatán, Mexico. RG 59: Records of the State Department, World War I and Its Termination, Neutral Commerce, Dec. 1917-Jan. 1918, M367, Roll 242, 763.72112A/104, National Archives at College Park, Md (NACP).
[111] The United States did not declare war on Austria-Hungary until 17 December 1917. They were the only other member of the Central Powers that the U.S. declared war on.
[112] General Consul to Lansing, Dec 1917, Mexico City, Mexico. RG 59. M367, Roll 242, 763.72112A/119, NACP.

Central Powers."[113] The consul's response was simply that "This statement alone only goes to show that neither Mr. Revuelta nor his friends realize what open hostilities to the allied nations means" and goes on further to state that everyone knows "he has been rabidly anti-American and anti-Ally, and has used every influence he possessed up to the time his name appeared on the lists of prohibitive firms to carry out his German propaganda by heated arguments and distributing of German literature on every available occasion."[114]

4.3 The Press Responds

Major Mexican papers covered the blacklists, regardless if they were *aliadófilo* or *germanófilo* publications. Unlike the British blacklists, the ones with the TWEA were publicized. Extensive coverage of the blacklists was a rarity as most articles after their introduction focused on which companies and persons were blacklisted, who was removed, and how to apply for removal. Many articles on the blacklists were relegated to either the "world news" or financial sections of papers. In some cases, the blacklists were viewed as a joke.[115]

Both the 5 December, 1917 and 4 January, 1918 issues of *El Universal* provide examples of a how little an article could say about the blacklists. "The War Trade Board

[113] American Consul to Lansing, Dec 22. 1917, Cienfuegos, Cuba, RG 59, M367, Roll 242, 763.72112A/127. NACP
[114] Ibid.
[115] A pamphlet distributed at an annual carnival in Mazatlán included an advertisement for Melchers Sucs. The bottom of the pamphlet includes the phrase "Agentes especiales de las listas negras": special agents of the blacklists. William E. Chapman, the consul at Mazatlán wrote Lansing claiming that the effect was "to convince the public that the lists of enemies are looked upon by the Germans as a joke and that being such, they can so treat them and join in the carnival fun with the rest." William E. Chapman to Lansing, Mazatlán, Mexico, Feb. 21, 1918, RG 59, M367, Roll 243, 763.72112a/665.

Blacklists" from the 5 December issue outlined the basic aims of the TWEA and the blacklists. 1,600 names were blacklisted in accordance with the TWEA and they include the comment that "many of these firms have been providing funds for German propaganda in Latin America and the U.S."[116] The 4 January article, "Varied Trade Regulations For German Houses," simply states that the WTB has provided provisions against trading with the enemy and that trading with them would violate laws in the countries where the branches are located.[117] In addition, this issue also included another brief article stating that the Consulate General will be meeting with persons interested in applying for the whitelist.[118] Other publications chose to publish the full lists for Mexico.

El Demócrata published the list of Mexican companies targeted by the blacklist in their 14 December, 1917 issue. Much like the basic coverage by *El Universal*, they comment that the blacklists are a product of the U.S. and they must follow guidelines by the WTB. However, *El Demócrata* does not attribute the reason for blacklisting companies to a singular cause, German or otherwise. They do comment on the fact that the newspaper is blacklisted.[119]

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[116] Translated from: "Muchas de estas firmas, centro las cuales están incluidas muchas compañas de utilidad pública, han estado proporcionando fondos para la propaganda alemana en los países latinoamericanos y en los Estados Unidos." "Las Listas Negras de Junta Comercial de EE. UU." *El Universal.* (Ciudad de México, México.) Dec. 5, 1917.

[117] The article also includes a snippet about a removal from the blacklists. Translated from: "Por disposicinó de la Junta de Comercio de Guerra, el nombre de la casa Flack and Son., de la ciudad de México ha sido retirado de las listas negras." Asoclada, Prensa. "Varía la Reglamentación para el Comercio con Casas Alemanas," *El Universal.* (Ciudad de México, México). Jan. 4, 1918.

[118] Translated from: "Las personas que soliciten pasaportes para cruzar la frontera con la vecina República del Norte, y aquellas que deseen inscribirse en las Listas Blancas, que, como informamos ayer, comenzarán a formarse el lunes, serán atendidas por el personal del Consulado Americano, establecido en la esquina de Avenida. Juárez y Rosales, a las horas y días indicados." "La formación de las "Listas Blancas." Ibid.

[119] Translated from: "Cerca de Dos Mil Casas Latinoamericanas, son Consignadas en las Listas Negras Estadounidenses." *El Demócrata* (Ciudad de México, México). Dec. 14, 1917.

In response to the growing unpopularity of the TWEA and the blacklists in the press, consuls started to request that more periodicals should be added to the blacklist. This sort of action was viewed as an attempt to coerce the Carranza regime to give in to U.S. pressure for a pro-U.S. neutrality. Criticisms about the TWEA, Wilsonian policy in Mexico, and anything that could possibly be interpreted as sympathy for the Germans were grounds for blacklisting. Periodicals that were not in line with the interests of the U.S. such as *El Demócrata* and other *germanófilo* papers were blacklisted almost immediately and faced supply penalties.[120]

Orientacion, the political paper of Sonora owned by the Constitutionalist General Calles, is one of the first newspapers that American consuls in Mexico asked the WTB to include in the blacklists. Two articles chosen by Fredrick Simpich, consul at Guaymas, were sent to Lansing showing the "characteristic of this newspaper." The articles, "Is the International Situation Delicate?" and "Mexico, Dec. 21, 1917" reflect a growing animosity toward the U.S. as a result of policies toward Mexico. The first article, published 23 December, calls out the U.S. for baring trade, coercion of government officials, and extensive propaganda campaigns. The author goes on further to state that:

> And all of this because, in the present state of transition, the United States interferes since it does not suit them that next to their territory there should exist a people who at any moment can convert themselves into an enemy.[121]

The second article, published on 22 December, takes a similar stance. The author, Dr. Cuthbert Hidalgo, remarks that:

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[120] De la Parra, "La primera guerra mundial y la presna mexicana," 164.
[121] Fredrick Simpich to Lansing, Guaymas, Mexico, Dec. 27 1917. RG 59, M367, Roll 242, 763.72112A/201, NACP.

> Frustrated in that unpatriotic effort, due to the firm resolution of the Constitutionalist Government to remain strictly neutral during the war and to conduct itself along the lines marked from the beginning in observing an eminently national policy, the instigators of this agitation have nevertheless not overlooked any pretext or occasion to continuely [sic] increase their machinations to the same end, notwithstanding unanimous public opinion.

He continues writing, stating that the U.S. bribed key officials within the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate:

> Buying with gold the consciences of two of three "Yankee Sympathisers" [sic] who dedicate themselves to the task of sowing seeds in the bosom of the National Representatives to the end and that these members should approve the alliance of Mexico with the entente Nations.[122]

These articles reveal why an American consul desired to blacklist certain publications for their less than positive coverage of U.S.-Mexican relations.

In the early morning on 2 January, 1918, Lansing received a telegram from the American Consul at Tampico proposing a question. *La Reforma*, attacked the consulate "in five advertising spaces, falsely claiming they were formerly taken by firms threatened with being blacklisted." A meeting of allied representatives proposed using "positive propaganda" against German activities with the consul asking Lansing if the State Department would approve and provide financial support. Lansing's response two days later simply asked "What funds are needed and what is character of propaganda."[123]

Both the 2 January and 3 January 1918 issues of *La Reforma* expressed their displeasure with the blacklists. Although not nearly as direct as Hidalgo's article, the advertising spots that Dawson mentioned in his telegram only had three sentences stating

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[122] Ibid.
[123] Claude I Dawson to Lansing, January 3, 1918, Tampico, Mexico. RG 59. M367, Roll 242, 763.72112A/165; Lansing to Dawson, January 4, 1918, Washington, D.C., NACP.

that they were forced to remove the original advertisement because of the American consular agent and the boycott against the its publisher. They conclude by noting that the vendor in question provides funding for *La Reforma.*[124] A larger article was published in the 3 January issue titled "The North American Boycott."[125] The first two paragraphs of the article alone provide an equally damning analysis of the blacklists and U.S. policy. The first paragraph frames the blacklists as an anomaly in warfare, stating that it is an attack on not only Germany, but neutrals. More specifically, it is "an attack on Mexico, Mexican commerce, and Mexican capital." [126] The second paragraph reiterates why the ads were moved from the previous issue of *La Reforma*, noting the "sad and ridiculous privilege" that the U.S. assumed through their economic blockade to gain Mexico's support against Germany.[127]

Dawson brought them up again the following month. An ad explaining the benefits of subscribing to *La Reforma* in the 21 February, 1918 issue echoed previous anti-American sentiments as well as provided an open statement about the periodical's

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[124] Translated from: "Aviso retirado por el boicoteo que el Gobierno Americano, por medio de su Agente Consular en esta ciudad, ha obligado a quitar, amenazándolo con no venderle mercancías, pero cuyo valor continúa pagando al periódico el propietario del aviso." Dawson to Lansing, Tampico, Mexico, Jan. 3, 1918, RG 59. M367, Roll 242, 763.72112A/256; "El Boycott Norte Americano." *La Reforma* (Tampico, México), Jan. 2, 1918 and Jan. 3, 1918, NACP.

[125] In his telegram, Dawson mentions that the larger article remains untranslated because of length.

[126] Translated from: "El boycott norteamericano, o hasta por la Cafrería. Debía correasea, la nueva forma gobierno de Estados Unidos ha adoptado ha llegado a afectar directamente a empresas y casas comerciales no alemanas. Es decir que, bajo ningún punto de vista el gobierno de la plutocracia norteamericana podrá justificar este ataque a los neutrales. No es un ataque a los intereses alemanes, cosa que sería explicable como media de Guerra. No. Es una medida de coacción contra quienes nada tienen que ver con los intereses ni con las armas alemanas. Es un ataque a México, al comercio mexicano, al capital mexicano, en suma." "El Boycott Norteamericano," *La Reforma.* (Tampico, Mexico), Jan 3, 1918.

[127] Translated from: "Según lo podrían notar nuestros lectores, en la edición de ayer de este diario, hicimos figurar los espacios de los avisos que so han retirado de 'LA REFORMA,' en vista insólita poder a la plutocracia norteamericana el triste y ridículo privilegio de querer imponer la simpatía hacia su causa por medio de bloqueo económico. Debía corresponder a ese gobierno que a cada minuto habla de la Libertad, para escarnecería, ser el primer en la tierra, que atentara contralas naturales libertades de los hombres." Ibid.

bias. The advertisement states that *La Reforma* "is not pro-Yankee and will never be" and that it is "Germanofile [sic]."[128] Dawson also mentions that the issue contains two captions from the same issue titled "What Would Happen When The Central Powers Triumph" and "What Would Happen If The Allies Triumph." Although sensationalist in their wording, these articles fulfilled the need to antagonize the State Department and American consuls.

In addition to *La Reforma*'s article, a similarly critical and harsh editorial was published in *El Pueblo* on 14 June, 1918. Titled "President Wilson Threatens Mexico," examines Wilson's address to Mexican newspapers and Ambassador to Mexico Henry P. Fletcher's comments on the Petrol Decree of 19 February.[129] It decries the attempts to disregard the established provisions that protect Mexican property. The author comments that the U.S and others who are pro-Allies are trying to "fool Mexico into thinking that there is no cause for fear."[130] They continue, stating that every promise of peace and friendship has been followed by an aggression:

> Fresh in our mind are the repeated assurances of non-intervention, of disinterestedness, of help and assistance, the truth of which can be judged by seeing our ports blockaded, our borders closed, our communications interrupted, our correspondence censored, our existence in danger, our security doubtful, and our prosperity and commerce attacked by an enemy more dangerous because of his mutability.

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[128] Dawson to Lansing, Tampico, Feb. 23, 1918, RG 59, Neutral Commerce, Jan. – March 1918, M367, Roll 243, 763.72112a/678.

[129] The Petrol Decree of February 1918 stated that the subsoil oil deposits "belonged to the nation and that private parties wishing to exploit it must recognize this new right by applying for a government concession." Lorenzo Meyer note that this move was nothing less than an attempt to "change the land titles granted during the *Porfirian* administration to mere concessions." Meyer, *Mexico and the United States in the Oil Controversy, 1917 - 1942*, 62.

[130] "President Wilson Threatens Mexico," *El Pueblo.* (Veracruz, México). June 14, 1918.

It ends on a bleak note. Due to all he past transgressions of the United States towards Mexico, the author makes the wrote that "Heaven has been good to us by giving us good crops; otherwise we should now be starving if our only source of supply was the United States, and we had to take what they saw fit to give us."[131]

This editorial piece illustrates how strained relations are with the U.S. and Mexico. To them, it appears as if the U.S. has no good will toward Mexico and that they only seek to exploit and corrupt Mexico as a part of their standard policy making. Framing the U.S. in such a way shows the extent of damages that had occurred because of the hegemonic relationship between both countries. The passing of the TWEA and enforcement of the blacklists in Mexico acts as another form of aggression toward Mexico. By recounting past misdeeds, it is clear that the actions of 1914 and before still resonated in the mind of the Mexican public.

4.4 The End of Two Wars

On 11 November, 1918, to two different headlines graced the front-pages of *El Demócrata* and *El Universal.* One read "The Kaiser Abdicates" and the other "The German Government Does Not Accept The Conditions of the Proposed Armistice."[132] The next day, both papers published stories on the Armistice. *El Universal* published a headline stating, "The Military Government of Germany's Hands and Feet are Tied, Runs Without Conditions; The Disaster is Complete" and *El Demócrata* stating "Since Eleven

[131] Ibid.
[132] Translated from: "Abdico El Kaiser" *El Universal* (Ciudad de México, México), November 11, 1918.; "El Gobierno Aleman No Aceptara Las Condiciones Del Propuestro Armistico" *El Demócrata* (Ciudad de México, México), November 11, 1918.

in the Morning Yesterday, No Fighting on the European Front."[133] Both articles, despite reporting on the same event, approach the narrative in vastly different manners. *El Universal*'s coverage welcomed the news with an editorial celebrating the news of the ceasefire.[134] *El Demócrata's* coverage was far less enthusiastic, only covering the basics of the Armistice. Both papers also covered the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Of the treaties signed during the conference, the one most relevant to this study is the Treaty of Versailles.

On 29 June, a day after the signing of the treaty was signed, *El Demócrata* ran the headline "At 3:13 Yesterday Afternoon, the Great War Formally Ended: In the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles, the Peace Treaty was Signed."[135] The report, provided by the Associated Press, covered the basics of the meeting. Accompanying the report was a one-page spread featuring portrait of the major figure heads and generals from both the Allied countries and Germany.[136] Other headlines about the close of the war included "The Ex-Kaiser Wilhelm Hopes the Dutch Will Not Grant Extradition to the Allies" and "Nothing Confirmed Regarding Suspected Pact Against Mexico."[137]

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[133] Translated from: "El Gobierno Militar Aleman, Atado De Pies Y Manos, Se Rinde Sin Condiciones; El Desastre Es Completo" *El Universal* (Ciudad de México, México), November 12, 1918.; "Desde Ayer, a las Once de la Mañana, No se Combate en los Frentes Europeos" *El Demócrata* (Ciudad de México, México), November 12, 1918.

[134] "La Paz del Mundo" *El Universal* (Ciudad de México, México) November 12, 1918.

[135] Translated from: "A Las 3 y 13 Minutos De La Tarde De Ayer, Acabo, Formalmente, La Gran Guerra: En La 'Sala de los Espejos' del Palacio de Versalles, se Firmó el Tratado de Paz" *El Demócrata* (México City, México), June 29, 1919.

[136] Absent from this spread were the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman leaderships. It is safe to assume that this is because the Treaty of Versailles only dealt with Germany and their conduct during the war. Austria and Hungary signed separate treaties in September 1919 and June 1920 respectively.

[137] The article mentioned does not specifically state which newspaper published cable. The June 28 issue of *El Demócrata* makes no mention of said cable. Translated from: "El Exkaiser Guillermo Confía en que Holanda no Concederá su Extradición a los Aliados" and "Nada Se Confirma Respecto Al Supuesto Pacto Contra México" Ibid.

The same day, *El Universal* ran a similar headline, "Yesterday at 3:13 in the Afternoon, the Peace Treaty Was Solemnly Signed at Versailles."[138] *El Universal*'s report also came from the Associated Press and much like *El Demócrata*'s coverage, it was very superficial. However, unlike the pro-German paper, *El Universal* ran a special article in the issue called "How News of the Signature of Peace Was Received in Mexico."[139] The article that explored how different areas of Mexico City responded to the news. The embassies, banks and the stock market, foreign colonies, and country clubs celebrated the news differently.

In the Allied embassies, it is not surprising that the news of the war's end was well received. The article points out that the American embassy received the news first and spread it to the other Allied embassies. The German embassy – as well as in German circles in Mexico City – told *El Universal* that "no official report had been received yet" and that the news was "being prepared for publication in the press."[140] News of the peace treaty lead to increased activity in the stock market and banks. The European and American communities in Mexico City celebrated the news of the peace treaty accordingly:

> The joy produced by the conclusion of the terrible conflict was exhibited splendidly and magnificently in city streets and buildings. The flags of the inter-allied countries were seen waving on the balconies of establishments and institutions owned by citizens of the Entente countries. The streets were full by the first hours of the morning. The Enthusiasm produced by the restoration of the city, and the presence of carriages and victories, which

[138] Translated from: "Ayer, A Las Tres y Doce Minutos De La Tarde, Fue Firmado Con Toda Solemnidad El Tratado De La Paz En Versalles" *El Universal* (Ciudad de México, México), June 29, 1919.
[139] Translated from: "Cómo Fue Recibida en México la Noticia de la Firma de la Paz" Ibid.
[140] Translated from: "En el Club Alemán se nos manifestó que aún no se había recibido ningún informe oficial y que únicamente se colocía la noticia por lo publicando por la prensa." Ibid.

> carried small flags of France, Belgium, England, Italy, and the United States, after years of bloody struggle.[141]

Both American and German propaganda agencies started to cease operations at home and abroad after the signing of the Armistice. On 11 November, 1918, the Mexico Section of the CPI had 222 individual correspondents operating out of Mexico City.[142] The following day, the domestic activities of the CPI ended and on 30 June, 1919, the foreign operations were terminated. Germany's operations in Mexico also ended around the same time.[143]

In the aftermath of the propaganda war, *El Universal* made an effort to showcase how German propaganda spread in the press. A series of articles published in 1919 titled "The Spider's Thread" argued that German investments in major newspapers violated Mexican sovereignty. The investments were treated as briberies of credible newspapers, suggesting that money turned reliable sources into "spokesmen of the 'Teutonic Culture.'"[144] These accusations towards the *germanófilo* press runs parallel to the claims made in *La Reforma* about the *aliadófilo* publications in 1917 and 1918. The unfortunate irony of this situation is that both presses were manipulated by outside forces.

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[141] Translated from: "La alegría que produjo la conclusión del terrible conflicto se exhibió espléndida y magnifica en las calles y en los edificios de la Metrópoli. Las banderas de los países inter-aliados se veían ondear en los balcones de los establecimientos e instituciones, propiedad de ciudadanos de los países de la Entente. Las calles estaban pletóricas desdé las primeras horas de la mañana. A ple y a bordo de automóviles y de victorias, que llevaban pequeñas banderas de Francia Bélgica, Inglaterra, Italia, y Estados Unidos, desfilaban los miembros de las colonias aliados, mostrando en el regocijo de los rostros, el entusiasmo que produce el retorno de la paz, después de los años de cruenta lucha."
[142] Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 316.
[143] Schuler, *Secret Wars and Secret Policies in the Americas*, 228.
[144] De la Parra, "La primera guerra mundial y la presna mexicana," 159.

CONCLUSION

Mexico in the aftermath of the World War saw the end of the Carranza regime and the election of Obregón as president. Though he stepped down as Secretary of War in May 1917, many Constitutionalists saw him as the natural successor to Carranza and "the true winner of the revolution."[145] On 1 June, 1919, Obregón announced his candidacy, leading Carranza strengthen his attempts to stop him. Forced out of Mexico City by one of his generals in April 1920, Carranza took a series of trains heading to Veracruz. However, the rail line was cut in Puebla and Carranza and his entourage stayed with a *Carrancista* general in Tlaxcalantongo. On 21 May, three men entered the shelter where Carranza was staying and murdered him. Following a brief interim presidency, Obregón was inaugurated on 30 November, 1920, ending a decade of revolution.

With the end of the World War and the revolution, both the country and the press attempted to reorient itself. The press, as mentioned in the last chapter, began an exposé on German propaganda. The *germanófilo* press started to also distance itself from war. Mexico's relationship with Europe and the U.S. also shifted as well. The influence which Germany, Britain, and France spread though the Western Hemisphere faded as the U.S. came to head as a dominant power on the world stage. European imperial aspirations – especially Germany's – faded by 1919. Compared to conditions in Germany after the

[145] The differences between both Carranza and Obregón started to become more apparent after Carranza came into power. Carranza distanced himself from his agrarian and labor supporters while Obregón was viewed as maintaining his principles despite gaining notoriety for his military prowess. Buchenau, *The Last Caudillo*, 97.

war, the German enclave in Mexico maintained their prosperity and enjoyed their higher status.[146]

Relations between the U.S. and Mexico did not improve. From 1920 to 1923, the U.S. cut relations with Mexico. Issues surrounding Article 27 of the Mexican constitution and destruction of U.S. property during the revolution surrounded the break in relations. The lingering damage caused by repeated interventions also affected the Mexican attitude toward joining the League of Nations. According to Friedrich Schuler, Mexico refused numerous offers to join the League of Nations on the grounds that "Mexican diplomats saw no use in joining an organization that could not protect their rights against the United States, since the League accepted the validity of the U.S. Monroe Doctrine and, consequently, abstained from intervening in Latin American Affairs."[147]

Forces outside of the offices of *El Universal, El Demócrata, La Opinión* and other Mexican newspapers worked to shape Mexican opinion on the war. By relying on foreign cables coming from Reuters, the Associated Press, Transozean GmbH, and other groups, the press published stories with an established slant. Under both Carranza and Huerta, the press was heavily censored and as the war progressed, they mirrored official presses from overseas. Foreign investment and coercion through blacklists and antagonization also added another dynamic to the manipulation of the press.

Allied propaganda efforts were successful before 1916 and faced ongoing challenges afterwards. Brief columns describing battles and longer ones promoting

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[146] *Tools of Progress*, 86-87.

[147] Mexico would eventually begin to participate in the League of Nations in the late 1920s. Friedrich E. Schuler, *Mexico between Hitler and Roosevelt: Mexican Foreign Relations in the Age of Lazaro Cardenas, 1934-1940* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 12-13.

aliadófilo attitudes graced the pages of *La Opinión* in 1914. Reproductions of propaganda from British and U.S. newspapers aided these successes. The challenges from 1916 onward were the product of the war itself as started to appear that the war was not going to be over quickly. *El Universal* and the CPI's involvement in 1917 attempted to mend the wounds caused by German propaganda yet with wartime legislature and repeated intervention during the revolution made it difficult to promote pro-Ally sentiments until the end of the war.

Conversely, while early German efforts were hindered by the British, reports from Berlin, Vienna, and Constantinople still made the pages of *La Opinión.* The exploitation of rifts between Mexico and the U.S. aided German efforts in 1916 onward. Wartime policies such as the Trading with the Enemy Act and the attempts at enforcing the blacklists provided the VDR and other propagandists with new material. Additionally, the Carranza government's relationship with Germany aided in the success of *germanófilo* propaganda. *El Demócrata* especially benefitted from this relationship, as it helped promote the foreign policy of the Carranza regime.

As in Europe and other areas more directly and immediately affected by the war, Mexico too saw a transformation in attitudes and perceptions as a result of the press. Although the bulk of the readership was the educated middle and upper classes, images from the battlefield made their way to front-pages of these newspapers. This sort of engagement, as Rinke points out, led to a greater public interest in the war that "far exceeded any previous world event."[148] Furthermore, it led to a distancing of Mexico and

[148] Rinke, *Latin America and the First World War*, 259.

Latin America away from using Europe as a reference point for their own countries. Rinke again notes that the "long, undisputed center of culture, education, and progress was responsible for the most horrific war in human history."[149]

[149] Ibid., 260.

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