

# An O.U. Book Hits the Bullseye

ONE of the first reactions to war in Europe felt in Norman has been the almost immediate increase in demand for copies of *Propaganda for War: The Campaign Against American Neutrality 1914-1917*, published by the University Press and written by Dr. H. C. Peterson, associate professor of history in the University.

For the second time since its publication last April a sudden increase in sales has demanded an additional printing. Enthusiastic reviews in papers from coast to coast, and highly enthusiastic comments by several of the best known syndicated political columns made a second printing of the book necessary within three weeks of publication.

Sale of the book held up unusually well during the summer months, usually the dulllest period of the year for the book trade.

But with the increasing momentum of international affairs and the final outbreak of war the book is rapidly assuming the role of a best seller in non-fiction. The *Detroit Free Press* has just called it, "Without question the most important volume of non-fiction to appear so far this year."

A third large printing of the book was ordered last month by the Press to meet this rapidly growing market.

"How does one know," says a reviewer in the *New York Times* in commenting on Mr. Peterson's outline of the tremendous energies expended in winning American favor, "that a similar movement has not been set going in anticipation of a new war on the continent of Europe?"

Political commentators, newspaper editorial writers, many of the broadcasters, and even President Roosevelt in his recent speech on neutrality, keep emphasizing to the American public the necessity of weighing all news concerning the war. They are pointing out various evidences of half-truth and partisanship which comprise propaganda in this country, and an outline of which Mr. Peterson is concerned with in his book.

While the book doesn't actually deal with the present situation, its readers cannot help seeing the strong parallel between America's situation in 1914-1917 and her position as a neutral now.

That the book is having national significance is indicated by Paul B. Mallon who recently said in his syndicated column, "Senators are now reading *Propaganda for War*. Mr. Peterson, in leaning heavily upon the Nye Munitions Investigation and in his discovery of such important secret documents as those of

Wellington House, the secret department of the British Foreign Office during the last war which was organized to win favor in the United States, has performed an unusual public service to America in helping clarify exactly how propaganda in Europe is organized and operates. This book will undoubtedly have considerable influence during the coming neutrality debates in Congress and perhaps be widely quoted during them."

Research carried on for a period of nearly twelve years by Professor Peterson preceded actual publication. The book consequently reflects both the mature scholarship of the author and writing ability on his part of a very high order.

The attention it has received nationally resulted recently in a request for a series of five articles by Professor Peterson on the technique of war propaganda, which appeared first in the *Daily Oklahoman* and have since been syndicated to the forty-two member papers of the North American Newspaper Alliance, including the *New York Times*, *Atlanta Constitution*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Minneapolis Tribune*, and other important newspapers.

Further indications of the wide critical acceptance of the book are quoted below:

"Will help vastly to prevent Americans from being swept off their feet by today's fears, hatreds and hysterias... A fascinating and thrilling account of who



H. C. Peterson

worked on whom and how." *The New Republic*.

"The book provides as full illumination of propagandic history as has been available up to this time." *The Dallas Morning News*.

"A new and important contribution to the subject of propaganda as it concerns American neutrality... is not so much an arraignment of the British for their successful efforts to bring America to the aid of the Allies as it is an implied warning against repetitions of the same thing." *The Kansas City Star*.

"... dates, names, facts, figures and degrees of the campaign... a well-planned, organized pattern of propaganda, aimed to inveigle America into war in Europe." *Boake Carter in 87 newspapers*.

"It would be hard to imagine a more timely and disturbing book than this... The book should make the entire nation stop, look and listen." *The Christian Century*.

"The reader will find himself amazed that propaganda, which is largely an intangible and unfelt thing if it is to be successful, can be such a business and such a delicate one at that." *Lynchburg (Virginia) News*.

"Mr. Peterson has discovered that the great success of propaganda in the United States should not be attributed to a professional group of propagandists but to native Americans—volunteer propagandists. Particularly interesting are the tactics described for winning the sympathies of American newsmen abroad." *The Christian Science Monitor*.



To some the history of the (World War) "neutrality" period demonstrates that the United States cannot keep out of war. But THE FACTS do not bear out any such contention. What it DOES PROVE is that it is impossible to be UN-NEUTRAL and keep out of war—H. C. Peterson in "Propaganda for War."

The cartoon and cutlines are reprinted from the *New York Journal-American*.