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VIEWS OF THE LA CROSSE TRIBUNE ON THE VERSAILLES TREATY
AND ITS REJECTION BY THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES
NOVEMBER, 1918 TO NOVEMBER, 1920

A RESEARCH PAPER
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Master of Science

by
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INTRODUCTION

This research paper is divided into two parts. The first consists of a summary analysis of the Armistice and of the Versailles Treaty. It considers the Treaty's main provisions and its rejection by the United States Senate. Some of the weaknesses of the Treaty, also attempts of the peacemakers to establish a strong basis for future peace are reviewed.

The second part of the paper is an interpretation of The La Crosse Tribune editorials from the Armistice until the election of President Harding. The purpose of this section is to present the concerns and interests of a small mid-Western community during the years immediately following World War I and the reaction to national and local events by news writers of this local paper.
PART I
THE ARMISTICE

The Great War lost its momentum noticeably in the latter part of 1918. As winter drew near and man power shortages crippled both the Allies and Germany, morale waned and peace became more attractive. The threat of Bolshevism was sweeping in from the east and no power bloc cared to face it. Allied leaders awaited any move made in the direction of conciliation. In November, encouraged by Wilson's offer of the Fourteen Points as a basis for ending the war, Germany asked for and received an armistice. While this release brought profound relief to the citizens of the world, celebrations soon sobered as the terms of the Versailles Treaty, with its 440 articles, became common knowledge.

Miasmas of distrust and intrigue rose on both sides of the Atlantic. Some European leaders planned to take what they could get from Germany regardless of either ethics or the practical aspects of creating a sound European economy. Narrown self-interest, not moral principles seemed to guide the exploiting nations. This convinced many members of the Senate that America could never make peace in Europe and that isolation from the Old World and its wars was necessary.


President Wilson, dissatisfied with many points of the Versailles Treaty, sympathized with Germany's plea for mitigation of its terms but was unable to persuade other Allied leaders to modify them. They argued that the Central Powers had surrendered and that it was imperative that German strength be checked so as never to disrupt the world again. However, the method by which this was to be executed was a matter upon which no two men agreed, much less two nations. Each chose to contemplate the future in terms of its own needs.\(^3\) France feared the rise of German power in future years and German participation in the League of Nations was completely unacceptable to French leaders.

The United States and Britain both knew that the safety of France did not require Germany to be crippled industrially or commercially. A check placed on Germany's military power by restricting the size of the German army was sufficient. The rest of the world was unwilling to bankrupt a good customer and a heavy debtor just to disable a dangerous trade rival of France. Furthermore, the League of Nations, which the Versailles Treaty produced, was expected to provide machinery for the peaceful correction of international blunders and menaces. For this reason, Wilson worked to have the Treaty ratified, expecting the United States Senate to realize that the League would someday remedy deficiencies in the agreement.

Other nations, in view of the serious damage done by war, wanted a speedy conclusion of a preliminary treaty of peace. To them, the

job of drafting a League Covenant could wait until a later date, but Wilson maintained that the Covenant must be an integral part of the same Treaty. In this, he differed from those who sought immediate settlements on new boundaries and on military power for protection against the Central Powers. Wilson won. On January 25, 1919, the Peace Conference voted that the Covenant would be a part of the Peace Treaty. Allied leaders appointed Wilson chairman of a special commission delegated to draft the Covenant. To meet the fears of those who felt that the League Covenant threatened the Monroe Doctrine, the delegates proposed and adopted an amendment that pacified anxious Americans.

Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements, such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe Doctrine, for securing the maintenance of peace.4

On April 28, 1919, the Peace Conference approved the Covenant and it became the first twenty-six articles of the Versailles Treaty. Boundary revisions, a disarmed Germany, reparations and the establishment of the League of Nations were the major provisions in the Treaty.

**BOUNDARY REVISIONS**

Germany's boundary changes were of great concern, especially to France. Alsace and Lorraine became French territory yet Clemenceau

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also demanded that Germany's western frontier be fixed at the Rhine River. This meant that 10,000 square miles of territory, lying on the left bank of the Rhine between Alsace and Holland, would become an autonomous and neutral state. This buffer state was to guarantee France sufficient warning against any German invasion. Both Lloyd George and Wilson opposed the demand and France settled for the right to occupy the territory for fifteen years. However, she was assured of British and American aid in the event of any German attack upon her. France also claimed rights to the Saar Basin and its valuable coal mines. Allied statesmen agreed to this French acquisition but Germany retained political sovereignty over the region. After fifteen years, the people of the Saar would determine, by vote, their political status.

Other modifications to Germany's western boundary were made in favor of Luxembourg, Belgium, and Denmark. But it was in the east that Germany suffered the greatest loss of territory. A large section of Poland, taken by Germany in the eighteenth century was returned to the Polish Republic. Poland was reconstituted and assured of access to the Baltic Sea through Danzig, a natural port and free city under the jurisdiction of the League. By the Treaty, Germany was forced to recognize Poland's independence. Czechoslovakia also received a small section of Germany's upper Silesia.

6 Israel, op. cit., Part II of the Versailles Treaty, Article 27.
Germany further renounced "in favor of the...Allied and Associated Powers all her rights and titles over her overseas possessions". Rather than outright annexation of these colonies, Wilson proposed a mandate system. All former German colonies in Africa and the Pacific became the property of the League of Nations and would be administered by nations chosen by the League. Each controlling power was to make an annual report to the League on the condition of the colony and members of the League would have equal commercial opportunities with all former colonial possessions.

DISARMAMENT

Disarming Germany was a second major goal of the Treaty. German military forces had to demobilize and reduce to 100,000 men. Certain terms prohibited military or naval air forces, others forbade the manufacture of arms, munitions or like materiel. Violations of these restrictions would be regarded as hostile acts toward the Allies. The terms also reduced Germany's navy to six battleships, six light cruisers, twelve destroyers, and twelve torpedo boats. They allowed no construction or acquisition of other warships except to replace the established

7 Ibid., Article 119.

8 Paul Birdsall, Versailles Twenty Years After (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1941), p. 49.
quota. Allies received all submarines that were not destroyed.

REPARATIONS

A third provision of the Treaty, reparations, threatened to force Germans to compensate for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and to private property. This implied a bill for all war costs but Wilson suggested that the demand was inconsistent with agreements made with Germany before the Armistice. He preferred limiting reparation payments to a fixed amount and providing for payment over a long period of time. The other Allies finally agreed with America's insistence that reparation obligations also be limited to actual damage alone. Later this was interpreted to include war pensions and separation allowances.

The amount, periods, and method of payment to be required of Germany were issues never decided at the Peace Conference. The power to establish a final sum was entrusted to a Reparations Commission and only later did Allied powers face the reality that Germany was unable to pay. This truth eliminated France's hopes for restitution, for she had intended to transform Germany into a land of serfs dominated by an alien military force. The Americans, least ravaged by war,

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9 Ibid., p. 6.
suggested that Germany be asked to pay what she could and that the Allies should cancel the rest. Other nations then felt that if the Germans were granted this major concession, a reconsideration of the Fourteen Points was in order. Many European leaders thought these Wilsonian proposals were more easily stated than applied in the first place. Statesmen, urged by the people, continued to demand a tremendous indemnity from Germany despite America's suggestions but efforts to collect these reparations failed. 10

Other demands, less onerous but bothersome, confronted the Germans. For instance, certain articles of the Treaty placed international control over waterways formerly considered to be German rivers. 11 Other articles demanded punishment of German war leaders for atrocities. These trials were to be conducted in military tribunals of the Allied powers. All these and other articles were supported with the threat that if Germany refused to observe any part of the Treaty, she would be subjected to immediate reoccupation by the Allied forces. 12

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Establishment of a League of Nations was the fourth provision of the Versailles Treaty and it was the most idealistic and most

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10 Horne, op. cit., p. xxviii.
11 Rhine, Oder, Elbe Rivers
controversial issue of them all. This portion sought to create some form of union among nations to prevent future world wars. To this end, those states accepting the League would agree to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of every other member. This was the context of Article X, the clause that was so critically debated in the United States Senate. Other articles were designed to bring to the attention of the Assembly or the Council of the League circumstances that threatened international peace. Arbitration, judicial settlements, and suggestions were to temper disputes that might ordinarily lead to war.¹³

President Wilson disapproved of many of the provisions of the Treaty but regarded them as only temporary until the League of Nations began to function and eventually eliminated the inevitable contradictions and injustices which the settlement inflicted upon Germany. He was so eager to see the League of Nations established that he yielded to many of the retaliatory provisions in order to protect this one victory.¹⁴

At the Paris Peace Conference, transactions and conflicts reaffirmed the need for some permanent international organization to promote and to maintain international peace. The nations in Europe quickly ratified the Treaty, then waited the approval of the United

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¹³Ibid., p. 150.

States Senate so that America could more fully participate. When it became evident that Senate debates would be extensive, Clemenceau called the first meeting of the League on January 6, 1920.15

SENATE AND THE TREATY

In Washington, President Wilson faced a Senate that had discussed the League of Nation's Covenant and had denounced it even before his return from Europe. The Republican majority in Congress, aggravated by Article X, claimed that it bound our nation, as one of the members of the League, "to preserve against aggressors the territory and political independence in all state members of the League".16 Many senators opposed it on the grounds that it was an infringement of Congress' right to declare war and to authorize any use of the United States military forces. Some senators opposed the League entirely while others favored a modified form of alliance.

Henry Cabot Lodge, Republican Senator from Massachusetts and Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, was a bitter rival of Wilson. He opposed the Treaty in its original form but saw dangers in any outright opposition to the entire document. He realized that

15 News item in the La Crosse Tribune, January 6, 1920.

involvement in a permanent alliance through any international organization was contrary to American tradition, but he also knew that the peace of the world might be maintained through such an alliance dutifully enforced. Politically unable to comply with Wilson's complete draft of the Covenant, because it was Wilson's, he set about injecting his own proposals modifying his rival's work. Senator Lodge resented Wilson's independence in formulating the Treaty. The President neither asked Senate advice regarding formation of a League or Treaty nor had he taken any senators with him to the Peace Conference. His pride hurt, Lodge urged amendments to spite Wilson while keeping the League of Nations. 17 Wilson rejected Lodge's suggestions because changes would force reconsideration of the document by all the Allied powers and delay peace.

During the summer of 1919, while Congress debated, Wilson toured the country hoping to win popular support of the League. He explained that the organization had limited power concerning war involvements. It could only "advise members regarding steps to be taken against a recalcitrant state". 18 Only a unanimous vote in the Council could lead the world into war. As long as the United States did not agree, such a development was not possible. The president's

18 Benns, op. cit., p. 136.
campaign ended abruptly on September 26, 1919 when he suffered a paralytic stroke. He returned to Washington and for the remainder of his term was physically and emotionally debilitated.19

The uncooperative spirit between the Senate and Executive also caused a widening of the breach between Wilson and his own party.20 Democratic senators voted for a bipartisan conference reservation on Article X as a compromise, in the hope that the process of approval of the Treaty could proceed. But when presented with the reservation, Wilson vetoed it and others presented by the Senate, declaring that peace established through such resolutions would not attain the purpose for which the United States entered the war.21

American foreign policy was too much affected by party politics at this time to fashion America's future.22 Wilson expected to make the coming election a solemn referendum on the League issue. Citizens too, failed to look into the actual working of the League of Nations to see what it really could have been expected to accomplish. Instead, Americans wasted time studying the personalities of senators who talked too much and who accomplished very little.23

20 Ibid., pp. 149-200.
When it became evident that the United States would eventually fail to join the League's membership, the other Allied Powers proceeded with their meetings. The United States was not officially represented but a few men acted in an advisory capacity. They rendered assistance in the negotiations and in many instances were called upon to arbitrate disputes.

By November, 1920, the United States had suffered a reaction to its wartime idealism and was increasingly influenced by feelings of disillusionment and restlessness. The majority of Americans voted Republican in the national election, crushing Wilson's illusion of public backing of his proposals. The Grand Old Party interpreted Warren G. Harding's election as a mandate to act against the Treaty and the League. With the rejection of the Versailles Treaty, the United States continued to be technically at war with Germany until July, 1921 when Congress passed a joint resolution ending hostilities, and in the Treaty of Berlin, America and Germany made their peace.24

Ironically, the Treaty of Versailles was more American than European and more democratic than former international settlements yet it was opposed by the Senate for being un-American. The United States threw away the chance of leadership that could have been hers during that period of world rehabilitation.25 Instead, intrigued by

24 Benns, op. cit., p. 137.

the idea of a return to "normalcy", Americans supported the man who offered this promise. To Harding and the Senate, the word meant the security of conservatism and an overthrow of Wilsonian idealism. Leading the country back to the "good old days" of pre-war America or normalcy, as Harding called it, remained an impossible dream--yet he cherished it. 26

WEAKNESSES OF THE TREATY

Certain weaknesses in the Versailles Treaty explain why the goals of the peacemakers never materialized. At Paris, for instance, the alleged and the actual intentions of the participants were rarely the same. Each delegate sought compensation from the defeated enemy and viewed every article of the Treaty with the intention of making reservations to accommodate the needs of his own nation. Hence, no genuine agreement was possible and conflicts in principle were readily apparent. America sought satisfaction for her self-righteousness. France tried to create a zone of protection from future attacks. Britain, impoverished by the war, wanted to replenish her depleted treasury and establish economic relations with her Dominions. Japan and Italy were

after territorial riches. Smaller nations dreamed of more territory and resources at the expense of defeated Germany. The leaders of these countries knew that if they acted otherwise, they would be replaced by other men whose views would be closely in accord with public opinion. 27

It was impossible for men both to satisfy public opinion at home and to frame a Treaty on a literal interpretation of the Fourteen Points. It would have been better had the delegates prepared a preliminary peace which would have first demobilized troops and raised naval blockades, and then negotiated with the enemy to form a treaty that would be in accordance with the terms of surrender. The final treaty could have been framed when public opinion was in a more rational mood. Lloyd George turned to this deferred form of procedure when he suggested a Reparation Commission to deal with the question from a more objective viewpoint.

But this weakness, whether the peace negotiated was to be preliminary or final, imposed or negotiated, was somehow overlooked. Wilson's insistence upon inclusion of the Covenant in the Treaty made the idea of a preliminary arrangement impossible. Delegates assumed that in some negotiating type of Congress the less reasonable clauses of the Treaty would be modified, yet no such Congress materialized or was planned. The clauses remained unmodified and were imposed under threat of re-invasion unless unconditionally accepted. Had the delegates

known that no negotiations with Germany would take place, many of
the unreasonable clauses would not have been inserted. The mistake
then, was the responsibility of the directing Powers who never made
it known to the Conference that the Treaty they prepared was the final
text to be imposed upon Germany. The Powers themselves may not have
been sure if the text was preliminary or final.

A great fault of these powers was their failure to draft a
workable agenda. Wilson and Lloyd George rejected a proposal offered
by France. They resented any written formula which would direct them
"of what, or how, or when, they were supposed to discuss pertinent
issues".28

The Treaty also lacked an effective coercive power adequate for
use against an aggressive member nation. There was no binding obli-
gation, no pledge to use force against a nation that disturbed the
peace. Such nations faced only military or commercial sanctions. The
French especially wanted some international force to apply the pre-
scriptions of the Covenant because the settlements that were made
could only be maintained if Germany was kept weak by strict enforcement
of the Treaty terms.29

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28 Ibid., pp. 100-103.

29 Dexter Perkins, America and Two Wars (Boston: Little,
THE TREATY, A BASIS FOR PEACE

Despite its faults, the Versailles Treaty supplied some sound base for future peace. New boundaries left national minorities on one side or the other but the territorial settlements that evolved from the various negotiations at Paris still remained "the closest approximations to an ethnographic map of Europe that has ever been achieved".30

Essentially, the Treaty can be considered a compromise between Anglo-American and French conceptions of a stable international order. The tempering spirit of British and American influence prevented France from entirely dismembering Germany. With some concessions to France's needs, the other two nations attempted to direct the course of the Treaty without serious violation of the Fourteen Points. These concessions were regarded as interim measures to enable the League of Nations to consolidate and move forward. The proposed military occupation of Germany would end when residents of the Saar Valley voted for the sovereignty of their choice. This forceful German disarmament was designed to be a prelude to world disarmament, and the Anglo-American military guarantee would cease when the League was strong enough to provide much needed general security.31 The English depended upon


31 Ibid., pp. 26-27.
America to exert a moderating influence in settling the reparation question, but when the United States rejected the Treaty, England re-examined the severity of some of its economic terms. This in turn threatened France's desire to enforce stringently the entire Treaty, and Anglo-French relations became increasingly strained.32

In America, most of the population assumed that the nation repudiated the entire Paris Peace Settlement when the Senate rejected the Versailles Treaty. Too, many believed that the United States was no longer responsible for any postwar problems that existed in Europe. Because of this, Americans took little action and showed less concern over threats created by reparation problems or by the French invasion of the Ruhr. America saw the rearmament of Germany and the remilitarization of the Rhineland, under Hitler, as threats to Europe and not to the world and a direct result of the Versailles Treaty. But all too soon, the United States felt the sting of involvement in those same affairs that awakened many to the realization that another war was inevitable. The effort used for making the world safe for democracy in 1917 was somehow just not enough and by 1941, despite America's reluctance to accept her commitment to the world, she became interested in the politics of Europe and Asia and thus found herself once again at war.
PART II
LA CROSSE, 1918 TO 1920

The La Crosse Tribune serves the heart of the Coulee Region and has been a member of the Lee Syndicate Papers since 1917. The Business Manager, Frank Burgess and Aaron Brayton, editor, witnessed the merger of The Tribune and its competitor, The La Crosse Leader Press, in January of that year. A. M. Brayton was the editor until August, 1918 then Mark Byers replaced him when Brayton left La Crosse to manage the publication of the Wisconsin State Journal. Mark Byers wrote many of the editorials during the period considered in this paper.

The style of writing in The La Crosse Tribune reflects the fundamental principles for the management of the Lee Newspapers.

To be fearless, straightforward, and fair; to fight steadily for the best interests of the community; to print news without favoritism, coloring, or bias; to prefer peace to conflict, but to fight for the rights of the people and good order.1

The Tribune was the only main source of information for the citizens in the city during the post-war period and afforded the readers with international, national, and local news. It lacked the appealing format and style of the New York Times but then, comparing the local paper of this community with the paper of a large metropolis as New York is unfair to the men who attempted to interest citizens of La Crosse with projects of local concern. In the following pages, this should be evident as the two years following World War I are considered.

World War I ended at five a.m. in La Crosse on November 11, 1918. Mayor Arthur Bentley declared a holiday and La Crosse joyfully celebrated the Armistice with parades, songs, and speeches. The Tribune issued four EXTRA Peace editions to keep citizens informed of the latest news. Since President Wilson immediately cancelled the draft, seventy-nine men scheduled to leave La Crosse at noon that day did not depart for training in South Carolina.2

Soon after Armistice jubilation subsided, The Tribune began to disagree with those urging help for the reportedly starving Germans. Suspicious of German propaganda, the paper warned people not to become emotionally involved in the former enemy's plight.3 The New York Times presented reports by experts suggesting that Germany was not suffering from any nutrient shortages as was implied in European press releases.

Editorials, at times, remarked about the vacillating German government. President Wilson tried to impress the Germans with the idea that they must be mindful of their future and suggested that they become Allies of a coalition against military autocracy. But such vision outranged that of his contemporaries. The Tribune did not seem to consider the new German government a reform-minded one especially when reports reached America of constant requests for modifications of the Treaty terms. On occasion though, The Tribune referred critically

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2 News item in The La Crosse Tribune, November 11, 1918.

3 Editorials in The La Crosse Tribune, November 11-18, 1918.
to short-sighted clauses in the Treaty restricting the use of Germany's resources and making any sensible reparation impossible.\footnote{Editorials in \textit{The La Crosse Tribune}, June 9 and February 18, 1920.}

Some writers in La Crosse handled information on Germany skeptically. Their reactions to events in Europe were more intense during the war, but traces of continued bitterness appeared in several editorials and news items after the Armistice. On the one hand, as early as November 15, 1918, C. W. Barron, an economist, informed readers that Germany's entire worth was only a third of the indemnity required of her. He cautioned leaders of the Peace Conference to impose only such conditions on Germany as could be met. To impose the impossible would be to block any possible recovery.\footnote{News item in \textit{The La Crosse Tribune}, November 15, 1918.} On the other hand, wire service releases accused the Germans of taking advantage of tender-hearted Americans who could not refuse aid when it was so desperately requested.\footnote{Editorial in \textit{The La Crosse Tribune}, November 18, 1918.}

Front page coverage of daily international news events kept readers informed but the editor concentrated his attention on local affairs. City officials discussed post-war problems that arose and prepared long-range measures for handling them. For example, steamboat traffic and improvement of the harbor along the levee were serious
matters for La Crosse. If the city did not remove the sand bar that formed near Riverside Park, the harbor would be ruined and commercial interests penalized. Strict enforcement of Prohibition in the city was sensational news and of great interest to La Crosse readers.7 People also became interested in a campaign to support war orphans in France. By pledging $36.50, a citizen could support one child for a year. The editor urged a successful campaign and La Crosse citizens complied.8

These topics, rather than international conflicts attracted the interest of local newswriters and La Crosse returned to "normalcy" almost immediately after the Armistice. People concerned themselves with their own community, honoring their "boys" and awaiting the arrival of every train that brought the servicemen home. They relived the jubilant celebration of the Armistice upon arrival of each new group.

For example, when Wisconsin's Thirty-second Red Arrow Division landed in New York on May 6, 1919, The Tribune planned to deck the city of La Crosse with the Division's emblem. Before their arrival in the city, the paper printed large "red arrows" as part of the daily edition so that each family could have the symbol in its window when the men returned. This idea was attractive to many people, sales increased,

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7 Editorial in The La Crosse Tribune, June 28, 1919.
8 Editorial in The La Crosse Tribune, November 17, 1918.
and the paper apologized for not having printed enough copies, a deficit met before the men arrived on May 10, 1919.9

That same day, Germany requested new peace negotiations but newsmen chose to write about returning veterans and about the need to patronize La Crosse businesses. Retailers complained that consumers purchased goods from mail order houses to the detriment of local businesses.10

The Allies presented the terms of the Treaty to Germany at Versailles on May 7, 1919 and shortly after that Wilson called an extra session of Congress. He hoped to dispose of important appropriation measures before he delivered the Treaty to the Senate for its consideration. La Crosse during this time received news that was more directly concerned with the community: special memorial services for two outstanding women who served in the war, nurses Agnes W. Reid and Jane Delano.11

When the German government resigned rather than sign the Treaty, the city remained indifferent, preferring to continue sponsoring dances and dinners for returning servicemen. The Tribune also encouraged employers to offer the veterans opportunities to return to a normal life and suggested that the city develop new industries to meet this need.12

9 News items in The La Crosse Tribune, May 6-10, 1919.
10 Ibid.
11 News items and editorials in The La Crosse Tribune, May 7, 1919.
12 Editorials in The La Crosse Tribune, May 16, and June 3, 1919.
When business responded to the request, La Crosse faced a new problem, insufficient housing for new employees moving into the city.13 Strikes in May, 1920 hampered industrial development but once management met the needs of workers, La Crosse returned to the task of developing the city.14

Senate debates on the Versailles Treaty revealed substantial differences with the President because of the Lodge Reservations. While the Senate insisted that they were necessary, planners in La Crosse worked to provide the community with air transportation. The Tribune believed that the city was ideally situated for an air terminal and suggested that Salzer Field, on the south side offered a good location.15 This comment led to discussion, then construction which made La Crosse ready for air service in the early 1920's.

Still another local issue held the attention of The Tribune readers, that of a school building project. At Longfellow School, the floor caved in, injuring a few boys. Shortly after, lightning struck another school. The fire that followed damaged the property and forced extensive repairs. The paper used these misfortunes to plea for the long-delayed school building program. The School Board

and city officials responded to the pressure and La Crosse built several new schools. 16

Delays in the Senate's ratification of the Versailles Treaty caused newswriters to suspect statesmen of political maneuvering that hampered negotiations with Europe. The first mention of partisan controversy over the Treaty's League of Nations appeared in The Tribune on June 22, 1919. Senator William Borah (Republican, Idaho) took a defiant stand against the League and America's membership in it. The Tribune editorial supported the Los Angeles Times which denounced senators who made the Peace League issue a partisan matter. The local paper regarded the League of Nations as a vital question to the world, not mere "timber for party platforms". It suggested, as President Wilson had, that the Covenant of the League be considered in a national referendum. 17

In the summer and fall of 1919, the Senate formulated several reservations to make the Treaty more acceptable. But when Wilson refused to consider any change in the text, the Senate rejected it and adjourned. 18 Responsibility for approval rested entirely upon the senators. The Tribune charged that if the Senate comprehended

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17 Editorial in The La Crosse Tribune, June 22, 1919.
18 News item in The La Crosse Tribune, November 19, 1919.
the importance of the Treaty to the United States it would have ratified it before adjourning.\textsuperscript{19} The editor blamed some Republicans for the defeat and concluded that it was the work of "blind partisan recklessness, done in callous disregard of the need and the suffering of nations and millions of men..."\textsuperscript{20} The commentator stated that rejection of the Treaty was not in the interests of most Americans for it would leave European statesmen with a free hand to arrange the world situation. But, The Tribune warned, the entire Republican Party was not to blame. Thousands of Republicans favored ratification because they wanted America to be a member of the League of Nations. They disliked dealing with the issue in partisan terms since it forced them to choose between the League and their party. Once again, The Tribune asked that the issue be considered in a referendum and taken out of politics.\textsuperscript{21}

In April, 1920, Senator Philander C. Knox successfully presented a resolution to end the impasse and the state of war with Germany and Austria. The Tribune did not approve of this step because the United States had stood by the Allies in the war. To desert them now and to write a separate peace seemed un-American. The editor must have been pleased when Wilson vetoed the Knox Resolution. In an editorial he

\textsuperscript{19} Editorial in the \textit{New York Times}, November 19, 1919.
\textsuperscript{21} Editorials in \textit{The La Crosse Tribune}, January 6-25, 1920.
reminded readers that a few years before, Senator Lodge, a Republican, had denounced a separate peace unless it could be arranged with the approval of the other Allies. The editor contended that this was a good argument against the Knox Resolution.22

During this same period, La Crosse read a great deal about Herbert Hoover and his quest for the Presidency. Local newsmen tried to mold the political attitudes of the people in La Crosse, encouraging them to consider the qualities of Hoover as those of a potential candidate. Some citizens futilely formed a La Crosse Hoover Club to generate enthusiasm for his nomination at the Chicago Convention in the summer.23

Politics held the spotlight throughout most of the summer and fall of 1920, and in the November elections, La Crosse county voted Republican. Warren Harding was its choice for the presidency, and it also supported John J. Blaine elected governor of the state and Senator Irvine Lenroot, who was returned to Washington.24 All were Republicans. La Crosse had followed the national trend for thirty years and did so again.25 Numerous Americans of German extraction in La Crosse probably voted Republican because they believed Wilson had failed to


24 Wisconsin Blue Book, 1921, p. 139.

25 In 1892, La Crosse voted Democrat (Cleveland); 1912 and 1916 Democrat (Wilson); 1900, (McKinley); 1904, (T. Roosevelt); 1908, (Taft) all Republicans.
fulfill his promise to the German people to procure peace according to the Fourteen Points.

The Democratic candidate, James Cox, toured most of the country advocating the League and denouncing Republican conservatism. He made it known that the Democrats would not oppose acceptance of reservations that could make more specific the obligations of the United States to the League associates. The Republicans, on the other hand, straddled the issue of the Treaty. They criticized the Covenant, yet favored some international association to prevent war. They kept their candidate at home in Marion, Ohio, where he waged a "front porch campaign" that made an appeal to the nation's postwar temper by calling for a "return to normalcy". On one occasion he promised to formulate a plan for a world court and a detailed study for reconstruction of the League. Probably citizens of La Crosse saw in this promise a better chance of securing membership in a more stable form of League under President Harding, a Republican, backed by a Republican majority in Congress than under Cox, a Democrat. Furthermore, La Crosse had voted in the two past elections for a Democrat. It may have felt that it was time for a change. But the strongest appeal Harding generated was a pledge to "go back to things that were". Since the local community had long before returned to "normalcy", Harding's pledge for the nation must have really appealed to La Crosse.

An analysis of The Tribune's editorials for the two years considered, reveals that La Crosse was certainly very community-minded. The editorials
respected citizens' interests and generally tended to comment on matters of local importance. These editorials seemed aimed at arousing the publics' concern for building up the city economically, intellectually, socially, and politically. While the editor displayed a negative reaction to international events, syndicated wire material kept the city informed of national and international news and thus provided adequate news coverage that created an awareness of current events among the citizens. By calling attention to the city's needs, the editor was often successful in urging development projects that inspired city builders to fashion an enterprising community.
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