

Censorship

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Summary

Censorship was an indispensable war weapon: its task was to keep the people in an atmosphere of utter ignorance and unshaken confidence in the authorities, and to allow their boundless indoctrination so that they would, despite terrible losses and privations, accept the necessity of holding on until the bitter end and the complete “knock out” (David Lloyd George) of the enemy. This article compares the organization of censorship and its limitations in the combatant countries, analyzes its methods, and cites the principal topics which were usually suppressed, not only in the media, but also in novels, entertainment, and in private correspondence. It also investigates the different reactions to censorship: self-censorship, accommodation, criticism, manoeuvres to outwit and circumvent it, and, last but not least, the way in which censorship was manipulated in order to discredit or even ruin political enemies.

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“If people really knew, the war would be stopped tomorrow. But of course they don’t know and can’t know. The correspondents don’t write and the censorship would not pass the truth.”¹ [David Lloyd George \(1863-1945\)](#)

Introduction

[Propaganda](#) only has a chance if divergent sources of information can be suppressed as much as possible. Therefore, the indispensable prerequisite of successful propaganda is censorship. Thus, in all warring countries, censorship was established immediately at the outbreak of hostilities.² The primary aim of censorship was to protect military secrets and movements. However, it was rapidly extended to political matters as well. Everything which might criticize the [government](#), distress and trouble the population, or weaken its [morale](#) was to be withheld or at least toned down and justified.

How was Censorship Organized?

While on the continent censorship was introduced in 1914 and justified by the proclamation of the state of siege, in [Britain](#) and later in [Italy](#) and in the [United States](#) the parliamentary bodies had to be consulted.³ Censorship was thus authorized in Britain by the [Defence of the Realm Act](#) (DORA), in Italy by the decree of 23 May 1915, and in the USA by the Espionage and Sedition Acts. Most urgent was the control of the media, and also, somewhat later, of [correspondence](#). All countries rapidly organized central censorship offices: the *Oberzensurstelle* (Chief Censorship Office) in October 1914 in Berlin, subordinated to the *Nachrichtenstelle* (Intelligence Bureau) of the [Oberste Heeresleitung](#) (Supreme High Command, or OHL), which did not take up its work until February 1915; the *Bureau de la Presse* (Press Bureau) in Paris under the direction of the Ministry of War; the *Official Press Bureau*, jokingly called *Suppress Bureau*, in London; and in April 1917 the *Central Censorship Board* in the United States. In Italy, in May 1915, the *Officio Stampa* (Press Office) was established under the direction of the minister of the interior who was also the prime minister at the time. In [Austria](#), censorship and propaganda were, from the very beginning, united in the *Kriegspressequartier* (War Press Office) under the direction of the Ministry of War, with two separate surveillance commissions for Austria and Hungary. However, the *Kriegspressequartier* was only responsible for censorship in the war areas, whereas two other authorities, the [Kriegsüberwachungsamt](#) (War Surveillance Office) in Vienna, and the *Kriegsüberwachungskommission* (War Surveillance Commission) in Budapest, took care of the Austrian and the Hungarian hinterland respectively.

The organization of censorship was somewhat modified during the course of the war. In some countries the censorship authorities lost their autonomy at a later date. In [Germany](#) and [France](#) they were united with the offices of propaganda: in Germany, in October 1915, at the *Kriegspresseamt* (War Press Office), in France, in January 1916, at the *Maison de la presse* (Press House). In Italy, in February 1918, they were placed under the *Sotto Segretario della propaganda all'estero* (Undersecretary of Propaganda Abroad). In Austria, in October 1917,

the *Kriegsüberwachungsamt* was replaced by a commission in the Ministry of War. At the same time the British War Office founded *MI7*, a propaganda department of its own, which included a section for censorship of military matters. In Germany, the various *Reichsämtler* (Imperial Offices) and other civilian authorities had their own censorship offices.

The central censors – in Prussia, [Russia](#) and Austria mostly career officers and in Britain, France and Italy mostly civilians – received their instructions from the service departments of the military authorities, and from various ministries, in some cases also from the prime ministers, and passed them to the press, either directly or through regular [press](#) conferences.

In France and Italy, local authorities had an important, and in Germany a decisive, influence: in Italy, censorship was done by the local censorship offices under the authority of the prefects, who received their daily instructions from the Press Office in Rome. In Paris, the Press Bureau, subordinated to the Ministry of War, coexisted with the censorship office of the military [government](#) of the city. Censorship in the provinces was handled separately by 300 provincial control commissions under the joint authority of the prefects of the fifty-five departments and the commanders of the twenty-one military regions. These local censorship bodies issued their own instructions which did not always harmonize with the central ones. Censorship in the combat zones was handled by special censors, in France from the War Ministry, in Italy from the High Command.

Germany, excepting Bavaria, had been placed under fifty-seven military commanders who, only nominally supervised by the *Kaiser*, assumed the executive power in their districts. Considering the *Instructions for the Press* from the War Press Office in Berlin as mere guidelines, they arbitrarily decided about censorship measures to be carried out either by subordinate commands or by local police. Bavaria was also governed by six military commanders who were, however, strictly subordinated under the Bavarian minister of war and had to handle censorship according to his instructions. The Bavarian War Press Office placed under his authority as well, usually enjoyed his support and provoked numerous quarrels not only with the Berlin censors but even with the OHL. The complicated organization in Germany and France lead to curious results: articles suppressed in one district or in one newspaper were passed in another; the same happened in Austria, Russia, Britain, and Italy despite their more centralized systems.

In Britain, the Official Press Bureau issued censorship notices with letters prefixed according to their importance. Although they had no binding force, offenders could be prosecuted under various DORA regulations, especially those who had received notices with the letter “D” (Defence). In the event of infringement, the paper or leaflet would be seized and court proceedings opened against the author and the printer. Until June 1915, prosecution was

carried out by a military court, with punishments of up to life imprisonment, thereafter by the civilian authorities with sanctions of a fine of up to £100 or six months in jail. As the regulations of DORA were not always clear, quite a few editors preferred to voluntarily submit their articles, sometimes also their books, to the Press Bureau in order to avoid problems. In order to facilitate the [journalists'](#) work, the German and British press bureaus summarized the instructions in censorship books which were, of course, secret and not available to the public.

In the United States, [George Creel \(1876-1953\)](#), who led the Committee on Public Information from 13 April 1917, issued a list of eighteen paragraphs with the title "What the Government asks of the Press" one week after his appointment, summing up his regulations for "voluntary censorship" concerning only military affairs.⁴ Otherwise, censorship instructions were only phrased in rather vague terms. The Espionage Act of 15 June 1917 did not formally authorize press censorship but announced heavy sanctions – prison for up to twenty years and/or a fine of up to \$10,000 – for "false reports [...] with intent to interfere with the operation or success" of the US military or to "promote the success of its enemies" or "to obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service". In its later amendment, the Sedition Act of May 1918, the same sanctions would punish any criticism of the government or the army, or of the sale of war bonds. One of the few opponents of this law remarked: "It is not necessary to Prussianize ourselves in order to destroy Prussianism in Europe".⁵ The Espionage Act was the legal basis for the establishment of the Central Censorship Board which directed the censorship of all communications by cable, wireless and mail.

In Russia, on 22 July 1914, rather lax civilian censorship regulations were replaced by military censorship under the Temporary Decree on War Censorship and a supplementary list of military secrets. Preventive censorship was imposed in Petrograd and in the areas of military operation; elsewhere, censors were expected to suppress only publications harmful to military interests. This allowed the press to publish highly critical articles on political matters, and when the Council of Ministers complained, the Minister of War [Alexei Polivanov \(1855-1920\)](#) pointed out that his military censors were "not particularly skilled in political nuances" and could only conform to the decree and the list. Finally, from February 1916, censorship was extended to political articles and later even to speeches in the [Duma](#), but by the end of the year censors could not or would not stem the tide of mounting criticism any more.

The censors also invited themselves to numerous amusements.⁶ [Theatrical plays](#), chansons, cabarets, and circus performances had, in Britain, Austria, and in Germany, with the exception of some of the smaller federal states, already been censored before the war,

whereas in France theatre censorship had been practically abolished in 1906 and was now reintroduced immediately. In Germany this task was assigned to the military commanders, in France to the prefects and the mayors, and in Britain to the censors of the Office of the Lord Chamberlain. In Berlin and Paris special services stepped in: the *Theaterpolizei* (Theatre Police), subordinated to the *Polizeipräsident* (chief of police), and the *Commission Spéciale* at the *Préfecture de Police* (Paris Police Headquarters). These two offices were organized as follows: the “special commission” in Paris consisted of two censors for theatrical plays and one for chansons who were detached from another administration, but could only make suggestions, the final decisions being taken by the *directeur du cabinet* (chief of staff) of the prefect of police. Very rarely, the minister of the interior would intervene. In Berlin, the theatre police was made up of eleven censors for plays and chansons alike, all of them police officials, with one exception. They decided autonomously, but in quite a few cases had to consider interventions from outside: from the chief of police, the military governor of Berlin and Brandenburg, sometimes from the OHL, the *Kaiser* and even the Austrian and Turkish allies.⁷ The manuscript of a stage play had to be submitted in two copies a fortnight before the first performance. One copy was handed back with modifications and the performances were checked afterwards by a policeman who was “often the most attentive listener in the hall”.⁸ In all three countries the censors were exposed to frequent criticism. Theatre directors argued with them, appealed to higher authorities or stirred up influential personalities, while clerical and other moralistic groups demanded more efficient censorship.

[Films](#) in Germany, Britain, and France had already been subject to censorship before 1914. During the war, films were centrally censored in [Britain](#) by a non-governmental organization, the *British Board of Film Censors*, in [France](#) locally by the prefects and the mayors and from 1916 as well by a central commission attached to the Ministry of the Interior. In [Germany](#) they were censored by the police under the uncoordinated supervision of the military commanders, so that for instance the film *Die Suffragette* with [Asta Nielsen \(1881-1972\)](#) was passed without problems in Berlin, whereas in Bavaria so many cuts were demanded that the director renounced to show it there.

How was Censorship Handled?

Newspapers

All information transmitted by cables and news agencies (Reuters, Havas, [Wolff](#)) was censored beforehand, which means that it was completely suppressed, modified, or at least delayed.⁹ The addressees were not even aware of it unless they received a copy by normal letter. In Britain, a daily average of around 1,000 cables were censored in this way. Cables

arriving in the United States were usually transmitted via Britain and had thus already been curtailed by British censorship. If a message still appeared dubious, American censors passed it to the press with the request not to publish it. And all newspapers accepted this, dutifully practicing self-censorship. Outgoing cable messages sent by foreign correspondents were filtered by the censors according to the receivers so that, for instance, pro-German newspapers in South America lost 50-80 percent of their messages. Newspapers leaving the US were censored as well, in order not to give the wrong impression about the US or arouse the antagonism of foreign countries.

In Europe, the press received numerous censorship instructions, some of them permanent, others temporary ("until further notice"); in France, altogether 1,100 general and thousands of particular instructions; in Germany at the end of 1916, there were already 2,000. In order to facilitate the journalists' work, the German and British press bureaus summarized the instructions in censorship books which were, of course, secret and not available to the public.

The censors were entitled to send the police to search the houses of suspects and to confiscate dangerous material. This happened, for instance, to the French writer [Henri Barbusse \(1873-1935\)](#); to the offices of the Independent Labour Party and the Non Conscription Fellowship in Britain; to the socialist newspaper *Avanti* in Italy and to the German [pacifist](#) *Bund Neues Vaterland* (Association New Fatherland).

The most restrictive and arbitrary censorship was practiced in France, Italy and Austria. Newspaper, brochures and leaflets (in France all other publications as well) had to be submitted beforehand, the censor marked doubtful lines, often whole passages, and then the printer had to "échopper", that is, remove from the clichés of the printing machines the censored passages which would appear as blank spaces in print, in Italy in the first months also as interrupted lines, called *zebrata* (like a zebra).¹⁰ Sometimes articles and also illustrations were so severely censored that nothing remained except the title or the name of the author.¹¹ In France, information from foreign newspapers, even those of allied countries, was mostly suppressed. In doubtful cases, French censors could change opinion, suppress information temporarily "until new instructions" or consult the ministry.¹² They also cooperated with Italian, British and American censors.¹³

Some [Austrian newspapers](#) would, as a sign of protest, fill in the word "Zensur" in the blank spaces.¹⁴ In Germany, apart from in Bavaria, blank spaces were strictly forbidden because the ordinary people should not be aware that all information was censored.¹⁵

Preventive censorship also existed in other warring countries, but was limited to special

cases only. German censors also gave recommendations like “undesirable”, “to be avoided”, “publish with prudence” or even “desirable”.¹⁶ As the censors also controlled publications afterwards, it was always safer, at least in delicate matters, to submit an article beforehand. Otherwise, one might face sanctions in varying degrees. A newspaper could be suspended: in France for up to six months, in Britain and Germany usually only for a few days. In 1917, the number of suspensions was fifty-six in France, and 103 in Italy.¹⁷ In the event of repeated offences, “observations” or “severe warnings” could be issued, the editors summoned to the censor’s office, or preventive censorship could be imposed regularly. As a last resort, the paper could be seized and suspended indefinitely, and journalists could be forbidden to write or even prosecuted. Worse still was the fate of the [French newspaper](#) *Le bonnet rouge*: partially financed by the Germans, it was completely suspended on 12 July 1917. Its editor [Miguel Almereyda \(1883-1917\)](#) died a month later in prison, “strangled, it seems, by the police for having threatened to spill the beans”. His collaborator [Emile Joseph Duval \(1864-1918\)](#) was executed in July 1918.¹⁸ In Germany, offenders got away more lightly and in the worst case had to emigrate, like, for instance, pastor [Johannes Lepsius \(1858-1926\)](#), because of his forbidden report about the [Turkish atrocities against Armenians](#).

Because of important defeats and increasing tensions in 1917, censorship in the Allied countries was intensified. In Italy, after hunger riots and the disaster of [Caporetto](#), the decree Sacchi of 4 October 1917 was passed, which severely sanctioned defeatist [propaganda](#), but censors not only suppressed anti-war propaganda and reports about the [Russian Revolution](#) by the socialists but also hate campaigns by the nationalist press against the clergy, enemy aliens and various ministers. In Britain on 15 November 1917, because of pressing public demand for a negotiated peace with Germany, publications about war and the making of peace were submitted to preventive censorship, and a witch-hunt started, reaching its climax in the “epidemic of prosecution” of February 1918.¹⁹ In France, censorship was used in order to prosecute journalists, politicians and even ministers.²⁰

Postal Control

In all armies, sooner or later postal control was introduced.²¹ Its aim was to look for disclosure of military secrets, to test the morale of the soldiers, and to find out about “subversive ideas”. At least in the British and the Austrian armies, it was also meant to remedy the problems. In Russia it had already been introduced in July 1914 through the decrees mentioned above. It was comprehensive and in some districts was also concerned with civilian correspondence. In [Italy](#) only the correspondence between the soldiers and their families in the so-called “war zones”, that is, border zones and areas with strong socialist

influence, was centrally controlled, but by the end of 1917 civilian letters were as well. In Austria, civilian letters to soldiers mentioning [food shortage](#) and hunger were confiscated so as not to “endanger the discipline of front troops and negatively affect their spirits”.²² In the French army, central postal control started in January 1915, and from July each army corps had a commission of twenty members who opened the letters. “Subversive” paragraphs in letters were “*caviardés*” by the censors – deleted with ink and aniline pencil – and a significant number were not transmitted at all. The quantity of controlled letters is estimated, for the French army, to be 180,000 out of five to seven million letters per week, as a sample quite superior to most current opinion polls. Nevertheless, as far as efficient control is concerned, Rosie Kennedy’s remark about the British army characterizes the situation in the other countries, except Russia and the United States, well: “The vast bulk of correspondence meant that censorship was at best patchy.”²³ In the German and British armies, censorship of the soldiers’ correspondence was at first handled by their own officers. Even when central censorship was introduced the secrecy of correspondence was still violated, at least in the German army: “[...] even intimate family letters are divulged and turned into a laughing stock”.²⁴ In Italy, Germany, and Austria soldiers could be punished and even court-martialed for letters containing supposedly “exaggerated and false information”.²⁵ In Italy, some servicemen were even executed on the spot under the draconian regime of General [Luigi Cadorna \(1850-1928\)](#). The most stringent censorship of soldiers’ letters was applied in the US army: All letters, without exception, were controlled three times by the company censor, the regimental censor and the base censor who, in this way, controlled each other as well. Family correspondence put into a blue envelope – allowed once a week – and letters in foreign languages were only read by the base censor. Furthermore, the War Department, following the custom of the Catholic Church, established an index of roughly 100 forbidden books including even classics such as “Can Such Things Be” by [Ambrose Bierce \(1842-1914\)](#). In order to escape control, soldiers in all armies preferred to be cautious in their correspondence and sometimes asked comrades on leave to post their letters at home, but in the German army such voluntary “postmen” were sometimes controlled in the trains and severely punished.²⁶

In the Allied countries, postal control was also extended to correspondence between civilians. In Britain, all mail was controlled in special censorship offices either in London or in Liverpool, and in 1918 between 4,000 and 5,000 persons were occupied with this. Their most important prey was war opponents such as [Bertrand Russell \(1872-1970\)](#) and [Edmund D. Morel \(1873-1924\)](#), who tried to place articles abroad and were thus jailed for “evasion of censorship”.²⁷ As the blockade authorities controlled all ships, censors opened all letters and parcels between neutral countries as well. As a result, they closely surveyed the

correspondence of German agents and even replaced German propaganda with their own.²⁸ In the United States, all mail was controlled in several central postal offices according to the instructions of the Central Censorship Board. However, censors would only open mail relating to [Spain](#), [Latin America](#) and the Orient because their British colleagues already took care of the other foreign countries. Following the British example, the American navy also stopped neutral ships in order to control their mail and even performed personal searches of the passengers and crew. Censorship was rather complete. According to the reports by the San Antonio post office for the week ending 25 October 1918, 180 censors had controlled 77 percent of the mail and held 20 percent for the next week. Altogether, 75,908 letters were controlled, 179 suppressed, and thirty-six suspended. All intercepted communications were sent to military intelligence in Washington. In comparison, French postal censorship appears rather modest: from September 1915 only the correspondence of “suspect” civilians, including all deputies of the National Assembly, was controlled by police, but not intercepted.

“Oral Censorship”

Worse than postal control was “oral censorship”, the spying out and sanctioning of public and even private utterances. In Italy, the “men of confidence” of the Italian “Servizio P” (Propaganda Service), created in January 1918, spied out workers and soldiers expressing “defeatist” ideas and denounced them to the authorities.²⁹ In Britain, people could be jailed for speeches and conferences, but not for private utterances of protest.

The most terrible witch-hunt occurred in the United States. Not only pacifist lectures and conferences were sanctioned, the most famous case being the socialist politician [Eugene V. Debs \(1855-1926\)](#) who was condemned to ten years of prison a few days after the armistice, even private utterances were severely punished. Self-styled detectives roamed the country looking for potentially dangerous people like pacifists, socialists, and the “German spy”. They even denounced German-Americans who dared to speak German at home, which was strictly forbidden. For instance, a dictograph was secretly installed in the shop of a German immigrant in order to control his critical discussions with friends and denounce them to the authorities. Another “detective” overheard the talk of a German with his parrot, broke into his flat, and had him jailed and the bird removed to a loyal animal store. Some people were tarred and feathered or humiliated in a different way, at least two persons were lynched. Even school children campaigning for the sale of war bonds had to test the loyalty of unwilling or critical people according to a well-organized questionnaire and denounce them to the authorities. On the other hand it is quite surprising that during the whole war only approximately 2,000 people were prosecuted.³⁰

What was Censored?

The following categories concern delicate topics which were, in all countries, usually suppressed either explicitly or through preventive censorship.

1) Criticism of the army and unauthorized publications about military operations, especially about military failures or mutinies. That sometimes led to strange results. When the Germans conquered Fort Douaumont in the [Battle of Verdun](#), French censorship suppressed this information. When the French took it back, this success was proudly announced by the official communiqué, but the population was quite surprised to learn that it had been in German hands.³¹ The same procedures were applied by the British and the Russians, who did not even mention the German advance when the inhabitants of Warsaw could hear the thundering of the German [artillery](#). Likewise, when the German invasion of France was stopped at the [Marne](#) on 8 September 1914 and the army had to retreat hastily, leaving 50,000 [prisoners](#) and thirty cannons behind, the German war communiqué spoke of a strategic reshuffle on the right wing, and of the capture of fifty cannons and several thousand French prisoners. Even the most brilliant victories of the enemy, like the famous [Battle of Tannenberg](#), were either not passed, or were toned down as “a simple local setback”.³² In Italy, the permanent failures at the Libyan front and the disaster at Caporetto were completely suppressed.³³

2) The terrible number of [casualties](#) at the front – on the German side alone, an average of 1,158 soldiers fell per day.³⁴ Short casualty lists could be published with “reserve and moderation”: for instance, those concerning regional areas or “Rolls of Honour” about selected fallen officers. The number of victims of epidemics – 20,000 mortal cases of cholera in the Italian army in 1915, and more than 600,000 of the “Spanish flu” in 1918-1919 – were either completely suppressed, or the scale was minimized.³⁵

3) Unauthorized letters of soldiers.

4) Information about [espionage](#) and counter-espionage.

5) Pacifist publications and activities.

There were many other thorny subjects as well, but censorship was not handled equally in all belligerent countries and the instructions could vary from time to time. As a general rule, all events which could alarm the population were suppressed, toned down or put under preventive censorship: for instance, strikes and other labour disturbances, demonstrations, confiscations of newspapers and other publications, doubts about victory, peace efforts, and

food riots.³⁶

The terrible food shortages in Austria and Germany culminating in the “turnip winter” of 1916-1917 could not really be passed over in silence but had to be excused and minimized. However, the censors intervened with caution. In November 1916, the German War Press Office issued five instructions to the press about the [food situation](#): journalists were asked to avoid sensational presentations of high food prices and attacks on traders and shopkeepers, reports about food riots or disturbances in front of shops, and even jokes about food shortages.³⁷ The censorship book of 1917 permitted information about food problems only on a local level and forbid instigating reports about food riots and about conflicts between [rural](#) and [urban](#) populations.³⁸ Even advertisements were controlled, and a newspaper was blamed for an advertisement with the revealing title: “Fat dogs wanted.”³⁹ In Italy, the exportation of newspapers carrying advertisements was forbidden because they might contain cryptic information destined for the enemy’s espionage.⁴⁰

Jokes about the infidelity of wives was another thorny problem because many soldiers, absent from home for a long time, did not trust their spouses. Classical comedies by [Eugène Labiche \(1815-1888\)](#) and [Georges Feydeau \(1862-1921\)](#), and frivolous medieval chansons by [François Villon \(1431-1463\)](#) were therefore either suppressed or modified. Nevertheless, some jokes and [cartoons](#) could slip through.

Another trick popular with the censors was to delay information. When the [Bolshevik government](#) announced that it would not honour tsarist bonds, this information was delayed for ten days so that well-informed VIPs could dispose of their assets. Some news was not disclosed before the end of the war, like the sinking of the dreadnought HMS *Audacious* in October 1914. A more famous case is that of the [Lusitania](#). Sunk on 7 May 1915 by a German [submarine](#), it was not only a passenger ship but functioned as a military cargo ship and troop transport as well. Besides approximately 1,200 passengers it also had ammunition and sixty-seven Canadian soldiers aboard, which was even confirmed by the US custom service. However, this fact was never admitted by the authorities, so that they could exploit it for propaganda purposes. Since the 1980s, several diving expeditions have discovered the remains of war materials.⁴¹

Each country had special restrictions: in France, articles about peace (and even the word itself) were, for a long time, forbidden. So were reports about the possible devaluation of the French franc, and even detailed or exaggerated descriptions of enemy [atrocities](#) which might demoralize the population or spread panic.⁴² In Germany, speculation about the future

constitution of [Alsace-Lorraine](#); news about deportations from [occupied territories](#); articles about the *Kaiser*; Turkish atrocities; and all illustrations had to be submitted to preventive censorship.⁴³ The Italian censors greatly distrusted the foreign press. Not only newspapers of the enemy, but also those from certain [neutral countries](#) were forbidden, and, until May 1916, even the allied press was not admitted.⁴⁴

There were also official exceptions to censorship. In Britain censorship was, so to speak, “geographically” limited: it suppressed a few left-wing newspapers such as *Forward* and *Worker*, but otherwise concentrated on the London press and left the provincial papers alone.⁴⁵ In Italy as well, local newspapers were sometimes overlooked, which meant that subversive news, for instance even the pacifist manifestoes of the socialist conferences of Zimmerwald and Kienthal, could be placed in a regional edition of the otherwise severely censored socialist newspaper *Avanti*.⁴⁶ In France, newspapers from neutral countries were not forbidden, only confiscated at the border if they contained articles which did not please the censors. For the importation of newspapers of enemy countries, a special authorization was necessary.⁴⁷ In Germany, censorship was even less complete. Except for those of an inflammatory character, newspapers from abroad, including enemy countries, could be bought,⁴⁸ enemy army communiqués could be printed, and reports on stormy *Reichstag* and Bavarian *Landtag* sessions were not censored.⁴⁹ Despite close surveillance of pacifist activities, some pacifists, such as [Ludwig Quidde \(1858-1941\)](#) and [Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster \(1869-1966\)](#), could secretly or openly distribute their propaganda. In Austria, censorship became more relaxed under [Charles I, Emperor of Austria \(1887-1922\)](#) because he reconvened the Austrian parliament, the *Reichsrat*, with the effect that highly critical statements and speeches given on behalf of the various Slavic [nationalities](#) appeared in the newspapers, and could not be suppressed.⁵⁰

What was censored in the artistic scene?⁵¹ There was no need to intervene against anti-war or defeatist plays because nobody dared to propose them. Censors did not give formal instructions, except sometimes in Britain, but the theatre directors – authors of plays were not even consulted – rapidly understood which aspects had to be avoided. First of all, films, operettas, and stage plays by contemporary authors and composers from enemy nations were forbidden, and even classical plays such as Molière’s frivolous play *Don Juan* led to controversies between censors and theatre directors in Germany.

Officers and soldiers, as well as police officers in Berlin and Paris, could not be shown in an adverse or ridiculous light. Thus plays such as *Der Leutnant in Unterhosen* (“The lieutenant in

under-pants”) or *Le commissaire bon enfant* (“The naïve commissar”) were not admitted at all. Officers amusing themselves with cocottes and exhausted soldiers were also considered as “shocking” or “inopportune” as the censors put it. Soldiers had to be shown as heroes, not as traitors, as discouraged, or as doubting the victory; deserters and shirkers were not welcome on stage at all. The reality of the trenches had to be sanitized by all means, there was no place for the injured and the dead. In Berlin and Paris, criticism or denigration of royalty or of politicians, even if directed against the enemy countries, was suppressed. In Berlin, the censors explicitly warned that plays with the tendency to stir up the population against foreigners would not be allowed. Britain was different. Here, ridicule of the *Kaiser* was finally permitted in August 1915, German atrocities were encouraged and even pogroms against the Germans were re-enacted on stage. Most interventions, however, in theaters, music-halls, and cinemas alike, concerned moral questions such as vulgar language, immoral scenes or allusions to sex: even a chamber-pot or a bed had to be suppressed; and criminals and [prostitutes](#) were completely banned from the scenes.

It is difficult to compare the frequency and the severity of censorship in the three countries because it is only in Paris that the interventions of censorship can be easily counted, whereas for Berlin one has to resort to some fortuitous statistics, and British figures have not been found so far. In Paris, altogether 4,583 stage plays were controlled during the war, and in 1915, 17 percent of plays were suppressed, in later years less. In Berlin in 1916, sixty-five dramas were suppressed; in Paris, according to Odile Krakowitch, 25 percent were passed with modifications, in Berlin, according to my estimates, 80 percent.⁵² It seems that in Berlin theatres often tried to ignore censorship instructions. In 1915, the theatre police controlled 1,321 performances and found 773 infractions: 58.5 percent. In such cases theatres had to pay fines or were closed for periods between a few days and a month.

Censorship of chansons was much more tolerant. 30 percent of French chansons were full of the most ignoble invectives against the Germans and their atrocities, especially against the *Kaiser* and crown prince, and contrary to the stage plays, they were free to criticize the abominable life in the trenches, the defeatists and even censorship itself. In Berlin in 1914, chansons could denigrate the enemy as well, but in the later years this was usually suppressed.⁵³

Film censorship was harsh: In France in 1916, 145 films were suppressed, and in 1917, 198 were suppressed or curtailed.⁵⁴ In Germany, even if a film was passed by the censors, it might later be refused.⁵⁵ A good example is the German movie *The Iron Cross* which has the following storyline: a German and a Belgian family were friends before the war and now their sons had to fight against each other. The film concludes with the commentary: where will all

this suffering end? The film was banned, and all copies were seized and destroyed.⁵⁶ Violent scenes, crimes, and atrocities, even those perpetrated by the enemy, were suppressed in France and Germany. In Britain, at least, their exaggerated forms were merely toned down. Scenes with injured or dead soldiers were usually suppressed, except in the famous British film *Battle of the Somme* (1916), which remained an exception. In the United States, formal film and theatre censorship did not exist, but film producers could be sanctioned for violation of the Sedition or Espionage Acts. Thus, a film about the War of Independence showing historically confirmed atrocities committed by British soldiers was forbidden after the first showing and later confiscated in another federal state. The producer, [Robert Goldstein \(1883\)](#), was jailed for ten years. In 1920, his appeal was refused.⁵⁷

Compared to other forms of censorship, like that of newspapers, chansons, and cartoons, theatre censorship was, in general, much stricter. Gary D. Stark has proposed a convincing explanation: The censors were afraid of the crowds. They all had read [Gustave Le Bon \(1841-1931\)](#) bestseller about the *Psychology of the Crowd* (1895), in which the crowds were considered as stupid, excitable, and prone to irrational actions. The dramatic acting in theatrical performances, more impressive than the reading of an article, could stir emotions and easily provoke unrest and disturbances. The censor's main task was to prevent this by all means.⁵⁸

A good example of the censorship of *belles-lettres* is the novel *Sous Verdun* by [Maurice Genevoix \(1890-1980\)](#).⁵⁹ The blank spaces in the edition of 1916 compared with the complete edition of 1925 show which topics censors did not like: references to, for instance, *poilus* so badly fed that they had to steal in order to eat; criticism of the military leaders for giving senseless orders and treating them like slaves; and a dying *poilu* saying: "What have I done, that I must get killed in the war?" In a comparison between the censored lines in this novel and those in the German war novel *Der Hauptmann* by [Friedrich Loofs \(1858-1928\)](#), [Nicolas Beaupré](#) found that similar scenes and topics were cut out but that on the whole French censorship was far more severe and unjust, even deleting expressions of patriotism and approval of war.⁶⁰

Censorship had and still has a very bad reputation. In France, it was personified by "Anastasia", an ugly old woman with spectacles and enormous scissors.⁶¹ However, censors were not all the same. Some were surprisingly lenient; others demanded stupid and useless suppressions.⁶² One must also not forget that they too were under permanent surveillance. If they passed a dangerous article, in France, at least, they could be fired or even sent to the

front.⁶³ In some cases, censors would cautiously examine the pros and cons of an intervention. In a chanson submitted to the censor, a mother tries to prevent her son from going to the front, but he replies:

"I can only live as a poilu.

If I die here I die without glory.

My country first! – My dear child! –

You are only mamma. My mother is France!"

The censor hesitated and preferred to consult the prefect. And then despite its heroic ending the chanson was suppressed with the remark, "Unbearable appreciation of a mother's feelings."⁶⁴

Censors in all countries also stopped exaggerated propaganda such as the denigrating of the enemy and of foreign politicians, the praising of atrocities, and appeals to the worst instincts because they were worried about the emotional effects on the population. Thus German censors suppressed postcards with aggressive slogans like "*Jeder Stoß ein Franzos*" ("Every hit a Frenchman"), a sketch in a circus about Belgian *francs-tireurs* and German reprisals, and the shameful stripping of a French governess in a stage play. The British censors cut the execution of women in a film, as well as the whipping of a naked mother superior, and obliged a newspaper to revoke false information. In Germany, France, and Britain the impersonation of royalty or politicians was forbidden on stage, but in August 1915 the British censors allowed the vilification of the *Kaiser* whereas, at the same time, the Russians forbid it.⁶⁵

What was the Role of Self-Censorship?

Self-censorship either for patriotic reasons or because of fear of sanctions was widespread. It was facilitated by the patriotic attitude of most journalists, who would willingly cooperate in order to support the homeland in danger. In Germany, even publications such as the caricature magazines *Simplicissimus* or *Der wahre Jakob*, which had, before the war, severely criticized the authoritarian structures in the [government](#), in the army and in society as a whole, would now refrain from criticism, explicitly join the propaganda war, and enlist in an "intellectual military service" as [Thomas Mann \(1875-1955\)](#) put it.⁶⁶

In France, journalists and authors avoided thorny subjects in order to secure publication or

performance. For instance, the socialist newspaper *L'Humanité* did not dare to publish the reports of either the assembly of the Socialist Party of July 1915 or the congress of the primary school teachers' union of August 1915 because in both cases resolutions against the war had been passed.

All war correspondents were "embedded" by officers, and obliged to travel and write their reports from the front. They pooled activities with colleagues, and resigned themselves to group auto-censorship; they were severely censored by the military and could sometimes be censored a second time by the national press bureau.⁶⁷ The United States applied an even more stringent measure: all journalists accompanying the American Forces to Europe had to swear not to publish any information helpful to the enemy, and their newspapers had to deposit a \$10,000 bond as a guarantee, which was retained in cases of infringement. In the United States, pre-war books and films were recalled by the editors and revised in order to give them a more pro-Allied slant or to modify pacifist messages which could hamper recruiting – forerunners of the methods of [Joseph Stalin \(1878-1953\)](#) in the Soviet Union.⁶⁸ In Britain, as well, stage scripts with anti-American tendencies were rapidly rewritten after the American declaration of war.⁶⁹

How was Censorship Criticized?

As censorship was harsh and arbitrary, it was frequently criticized, especially by deputies and journalists. Lieutenant-Colonel [Charles Repington \(1858-1925\)](#), military correspondent of *The Times*, considered censorship "as a cloak to cover all political, naval and military mistakes".⁷⁰ British newspapers repeatedly demanded, "Abolish the Press Bureau" and "Tell the Truth."⁷¹ When, in November 1917, through DORA regulation 27 C, preventive censorship on leaflets and articles on war and the making of peace was introduced, this was considered as the "assassination of opinion" (*The Nation*).⁷²

The harshest critic of censorship in France was [Georges Clemenceau \(1841-1929\)](#), before he became prime minister. When his newspaper *L'homme libre* (The Free Man) was suspended after severe criticism about the lack of hygiene in a military train he replaced it with *L'homme enchaîné* (The Man in Chains) only to see that immediately suspended as well. On 24 September 1914, he said, "everybody with common sense will understand that censorship can only be applied to military matters. Otherwise it is nothing but an abuse of power." However, when he became prime minister in November 1917, he told the censors: "To suppress censorship – never! I am not a complete idiot. You are my best policemen."⁷³ In Germany, press and *Reichstag* alike bitterly attacked the military control of public opinion.

However, the military insisted on their censoring activities, with the argument that journalists could not distinguish between suspicious and harmless news.⁷⁴ In the Italian parliament, like in Britain, critical deputies explained that censorship only occults the mistakes and abuses of the government, or mocked it like [Giacomo Barzellotti \(1844-1917\)](#), who said: "Censorship wants to suppress what everybody knows."⁷⁵ On the other hand, censorship was also criticized for censoring too little, especially by ministers, army commands, and right-wing politicians and journalists.

How was Censorship Outwitted?

Especially in France, censorship was quite successfully circumvented. A relatively mild method was to blackmail the censors by threatening either to complain to the prime minister about the "*échoppages*" or to have the article read out in parliament. In such cases, censors would sometimes either reduce their orders substantially or agree to postpone their decision.⁷⁶ Another method was used by Clemenceau. He systematically posted his articles to political personalities and other VIPs before they were censored. Other newspapers would send their subscribers special editions containing all censored articles of the previous weeks or months.⁷⁷ Very courageous papers would ignore censorship instructions, not submit articles or photos to the censorship office, or simply keep censored articles.⁷⁸ It was also possible to publish two versions of the newspaper: one censored with the white spaces, kindly forwarded to the censors, and another comprehensive version destined for sale.⁷⁹ For this reason, the suspicious censors sometimes bought three copies of a newspaper at a stand in order to verify whether their order had been executed.⁸⁰ The French Press Bureau complained that from July 1916 to July 1917, out of 1,076 censored articles, 319 were published anyway.⁸¹ On the other hand, the office of the prime minister frequently complained to the Ministry of War that the censors failed to suppress dangerous articles.⁸² As far as film censorship was concerned, it could be outwitted by replacing, on the permission card, the title of the authorized film with a film without visa.⁸³

Personal connections also proved helpful. At a time when even the use of the word "peace" was strictly forbidden, a book by a certain A. Schwann, *The Bases of a Durable Peace*, was passed by the censor, his close friend, with the argument that it was simply a philosophical construction.⁸⁴ The book [Under Fire](#) by Henri Barbusse is another example.⁸⁵ The censor [Paul Gsell \(1870-1947\)](#), himself a writer, succeeded in placating the serious doubts of his colleagues and only two chapters were cut out when it appeared in the newspaper *L'Œuvre*.

When it was published as a book, Barbusse boldly reinserted the suppressed chapters, got away with it, and was even awarded the coveted Goncourt prize. Later, the French secret service bitterly complained that it was used for propaganda by the Germans, and tried to prevent its exportation.

In Germany, editors were asked to present a copy of all publications to the local police, and they usually complied with the orders. In cases of litigation they could usually come to an arrangement. When a German caricature of the pope's peace proposal was not accepted, the cartoonist presented it again, without the pontiff, and obtained approval.⁸⁶ But the censor's protection existed as well. The Armenian massacres committed by Germany's ally [Turkey](#) from April 1915 were put under preventive censorship and all articles were completely suppressed. Whereas Lepsius could not place his report on this question in a single newspaper, a less important journalist, Max Roloff, succeeded in publishing a highly provocative article in *Die Hilfe*, the influential periodical of the liberal politician [Friedrich Naumann \(1860-1919\)](#). It seems that [Ernst Jäckh \(1875-1959\)](#), a collaborator of *Die Hilfe* and renowned expert on Turkey, who at that time worked in the censorship office, let the article pass.⁸⁷

Another trick was to say things indirectly. [Hellmut von Gerlach \(1866-1935\)](#), editor of the left-liberal weekly *Welt am Montag*, was a specialist in this method. As he could not criticize the war heroes [Paul von Hindenburg \(1847-1934\)](#) and [Erich Ludendorff \(1865-1937\)](#), or the submarine war, he completely passed them over in silence. As he was not allowed to praise German socialists for refusing the war credits, he did honour to the Italian socialists for the same action and his readers knew whom he meant. Since he could not criticize the vast annexation program of the military and right-wing circles, he resorted to historical articles: condemning [Napoleon I, Emperor of the French \(1769-1821\)](#), who had annexed half of Europe and was finally exiled to St. Helena, and praising [Otto von Bismarck's \(1815-1898\)](#) who, after the Prussian victory of 1866, renounced all annexations of Austrian territory. Censors were furious but could do nothing about it.⁸⁸

As newspapers, because of censorship and self-censorship, became less and less credible, an alternative public information system was established through rumours, gossip, jokes, criticism of the war, and information about strikes and riots, transmitted orally and through flyers, billboards, broadsheets, and [graffiti](#).

How was Censorship used for Political Manoeuvres?

Normally, censors protected leading statesmen from criticism and suppressed any information which could harm them. When, for instance, 2,000 kilos of coal were delivered to

the French minister of supply during a terrible shortage in frozen Paris the government asked the censors “not to let this pass under any circumstances”.⁸⁹ However, in the event of dissension amongst the political and military elites, censors suppressed articles favourable to certain politicians or, worse, passed defamatory articles against them. Most victims were supporters of a negotiated peace.

Whereas parliamentary debates in Austria, Britain, and Germany were not censored, in Italy and France speeches by opposition groups and discussions in the commissions were suppressed or at least curtailed.⁹⁰ In France, the Minister of the Interior [Louis Malvy \(1875-1949\)](#) was subjected to a calumnious campaign by [Léon Daudet \(1867-1942\)](#), editor of the right-wing daily, *Action française*, “with the complicity of censorship”, as was commented in the Chamber of Deputies. Malvy finally had to resign, and was tried for alleged treason and sentenced to five years in exile.⁹¹ When, in November 1917, Georges Clemenceau was appointed prime minister of France, he put one of his closest collaborators, [Georges Rothschild-Mandel \(1885-1944\)](#), in charge of censorship and used it ruthlessly against his political enemies such as [Aristide Briand](#) and [Joseph Caillaux \(1863-1944\)](#), who sought peace through understanding with Germany.⁹² In the case of Caillaux, censorship even tolerated the falsification of documents in order to have him inculpated and the slanderer, Daudet, was not even molested when a collection of weapons was found in his office. Furthermore, his newspaper did not always comply with censorship interventions, because sanctions such as suspensions or seizures were rarely applied: only fifteen times during the whole war, whereas left-wing newspapers like *Le bonnet rouge* and *L'Œuvre* were sanctioned thirty-eight and twenty-eight times respectively.⁹³

In Germany, the chancellor, [Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg \(1856-1921\)](#), proposed peace negotiations to the Allies on 12 December 1916, with the support of the party of the Center and the liberal and social-democratic parties.⁹⁴ The military and conservative circles, bent on a victorious peace with huge conquests, were opposed to this initiative and soon intrigued against him to bring about his dismissal. Unfortunately, the chancellor had not succeeded in controlling public opinion and the military commanders were in complete control of censorship. Thus, this ferocious dog was kept on a leash and did not hinder a hate-filled, denigrating campaign that culminated in the demand “*Fort mit diesem Kanzler*” (“Away with this chancellor”), which prepared the way to his downfall.⁹⁵

In Russia, at the end of 1916, the censors did not suppress serious allegations from the leading Kadet party politician [Pavel Miliukov \(1859-1943\)](#), who, in the Duma, asked if the regime’s failure was due to “stupidity or treason”. Images ridiculing the Nicholas II, Emperor

of Russia's (1868-1918) family; accusations about the alleged treason of the German-born tsarina; and semi-pornographic caricatures about her alleged liaison with the sinister monk [Grigori Rasputin](#) circulated freely all over the country.⁹⁶ In this case, the censors even helped to prepare for the revolution.

Conclusion

When the war ended, censorship continued, except in Germany where the [revolutionary](#) government abolished it at once. However, there too it was imposed again, fifteen years later. In Britain it continued until June, and in France until September 1919. In Italy, it ended on 29 June 1919, was re-established on 3 October 1919 and was abolished on 1 April 1920. Five years later it was re-introduced by [Benito Mussolini \(1883-1945\)](#). In Russia, censorship continued under the Soviets but became far more stringent than before. In the United States, the restrictions were removed on 25 June 1919, but thirty federal states promulgated new sedition laws which surpassed the former regulations in theory and practice alike, simply replacing the German spy with the Bolshevik revolutionary. So most Americans, having fought "to make the world safe for democracy", did not get their former democratic freedoms back for more than twenty-five years.⁹⁷ But in many other countries as well censorship, perfectly merged with political propaganda, time and again raised its ugly head in various forms, ranging from far-reaching suppression of the facts to government-enforced self-censorship. It is perhaps the most nefarious legacy World War I has left to the world.⁹⁸

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Notes

1. Remark on 28 December 1917 to Charles P. Scott, in: Knightley, Philippe: *The First Casualty. The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Kosovo*, Baltimore et al. 2002 [1975], pp. 116f. ↑
2. It was only in Bavaria that freedom of press could not be abolished, for constitutional reasons, but in practice censorship was applied, cf. Schmidt, Anne: *Belehrung – Propaganda – Vertrauensarbeit. Zum Wandel amtlicher Kommunikationspolitik in Deutschland 1914-1918*, Essen 2006, p. 33; Fischer, Doris: *Die Münchener Zensurstelle während des Ersten Weltkrieges. Alfons Falkner von Sonnenburg als Pressereferent im Bayerischen Kriegsministerium in den Jahren 1914-1918/19* (thesis), Munich 1973, p. 10. ↑
3. See, for the following section: Rajsfus, Maurice: *La censure militaire et policière 1914-1918*, Paris 1999, pp. 30ff., 51; Forcade, Olivier: *La censure politique en France*

pendant la grande guerre (thesis), University of Paris X 1998; Schwendinger, Christian: *Kriegspropaganda in der Habsburger Monarchie zur Zeit des Ersten Weltkriegs*, Hamburg 2011, pp. 53ff., 62ff.; Smith, John T.: *Russian Military Censorship during the First World War*, in: *Revolutionary Russia* 14 (2001), pp. 75ff., 83ff., 90ff.; Rose, Tania: *Aspects of Political Censorship 1914-1918*, Hull 1995, pp. 42, 54; eadem: *World War I. Britain*, in: Jones, Derek (ed.): *Censorship. A World Encyclopedia*, volume 4, Chicago et al. 2001, pp. 2647-2649; Demm, Eberhard: *World War I. Germany and France*, *ibid.*, pp. 2644-2647; Deist, Wilhelm: *Censorship and Propaganda in Germany during the First World War*, in: Audoin-Rouzeau, Stéphane and Becker, Jean-Jacques (eds.): *Les sociétés européennes et la guerre de 1914-1918*, Nanterre 1990, pp. 199-211; Creutz, Martin: *Die Pressepolitik der kaiserlichen Regierung während des Ersten Weltkrieges*, Frankfurt 1996, p. 110; Welch, David: *Germany and Propaganda in World War I. Pacifism, Mobilization and Total War*, London 1914, pp. 27ff., 39ff.; Mock, James R.: *Censorship 1917*, New York 1972 ; Fiori, Antonio: *Il filtro deformante. La censura della stampa durante la Prima Guerra mondiale*, Rome 2001, pp. 79ff., 92f., p. 100, 283, 317; Sanders, Michael L. and Taylor, Philip M.: *British Propaganda during the First World War 1914-1918*, London 1982, pp. 18ff., 51ff.; Cook, Edward: *The Press in War-Time. With Some Account of the Official Press Bureau*, London 1920, pp. 27, 41ff., 58f.; Oberzensurstelle: *Kommunikationsüberwachende Vorschriften des Jahres 1917*, in: Fischer, Heinz-Dietrich (ed.): *Pressekonzentration und Zensurpraxis im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Berlin 1973, pp. 194-275; Axelrod, Alan: *Selling the Great War. The Making of American Propaganda*, New York 2009. ↑

4. Axelrod, *Selling* 2009, p. 72 (quotes). ↑

5. Axelrod, *Selling* 2009, p. 71ff.; Mock, *Censorship* 1972, p. 50 (first quotes); Wüstenbecker, Katia: *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika. Widerwillige Teilnahme am Ersten Weltkrieg*, in: Bauerkämper, Arnd and Julien, Elise (eds.): *Durchhalten! Krieg und Gesellschaft im Vergleich 1914-1918*, Göttingen 2010, pp. 217-237, here p. 227 (last quote). ↑

6. See, for the following, Collins, Larry J.: *Theatre at War, 1914-18*, Oldham 2004, p. 208; Stark, Garry D.: *Banned in Berlin. Literary Censorship in Imperial Germany 1871-1918*, New York and Oxford 2009; Williams, Gordon: *British Theatre in the Great War. A Revaluation*, London and New York 2005; Forcade, *Censure* 1998, pp. 697-761; Rajsfus, *Censure* 1999, pp. 186ff., 200ff.; Krakovitch, Odile: *La censure des théâtres durant la grande guerre*, in: *Théâtres et spectacles hier et aujourd'hui. Epoque moderne et contemporaine. Actes du 115e congrès national des sociétés savantes*, Paris 1991, pp. 331-353; Baumeister, Martin: *Kriegstheater. Großstadt, Front und Massenkultur 1914-1918*, Essen 2005, pp. 33ff., 143ff., 178ff., 183ff.; Demm, Eberhard: *Les policiers comme censeurs pendant la Première Guerre mondiale – Les cas de Paris et Berlin*, in:

Payen, Guillaume et al. (eds.): *L'ordre dans la guerre. Gendarmeries et polices européennes face à la Première Guerre mondiale*, Paris 2017. ↑

7. See tables 1 and 2. ↑
8. Stark, *Banned in Berlin* 2009, p. 52 (quote). ↑
9. See, for the following, Rose, *Britain* 2001, pp. 49, 53f.; Rajsfus, *Censure* 1999, pp. 59, 66; Forcade, Olivier: *Dans l'oeil de la censure. Voir ou ne pas voir la guerre*, in: Prochasson, Christophe and Rasmussen, Anne (eds.): *Vrai et faux dans la Grande Guerre*, Paris 2004, pp. 35-54, here pp. 40ff.; Berger, Marcel and Allard, Paul: *Les secrets de la censure pendant la guerre*, Paris 1932, pp. 9, 15; Koszyk, Kurt: *Entwicklung der Kommunikationskontrolle zwischen 1914 und 1918*, in: Fischer (ed.), *Pressekonzentration* 1973, pp. 152-193; BDIC (Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine) Nanterre, collection "France Censure 1914-1918", F 270 Rés C; Mock, *Censorship* 1972, pp. 80f., 91, 134; Fiori, *Filtro* 2001. ↑
10. Illustration no. 1: *L'Action française*, 15 March 1917, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k759376q.r=L'Action%20fran%C3%A7aise.langDE> (retrieved 25 November 2016) ↑
11. Illustration no. 2: *Le Ruy Blas*, 9 April 1916; Illustration no. 3: *Arbeiterwille* 9 August 1918, <http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=awi&datum=19180809&seite=1&zoom=33> (retrieved 25 November 2016) ↑
12. BDIC, *Censure*, 23.3.1915, 12.9., 6.10.1917; 17.9.1917; 4.10.1917. ↑
13. *Ibid.*, 2.10., 23.9.1917. ↑
14. Illustration no. 4: *Vorarlberger Wacht*, 9 August 1918, <http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?datum=19180809&zoom=33> (retrieved 25 November 2016); the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* once commented on the blank space with: "Here half a page was confiscated", but did not dare to repeat this criticism, cf. Healy, Maureen: *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire. Total War and Everyday Life in World War I*, Cambridge 2004, pp. 130f., 134. ↑
15. Gerlach, Hellmut von: *Die große Zeit der Lüge. Der Erste Weltkrieg und die deutsche Mentalität (1871-1921)*, Bremen 1994, p. 59. ↑
16. Oberzensurstelle 1973, for instance pp. 204f., 208, 218, 222, 251, 262 (quotes). ↑
17. Fiori, *Filtro* 2001, p. 358. ↑
18. Rajsfus, *Censure* 1999, p. 66 (quote). ↑
19. Fiori, *Filtro* 2001, pp. 202ff.; Millman, Brock: *Managing Domestic Dissent in First World War Britain*, London et al. 2000, pp. 11f., 77, 82, 181, 188ff., 256 (quote); Pankhurst, Sylvia: *The Home Front. A Mirror to Life in England during the World War*. London 1932, pp. 263, 301. ↑
20. See section 8 below. ↑

21. See for the following Cabanes, Bruno: Ce que dit le contrôle postal, in: Prochasson and Rasmussen (eds.), Vrai et faux 2004, pp. 55-75, quote p. 58; Cochet, Annick: L'opinion et le moral des soldats en 1916 d'après les Archives du Contrôle Postal, doctoral dissertation, Nanterre 1986; Rajsfus, Censure 1999, pp. 133ff., 138ff., 143ff., 161ff., 191ff.; Jeanneney, Jean Noel: Les Archives de la commission du contrôle postal aux armées (1916-1918). Une source précieuse pour l'histoire contemporaine de l'opinion et des mentalités, in: Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine (1968), pp. 209-233; Corner, Paul and Procacci, Giovana: The Italian experience of 'total' mobilization, 1915-1920, in: Horne, John (ed.): State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War, Cambridge 1997, pp. 223-240, here p. 227; Forcade, Censure 1998, p. 790; Healy, Vienna 2004, pp. 85, 124f., 136; Ulrich, Bernd: Die Augenzeugen. Deutsche Feldpostbriefe in Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit, 1914-1933, Essen 1997, p. 103; Mock, Censorship 1972, pp. 96ff., 61ff., 117f. [↑](#)
22. Healy, Vienna 2004, p. 85. [↑](#)
23. Kennedy, Rosie: The Children's War. Britain, 1914-1918, New York 2014, p. 26. [↑](#)
24. Ulrich, Bernd and Ziemann, Benjamin (eds.): German Soldiers in the Great War. Letters and Eyewitness Accounts, Barnsley 2010, p. 124 (quote); Graves, Robert: Good-bye To All That. An Autobiography, London 1929, pp. 154, 167. [↑](#)
25. Ulrich, Augenzeugen 1997, p. 103; Rollet, Catherine/Gregory, Alan/Demm, Eberhard: The Home and Family Life, in: Winter, Jay and Robert, Jean-Louis (eds.): Capital Cities at War. Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919, volume 2, Yale 2007, pp. 315-353, quote p. 329. [↑](#)
26. Ulrich and Ziemann, German Soldiers 2010, p. 126; Jeanneney, Contrôle postal 1968, pp. 217, 219. [↑](#)
27. Millman, Dissent 2000, pp. 183, 188f.; Illustration: official notice about a letter returned by the censors, See image "Postal Censorship" [1]. [↑](#)
28. Silber, Jules C.: The Invisible Weapons, London 1932, pp. 106ff.; Contrôle postal de Londres, BDIC, 4 Δ res 16. [↑](#)
29. Fiori, Filtro 2001, pp. 201ff., 291; Procacci, Giovana: Popular Protest and Labour Conflict in Italy 1915-1918, in: Social History 14 (1989), pp. 31-58, here pp. 46ff.; Gatti, Gian Luigi, Dopo Caporetto. Gli ufficiali P nella Grande guerra; propaganda, assistenza, vigilanza, Gorizia 2000, pp. 71ff., quote note 44 on p. 38, p.116. [↑](#)
30. Mock, Censorship 1972, pp. 32ff., 190ff., 198, 211ff.; Collins, Ross F.: Children, War and Propaganda, New York 2011, pp. 152f. [↑](#)
31. Berger and Allard, Secrets 1932, p. 57. [↑](#)
32. Le Temps 19/418 and 19/419 of 5 and 6 September 1914. [↑](#)
33. Fiori, Filtro 2001, p. 155, 255. [↑](#)
34. Demm, Eberhard: Else Jaffé-von Richthofen. Erfülltes Leben zwischen Max und Alfred

- Weber, Düsseldorf 2014, p. 123. ↑
35. Rose, Britain 2001, p. 2648 (quote); Forcade, Censure 1998, p. 779; Fiori, Filtro 2001, pp. 126, 154. ↑
 36. Forcade, Censure 1998, pp. 228f., 774, 800; Mock, Censorship 1972, pp. 203f.; Fiori, Filtro 2001, pp. 225ff. ↑
 37. Welch, Germany 2014, p. 143. ↑
 38. Oberzensurstelle 1973, pp. 242f. ↑
 39. Koszyk, Kommunikationskontrolle 1973, p. 171. ↑
 40. Fiori, Filtro 2001, pp. 250ff. ↑
 41. Illustration no. 5 "Passed by the censor" by Alfred Leete (1882-1933), shows an English gentleman shocked by the delayed information "Battle of Hastings A.D. 1066", London Opinion, 24 July 1915; Schramm, Martin: Das Deutschlandbild in der britischen Presse von 1912 bis 1919, Berlin 2007, pp. 319ff., 385; Axelrod, Selling 2009, p. 57; Greenhill, Sam: Secret of the Lusitania, in: Daily Mail, 20 September 2008, online: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1098904/Secret-Lusitania-Arms-challenges-Allied-claims-solely-passenger-ship.html> (retrieved 25 November 2016). ↑
 42. Rajsfus, Censure 1999, p. 39. ↑
 43. Oberzensurstelle 1973, pp. 195, 214, 219, 230, 254, 264. ↑
 44. Fiori, Filtro 2001, pp. 366ff. ↑
 45. Hiley, Nicholas: The news media and British propaganda, 1914-1918, in: Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, sociétés 1990, pp. 175-181, here p. 179; Millman, Dissent 2000, p. 11. ↑
 46. Fiori, Filtro 2001, p. 137. ↑
 47. Becker, Jean-Jacques: The Great War and the French People, New York 1986, p. 62. ↑
 48. Oberzensurstelle 1973, Ausländische Zeitungen, p. 202. ↑
 49. Deist, Censorship 1990, p. 204. ↑
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