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The Mobilization of the American Doughboy (and Beyond): One Case Study of the Long Great War

The United States was a late-comer to World War I. Following the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed American neutrality, declined to use incidents such as the sinking of *Lusitania* (when 128 Americans lost their lives) to bring the United States into the war, and pushed a preparedness campaign skittishly. He also won reelection in 1916 with the slogan “He Kept Us Out of War.”¹ Wilson, an astute politician, understood the national mood. Protected by two oceans and motivated by a longstanding policy of isolation from European power politics, Americans were reluctant to commit themselves to, and marshal their resources for, participation in a major European war. But a sequence of aggressive actions, such as Germany’s resumption of unrestricted warfare, eventually convinced them, and their president, that America’s security was in danger. On April 2, 1917, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. After the House and Senate complied, American men volunteered (or were drafted) for military service, received training, were educated about venereal disease and other hazards to their health, and went to distant battlefields².

Much of the changes wrought by the war can be seen in the early life and career of Paul V. McNutt, a university professor who showed little interest in foreign or military affairs before 1917. McNutt was one of the “ninety-day wonders,” that is, a raw recruit who became an officer in the U.S. Army following three months of training. Overall, McNutt’s experience during the Great War was more humdrum than heroic. He trained soldiers for the artillery, performed an array of routine tasks, and spoke in favor of sexual hygiene. But he never saw combat. Such a record did not prevent

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McNutt from joining the American Legion, the principal veterans' organization to emerge in the United States following World War I, and becoming the Legion's national commander in 1928. Aided by his leadership of the American Legion, McNutt launched a political career that saw him become governor of his native state (Indiana) and a high-ranking official in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt during the 1930s and 1940s.

McNutt's experience during World War I exemplify what might be labeled "the long Great War," for shades of his wartime service colored much of his political career. McNutt employed military-style rhetoric to rally Americans to persevere during the Great Depression. His Great War-era support for sexual hygiene continued into World War II when, as head of the Federal Security Agency (FSA), he sanctioned a vigorous campaign to fight venereal disease and suppress prostitution. McNutt also believed that the patriotic enthusiasm and the voluntary methods used to mobilize America's human and material resources at the beginning World War I could be repeated during World War II, when he led another, high-profile government agency: the War Manpower Commission.

McNutt's years as a soldier and a leader in veteran's politics presaged the importance of the concept of "security" in American politics during the 1930s and 1940s. Because McNutt never witnessed the horrors of machine-age warfare, he retained a romantic perspective on military service that coincided with the American Legion's beliefs in patriotic service, preparedness, anti-radicalism, and federal provisioning for veterans. The Legion also encouraged McNutt's realistic thoughts on foreign policy and his hatred of Communism which, when combined with his championing of the welfare state during the 1930s, would have made him a quintessential, security-conscious Cold War liberal by the late 1940s. By that point, however, his career had ended and other veterans of the Great War, such as Harry S. Truman, were left to shape the direction of Cold War liberalism.

Paul V. McNutt Goes to War, 1917-1919

The liberalism that had emerged in the United States by the 1940s was "tough-minded"—a "fighting faith" in the view of the historian Kevin Mattson³. McNutt fit within that milieu. His ideological education began in earnest during World War I. As a young man, McNutt grew up in Indianapolis and Martinsville, Indiana, where he was an academic standout in high school. He excelled at Indiana University (IU), from which he graduated with a B.A. in 1913. During these early years, McNutt was more interested in his own advancement (and campus issues) than in the reforms of the Progressive Era. Politically, he was reflexively a partisan — a Democrat, like his father — rather than a cause-driven reformer. Mostly, he was intensely ambitious and increasingly restless. In 1913, McNutt headed east, enrolled in Harvard Law School, and earned a law degree. He returned to Martinsville to become a partner in his father's law firm. But

McNutt tired of his life in hometown. The chance to become an instructor of law at IU, during the spring of 1917, offered him a means of escape, albeit only a temporary one⁴.

World War I gave McNutt something larger to fight for. He drew inspiration as he watched the IU campus mobilize for war. Generally speaking, Hoosiers (as people from Indiana are known) and Midwesterners embraced more slowly than citizens in the eastern United States the program of "reasonable preparedness" inaugurated by President Wilson in 1915⁵. In 1916, for example, Indiana University required only freshman male students to drill. Not until Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1, 1917, did patriotic fervor, and the demand for "some form of military organization," engulf the campus⁶. In March 1917, IU established a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), an organization that McNutt came to cherish and later to defend against criticism by pacifists. Following Congress's declaration of war in April 1917, Indiana University came to resemble a military depot, as volunteers and draftees left for the army while other recruits arrived to be sheltered and trained. All able-bodied freshmen and sophomore males, moreover, were now required to drill, at sunup and at dusk. Fourteen members of the IU faculty did their part by entering the service⁷.

McNutt wasted little time before enlisting. Although up to this point in his life he had showed scant interest in foreign and military affairs, McNutt, like most Americans, suffered no lack of patriotism. He was too active and too driven to remain aloof during what promised to be the defining drama of his youth. Like many professors who joined the army, he surrendered to a "yearning for the battleground, a desire for excitement, patriotism, and an instinct to serve." He also may have been influenced by "a kind of masculine mystique, an indefinable dissatisfaction with a life of scholarship and teaching while an exciting war was raging in Europe."⁸ Whatever his motivations, McNutt decided to train as an officer. Since he held both college and advanced degrees at a time when few enlisted men had progressed beyond the seventh grade, his move into the officer corps was swift. The tall, handsome, thin-faced, and recently promoted assistant professor entered the officers' training camp at Fort Benjamin Harrison, near Indianapolis, in August 1917. He left camp ninety days later⁹.

Officer training was an exhausting grind, one which began at five o'clock in the morning, ended at ten in the evening, and filled every hour in between. "Servicemen took their new military experiences in stride," the historian Robert H. Ferrell noted, "although sometimes with a form of complaint known as griping."¹⁰ There was much to complain about. Aspiring officers performed their share of menial tasks — at Fort Benjamin Harrison, McNutt dug trenches. Mainly, they mastered fundamentals of marksmanship, scouting, patrolling, drilling, marching, and horsemanship for those in cavalry and artillery units. One officer at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, compared the monotony of training to "hoeing a garden on a rainy day" and the chore of absorbing the drill instruction manual to reading column after column in *Webster's Dictionary*. In a country ill-prepared for war, the camps struggled to provide for the

recruits. One soldier at Fort Benjamin Harrison had to make an hour-and-a-half journey to Indianapolis just “to get oil and rags to clean his rifle.” At the same time, he crowed, “They are feeding us here like lords.”¹¹

McNutt emerged from officer training a changed man, in both size and status. “Army beans put weight on him,” a journalist remarked. “Army officers put captain’s bars on him.”¹² McNutt then became an instructor of soldiers. Between December 1917 and the end of the war, the army sent McNutt from one military base to another, first to Texas — Camp Travis, Kelly Field, and Camp Stanley, near San Antonio — and later to Camp Jackson in South Carolina. At Camp Jackson, where seven thousand officers and nearly eighty thousand enlisted men prepared themselves for artillery service, McNutt drilled soldiers and wrote training manuals¹³. While in San Antonio, he met Kathleen Timolat, whom he married in 1918. Their wartime courtship and marriage was not unique. Surrounded by army bases, San Antonio became known as the “mother-in-law of the army” because “so many soldiers met their wives there.”¹⁴

Marriage — and monogamy — kept McNutt free from “sexual vice,” which the U.S. Army moved to stamp out during World War I. To fight venereal disease, the army enlisted the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA), an umbrella organization which drew on the resources of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), Jewish Welfare Board, and the Knights of Columbus. Placing results ahead of reticence, the CTCA’s pamphlets argued that such previously taboo practices as masturbation were preferable to “infectious liaisons.”¹⁵ The commission also parroted conventional thoughts about the virtues of abstinence as a way for men to keep their “bodies clean” and “hearts pure.”¹⁶ One CTCA poster exhorted: “Remember the Folks at Home. Go back to them physically fit and morally clean. Don’t allow a whore to smirch your record.”¹⁷ For many recruits, this campaign represented “the first thorough sex education they had received.”¹⁸ The CTCA also promoted “personal and social uplift” through a program “in which working-class recreations like drinking and gambling were discouraged in favor of middle-class virtues of education, middlebrow culture, personal cleanliness, and temperance” — all of which, save temperance, McNutt endorsed¹⁹.

McNutt embraced the campaign against sexual vice. During his teenage years, he had been warned by his father about the need to remain sexually “clean,” and he had complied, though many of his fellow soldiers had not²⁰. Speaking before a church group in his hometown of Martinsville, McNutt later related that at one training camp more than half of the recruits were physically unfit because, as he euphemistically put it, they had not taken care of the “masterpiece entrusted to them by their Maker,” meaning their body. McNutt was referring to venereal disease, for he cited “army regulations” that helped men to guard “against evil in all its forms” and praised the YMCA “for the noble work it has done, is doing and will continue to do” in this area²¹. Wholesome and handsome, McNutt embodied the “male sex role” promoted by social hygienists during the war — someone “powerful but pure, virile yet virginal.”²²

For McNutt, army life opened new opportunities — to a point. Although he had entered Fort Benjamin Harrison with no military experience, he left a captain, at a time when the majority of men who went through officer training emerged with the rank of lieutenant. In August 1918, McNutt was promoted to major in the field artillery and a year later, he became a lieutenant colonel in the artillery reserve. Overall, McNutt made a fine officer. At the close of the war, the adjutant at Camp Jackson commended him for being “very capable” and for performing his duties in an “excellent manner” with “fine results.”²³ Something was missing, however: McNutt longed to be overseas. Like other Americans, he saw the propaganda, circulated by the U.S. government’s Committee on Public Information (CPI), accusing Germany of rank depravity. Not unlike Harry Truman, a fellow officer in World War I, McNutt was eager “to fire at least one volley at the Hun.”²⁴ “He had visions of the Argonne, Chateau Thierry and newer fronts,” a reporter noted of McNutt²⁵. But when the German home-front collapsed, so did his hope of seeing combat. The war came to an end on November 11, 1918, while McNutt was still at Camp Jackson. Unlike Truman, who had commanded troops on the battlefield and had learned about his capacity to lead under the greatest of pressures, McNutt could claim no comparable feat.

McNutt tried to make up for his failure to see combat. A quarter century later, after the United States entered the Second World War, he went to General George C. Marshall, the army’s chief of staff, to volunteer for active service. Marshall rejected the offer no doubt because McNutt was fifty years old²⁶. McNutt’s decision to volunteer stemmed from his love of the army. World War I had brought him into the service and had given him the chance to mold other men. Yet circumstances shielded him from the realities of mechanized warfare. For McNutt, there was no searing specter of death to wash away the idea of combat as “glorious, adventurous” sacrifice and a “virile antidote to the effete routine of modern life.”²⁷ Perhaps for that reason, he never questioned the cause, of democracy and security for all nations, for which Americans fought during the Great War. In 1923 McNutt told a group of war mothers that “a war to overcome false principles,” that is, selfish, national ambitions, was “a war of eternal glory.” So it was with World War I. McNutt praised his fallen comrades for heroic sacrifice and “unselfish devotion to the common cause” of defending America and extending its stated ideals to other countries²⁸. Generally speaking, McNutt retained a gallant, unsullied view of military service.

Paul V. McNutt and the Enduring Great War, 1919-1945

The Great War left a mark on McNutt’s career in many respects. First, he refused to let go of army life after he returned to Indiana University. Increasingly restless with his life as a college professor, he joined the Reserve Officers Corps and became a member of the Reserve Officers Association (ROA), serving as commander of its Indiana department between 1923 and 1924 and as its national vice president in 1927²⁹. “I believe in the reserve corps,” he wrote,

"I want to see it live and prosper."³⁰ McNutt also worked on behalf of Indiana University's Memorial Fund Campaign, a drive to raise money for a stadium, auditorium, women's dormitory, and new home for the student union — all in honor of those who had fallen in World War I. Indeed, the word "memorial" appeared in the name of all buildings financed by the campaign, and a marker, bearing the words "in memory," was placed in the student union. The project belied the stereotype of the 1920s as a "slap-happy age" when Americans enjoyed jazz music and consumed illegal alcohol in underground taverns³¹. McNutt shook his head at the frivolous aspects of the 1920s which he blamed on human nature, especially "selfishness," rather than on the country's political institutions. Like other veterans, he waxed nostalgic for the "great wave of patriotic fervor" that had swept the United States during Great War, and he was dismayed to find Americans uninterested in sacrifice³². On the latter point, he should have been more realistic. "Whenever the U.S. Army had concluded a successful war," one scholar observed, "the public quickly turned away, as if to say that citizens might at times make good soldiers, but soldiers could never make good citizens."³³

McNutt fought against such attitudes, as did the American Legion. McNutt joined the Legion in 1919, becoming commander of the organization's Indiana department in 1926 and its national commander two years later. McNutt and the Legion made a natural fit. Formed by veterans of the Great War, the organization embodied his ideals, honored his past as a soldier, and pointed him toward a future beyond academe. McNutt, in turn, promoted the Legion's agenda by expounding on the duties of citizens, the need for a strong national defense, and the importance of protecting the United States from enemies at home and abroad. He extolled the citizen soldiers and backed a policy of preparedness to give America's fighting men training and weapons. Such a program, he said, would reduce casualties in wartime and signal U.S. strength in peacetime³⁴. McNutt also pushed the Legion's campaign of civic education and defended ROTC training on school campuses against attacks from leaders of the peace movement, which had attracted a sizeable following in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s³⁵. Later on, he went further, accusing pacifists with being Communists — "Reds" — who "work for the abolition of all means of defense in order to make way for the revolution."³⁶

A degree of opportunism informed McNutt's advocacy, for he would use the American Legion to launch a career in elected politics³⁷. But he was not exactly espousing popular causes. McNutt's anti-communist rhetoric was more suited for the period immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution than to the mid-1920s. And his calls for military training, preparedness, and increased expenditures on arms failed to move the vast majority of Americans who considered World War I "a dirty, unheroic war which few remembered with any emotion save distaste."³⁸ Isolationism and avoidance of war, rather than military preparedness, international commitments, and anti-communism, were the preferences of the American public during the 1920s.

Philosophically, McNutt was no isolationist, for he had been thinking about America's place in the world — in a highly unsentimental manner. He disdained pacifists in part because they failed to acknowledge a crucial lesson from World War I: "Fear, lust, greed, and envy" in individuals filtered up to governments and their policies³⁹. Wary of European nations beset by the turmoil that followed the Great War, McNutt foresaw the rise of aggressive dictatorships and urged the necessary preparations, asking: "Would you clean up a gang of thugs and murderers by sending peaceful citizens, unarmed, into their midst?"⁴⁰ He did not oppose all international treaties and collective security arrangements; he had backed American entrance into the World Court and League of Nations — issues associated with his wartime commander-in-chief, Woodrow Wilson. Yet by the late 1920s, McNutt did not campaign for such causes, to which Americans were, at best, indifferent. He placed even less trust in the toothless Kellogg-Briand Pact, under which the United States and fourteen other nations renounced war as an instrument of policy. "As long as individuals break promises, so will nations," McNutt lamented⁴¹.

According to McNutt, the strength of any treaty rested on the nation having adequate stockpiles of weapons to enforce it. Along with other proponents of a large navy, he prodded Congress to fund a set of new cruisers as a way of giving substance to the Kellogg-Briand Pact⁴². But when President Herbert Hoover suspended construction of three cruisers authorized by Congress, McNutt protested. In response, Hoover argued that more arms would lead to "burdensome expenditure" at home and "misunderstanding" abroad⁴³. "The idea of disarmament," Ferrell noted, "was much in vogue in the 1920's."⁴⁴ McNutt was one notable dissenter. "It is amazing and distressing," he complained, "to discover how little the people generally know or think about matters of national defense."⁴⁵

The debate over national defense showed that McNutt was beginning to advocate of larger role for the federal government. He certainly was willing to use federal dollars to fund projects close to his heart, such as the rehabilitation of veterans and the provisioning of their orphans and dependents. This was a major cause of the Legion, and it became McNutt's as well. He repeatedly emphasized the needs of those who had been wounded and he vowed not to rest until "every veteran disabled in the World War receives the care and award to which he is entitled."⁴⁶ In making his case, McNutt employed metaphors from the Great War; while visiting the Grand Canyon, he wrote that the site reminded him that the state of Arizona was a "front line trench" in the battle to help "disabled comrades."⁴⁷ After leaving the post of national commander, McNutt still thought about his fellow veterans, especially with respect to the World War I bonus. Enacted in 1924, the bonus was a life insurance policy to be paid to the heirs of each veteran upon his death or to the veteran after twenty years. In 1932, during the depths of the Great Depression, veterans descended upon Washington, D.C. to demand payment of the bonus at once—a position rejected by both Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt⁴⁸. McNutt, however, sided with the veterans and favored immediate payment of the bonus. The money, according to

McNutt, was due to them for their service, and its swift dispersal would provide relief and pump badly needed dollars into the depression-era economy⁴⁹.

In McNutt's speeches on behalf of veterans' issues, one can see the beginning of his embrace of the welfare state. McNutt's concern for disabled veterans led him to back what he termed "welfare measures" to provide "protection and care" for those who were "the unfortunate products of modern civilization." In 1929, he praised the government of Massachusetts for adopting policies that had gone "a long way" toward providing some security for its poorer citizens⁵⁰. He never forgot the contributions of the Legion in this area. In the 1930s, McNutt lauded the Legion for its "outstanding welfare accomplishments" on behalf of "war orphans and underprivileged children."⁵¹ Service in the Great War and participation in postwar veterans politics allowed McNutt's vision to widen to encompass social and economic, as well foreign and military, issues.

McNutt's background as a soldier and a Legionnaire influenced his governorship. In 1932, voters in Indiana elected him governor, chiefly because he was a Democrat and because the onset of the Great Depression had discredited the policies of the ruling Republican Party. McNutt's wartime service played a role in his victory. As a former soldier of the Great War, he appealed to other veterans, especially Legionnaires, who formed his core supporters. McNutt's soldiery ties also lifted him above routine partisan politics and allowed him to win votes from Republicans and independents as well as Democrats⁵². His inauguration in 1933 had an almost predictably military tone. The American Legion was front and center during the festivities, with a uniformed band playing in tribute to its former commander. Unlike past inaugurations, at which souvenir cups were sold, spectators could buy army-style medallions featuring McNutt's portrait⁵³. The inauguration ceremony commenced with a blare of trumpets by the National Guard and presentation of the colors of the local Legion post that McNutt had commanded and of the 366th Field Artillery Reserves in which he had served as a colonel. The ceremony impressed former governor James P. Goodrich, a Republican, who wrote: "McNutt inaugurated Governor with a lot of fuss & feathers for a Democrat."⁵⁴

McNutt employed military metaphors as he urged Hoosiers to persevere through hard times and support his policies. In his inaugural address, McNutt acknowledged an economic crisis "as grim and as real as any war" and called upon the "unselfish service, energy, intelligence and solidarity" of the people of Indiana to meet the challenges ahead, as they had during the Great War. Yet he was no strong believer in human virtue, or that the people would serve and sacrifice in the absence of a shooting war. McNutt warned of "those among us who are afraid" and who predict the demise of democracy. He shrugged aside such doubts as he pledged to prove "that government may be a great instrument of human progress."⁵⁵ By invoking the analogy of war, warning against fear, pledging action, attacking selfishness, and voicing optimism about the capabilities of government, his inaugural address presaged that of President Franklin D. Roosevelt

two months later. Meanwhile, in Indiana, McNutt pushed a program similar to Roosevelt's. He implemented such New Deal-style measures as banking and tax reform, unemployment relief, and old-age pensions. And like FDR, who had served as assistant secretary of the navy during the Great War and who also used military analogies in his speeches, McNutt reiterated that people must behave like soldiers under fire. Only with such fortitude, he emphasized, "We can order a charge and can move forward with courage" against the depression⁵⁶. The governor could so speak because he had been a soldier and because he projected soldierly virtues. After a meeting with McNutt, former governor Goodrich remarked that he had many qualities but one in particular stood out: "He has courage."⁵⁷

As the 1930s unfolded, McNutt was unafraid to confront the aggressive regimes in Germany, Italy, and Japan; his stance stemmed, at least in part, from his service in the Great War. When Hitler became chancellor of Germany and began to eliminate dissent, rearm, and prepare for war, McNutt had a frame of historical reference. He no doubt recalled U.S. propaganda against Germany during the First World War, such as the famous Liberty Bond poster showing a rapacious, ape-like, spike-helmeted "Hun" carrying off an innocent maiden (this searing image allegedly inspired U.S. flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker as he prepared to shoot down his first enemy airplane in World War I)⁵⁸. McNutt alluded to his wartime experience in March 1933, when he condemned as "outrageous" the Nazis' attacks on Jews. "For the second time in my life," this veteran of World War I proclaimed at a rally in Chicago, "I rise to protest against the acts of the German government."⁵⁹ His concern about the fate of Jews in Nazi Germany surfaced a few years later when, as high commissioner to the Philippines, he helped 1,300 German Jews resettle in Manila. While in the Philippines, McNutt also challenged Imperial Japan, another autocratic regime that, like the Kaiser Reich and Third Reich, sought to expand its domain via force. Partly to check Japan, McNutt urged the U.S. government to retain the Philippines as an outpost of American power rather than grant the colony independence⁶⁰. The brutality perpetrated by Japanese troops against civilians in China offended McNutt, and he said so. "McNutt has [a] strong anti-dictator slant," the journalist Raymond Clapper noted in 1938, "and is echoing current clichés about [how] democracies must stand up to dictators."⁶¹

Echoes of the First World War resonated during McNutt's service as a federal administrator. Between 1939 and 1945, McNutt headed the Federal Security Agency (FSA), a largely domestic agency that oversaw much of the New Deal. As America prepared for possible war, however, McNutt tailored the FSA's health, welfare, and job-training programs to the nation's defense effort. For example, as head of the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services, a companion agency to the FSA, McNutt strove to maintain a healthy workforce and fighting force by cooperating with local law enforcement to wipe venereal disease and one of its root causes: prostitution⁶². His urgency partly stemmed from his experience during World War I, when he had witnessed the army's efforts to educate recruits on the dangers of intercourse with prostitutes.

Providing servicemen with wholesome recreation was another means of keeping them sexually clean. To that end, McNutt conferred with five private organizations, all of which had provided recreation for service personnel in the Great War: the Salvation Army, the YMCA, the Young Women's Christian Association, National Catholic Community Service, and the Jewish Welfare Board. In 1941 these groups joined together to form the United Service Organizations (USO), an organization that, like the earlier CTCA, promoted upstanding, middle-class, middlebrow entertainment for soldiers and sailors. With McNutt's support, the recreation effort involved a public-private partnership under which the government acquired land near a military base, built a community center, and leased the building to the USO⁶³.

McNutt appears to have drawn from the example of World War I in mobilizing American manpower during World War II. Between 1942 and 1945, he chaired the War Manpower Commission where he found himself trapped between the demands of military and civilian officials for scarce human resources. In remedying the problem, McNutt declined to support legislation to require national service from all workers, a policy he likened to fascism. Instead, he preferred relying on "democratic methods" — that is, a lightly-regulated market economy — to marshal the nation's manpower⁶⁴. McNutt's embrace of voluntary action may have derived from overly fond memories of the patriotic spirit that had animated Americans during World War I. He either believed (or hoped) that once the government roused the public to act during an actual war, people would sacrifice for the sake of achieving victory. If so, his worm's eye view — as a mere soldier in World War I — betrayed little understanding of the policies of the Wilson administration, which shifted from a largely voluntary approach to mobilizing the wartime economy toward a greater degree of centralized coordination under the aegis of the War Industries Board⁶⁵.

Retrospect: The Long Great War

Service during World War I and in the American Legion helped McNutt acquire the major elements of his political ideology, which rested on the concept of security, an idea that came to dominate American politics during the years following World War II. As early as 1935, McNutt saw the world struggling through a "long crisis" that had begun with the Great War and continued with the Great Depression and the rise of dictatorships. To him, the "heart of the crisis" lay in the fact that the people of Russia, Italy, and Germany had become insecure — "frightened" and "demoralized" — and such fear had overturned the existing social order in those lands. To prevent that from happening to the United States, McNutt sought greater security for Americans via state-sponsored old-age pensions and unemployment insurance⁶⁶. As head of the wartime Federal Security Agency, he was able to refine his thinking on the responsibility of the state to its citizens, something he had begun to do as a soldier and Legionnaire. Meanwhile, his hatred for autocratic

regimes remained intense, as did his longstanding commitment to achieving a strong national defense. Over time, McNutt, not unlike Truman — a fellow veteran, Legionnaire, New Dealer, and anti-Communist — embraced a holistic view of security whereby the federal government would protect Americans from privation, subversives, and predatory dictators. By the late 1930s, McNutt had emerged as an early Cold War liberal, that is, a proponent of the Welfare/Warfare State who wanted to promote economic security for Americans at home and national security for America abroad. The liberal tradition in the United States would evolve in new directions after 1945, but the notion of security lay at the heart of the emerging postwar consensus.

Through the prism of McNutt's biography, then, it is possible to see the long shadow cast by the Great War in United States history. Recent historians have lengthened several watershed moments in America's past to point that they discuss a "long civil rights movement," a "long New Deal," and a "long peace" following the end of World War II⁶⁷. The British historian Eric Hobsbawm has done something similar for the two world wars, which he combined with the interwar era to re-label "the Thirty-one Years' War."⁶⁸ And another British historian, David Reynolds, similarly has written about the long-term impact of the Great War⁶⁹. With an eye on the hard-headed realism expressed by such security-conscious politicians as McNutt, historians of the United States might follow the example of these scholars by extending America's experience in First World War further—into the Cold War era—and by speaking specifically of a long Great War.

¹ Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 5-67, 89-90; Michael E. McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1965-1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 166 (quotation).

² Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), 281-282; Robert H. Ferrell, *Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1917-1921* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 13-117.

³ Kevin Mattson, *When America Was Great: The Fighting Faith of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 25, 180.

⁴ Dean J. Kotlowski, "The First Cold War Liberal? Paul V. McNutt and the Idea of Security from the 1920s to the 1940s," *Journal of Policy History*, 23, no. 4 (2011), 544.

⁵ David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 32.

⁶ Thomas D. Clark, *Indiana University: Midwestern Pioneer*, Vol. 2, *In Mid-Passage* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 201.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 202-208; Robert R. Neff, "The Early Career and Governorship of Paul V. McNutt" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1963), 23.

⁸ Ronald Schaffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 126-127.

⁹ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 188; Neff, "Early Career and Governorship," 23.

¹⁰ Ferrell, *Woodrow Wilson and World War I*, 21.

¹¹ Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 55 (first quotation), 56 (second and third quotations)

¹² *Indianapolis Times*, May 17, 1933, 5.

¹³ Philip Von Blon, "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," *American Legion Monthly* (January 1929), 48.

¹⁴ Hal K. Rothman, *LBJ's Texas White House: "Our Heart's Home"* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 27.

¹⁵ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 186.

¹⁶ Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering during the Great War* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 20.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, photograph #4.

¹⁸ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 187.

¹⁹ Douglas B. Craig, *Progressives at War: William G. McAdoo and Newton D. Baker, 1863-1941* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 164.

²⁰ "Indiana's McNutt," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, no date, box 26, Paul V. McNutt Papers (PVMP), Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

²¹ News clipping, no date, Ruth Neely McNutt Remembrance Book, John L. Krauss Collection (private), Indianapolis.

²² Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 20.

²³ E. P. Parker Jr. to McNutt, March 24, 1919, box 1, PVMP.

²⁴ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 62; Alonzo L. Hamby, *Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 67.

²⁵ *Indianapolis Times*, May 17, 1933, 5.

²⁶ Watson B. Miller to William Wolff-Smith, August 22, 1942, box 12, Records of the Federal Security Administrator: General Classified Files, 1939-1944, Alphabetical Series, General Records of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Record Group (RG) 235, National Archives, College Park, Maryland (NACP).

²⁷ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 180.

²⁸ McNutt speech to War Mothers, 1923, box 14, PVMP.

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Dean J. Kotlowski. The Mobilization of the American Doughboy (and Beyond): One Case Study of the Long Great War

ABSTRACT The United States was a late-comer to the Great War. Most Americans were reluctant to marshal their human and industrial resources for battle until the Congress declared war on Germany in 1917. Thereafter, the country mobilized as men entered military service, received education about venereal disease, and went to distant battlefields. Much of these changes can be seen in the life of Paul V. McNutt, a university professor who became an officer after three months of training. During the war, McNutt drilled soldiers and spoke on behalf of sexual cleanliness. But he never saw combat. Such a record did not prevent him from joining the American Legion (the principal veterans organization to emerge following World War I), rising through its ranks to become national commander, and then using the Legion to launch a political career. He became a state governor and a high-ranking official in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Not surprisingly, McNutt peppered his speeches with military-style metaphors. McNutt's experience exemplifies what might be called "the long Great War." As a soldier and a practitioner of veteran's politics, he acquired the major elements of his political philosophy which rested on concept of "security," an idea that became central to American politics during the 1930s and 1940s. Along with the American Legion, McNutt came to believe in patriotic service, military preparedness, federal provisioning for veterans, anti-Communism, and a realistic foreign policy which, when combined with his championing of the welfare state during the 1930s, would have made him the quintessential, security-conscious Cold War liberal by the late 1940s. Alas, by that point, his political career was over.

KEYWORDS: Paul V. McNutt, Ninety-Day Wonder, Commission on Training Camp Activities, American Legion, Cold War Liberalism

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