Four Minute Men

Woodrow Wilson was re-elected President in November, 1916. One of the major slogans of his campaign was "He Kept Us Out of the War". Now, in April, 1917, Wilson appeared before Congress asking for a Declaration of War against Germany. He realized a major propaganda effort was required to get public opinion fully behind the war.

In 1917 Wilson created the Committee on Public Information which consisted of the Secretaries of State, the Army, and the Navy. The committee was essentially a massive generator of propaganda. They were responsible for producing films, commissioning posters, publishing numerous books and pamphlets, and purchasing advertisements in major newspapers. The message that America's involvement in the war was necessary to save Europe from the German and enemy forces.

In addition, they recruited business men, preachers and professors to serve as public speakers in charge of altering public opinion in their communities. They were called "Four-Minute Men", supposedly because they gave four-minute speeches in the period when the reels of a silent movie were changed. They also spoke at churches, lodges, fraternal organizations, and labor unions.

ORGANIZE FOUR MINUTE MEN TO GIVE PATRIOTIC TALKS

The Morris County Four Minute Men were organized last week at a meeting held in Morristown, George W. Downs of Madison being elected county chairman. Mr. Downs is now arranging the speaking committee whose business it will be to give four-minute talks on patriotic topics before Morris county audiences. David F. Barkman of Morristown is secretary of the county organization. The organization meeting in Morristown was attended by Ben E. Chapin, state chairman of the Four Minute Men, and by speakers from Newark who have been doing four-minute speaking in that city.

The purpose of the Four Minute Men is to present to the citizens of the country in a brief, understandable form, the reasons for our entry into the world war and the steps which citizens must take to insure America's final victory over militaristic Germany and her harsh ideals. The work is under the direction of the Committee on Public Information, Washington. There are now about 11,000 Four Minute Men in the United States. The speeches which they present in tabloid form are made in moving picture theaters and other places of public gathering.

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