



Lusitania: The Cultural History of a Catastrophe

Willi Jasper

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A fascinating reassessment of a turning point in the First World War, revealing its role in shaping the German psyche

On May 7, 1915, the *Lusitania*, a large British luxury liner, was sunk by a German submarine off the Irish coast. Nearly 1,200 people, including 128 American citizens, lost their lives. The sinking of a civilian passenger vessel without warning was a scandal of international scale and helped precipitate the United States' decision to enter the conflict. It also led to the immediate vilification of Germany. Though the ship's sinking has preoccupied historians and the general public for over a century, until now the German side of the story has been largely untold. Drawing on varied German sources, historian Willi Jasper provides a comprehensive reappraisal of the sinking and its aftermath that focuses on the German reaction and psyche. The attack on the *Lusitania*, he argues, was not simply an escalation of violence but signaled a new ideological, moral, and religious dimension in the struggle between German *Kultur* and Western civilization.

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