

## **Pieter Geyl as journalist, 1914–1919**

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Pieter Geyl (1887–1966), the well-known Dutch historian and proponent of the ‘Greater Netherlands idea’, started his career in London. In September 1919, almost exactly 100 years ago, he was appointed to the first Chair for Dutch Studies in the Anglophone world, at University College London. But Geyl’s academic career was preceded by five years’ work as a journalist, a period that much less light has been shown on, although it has been formative for his outlook on the world. After historical studies in Leiden and a brief spell as a secondary school teacher in Schiedam, Geyl was offered, in 1913, the post of London correspondent of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, one of the leading Dutch newspapers now and then – a liberation (‘bevrijding’) as he wrote in his memoirs, not the least because the position allowed him to pursue both his scholarly and political aspirations. In the clublands of the British capital, Geyl quickly made connections and managed to interview the leading figures of British political life for the N. R. C., while also following the development of Irish nationalism closely, a development that, as he attested, informed his understanding of the Flemish movement in Belgium, and vice versa. Geyl’s columns and articles from this time also allow tracing the beginnings of the main lines of his historical thinking, especially as Geyl himself, certainly until his move to Utrecht in 1935, never clearly distinguished between his journalistic and scholarly writings. On the basis of Geyl’s newspaper work, and records about his repeated clashes with British war-time censors, this talk will outline these developments and come to a new assessment of this aspect of Geyl’s early work.