

transportation to aid or injure special business concerns; and other unfair trade practices.

...

Questions

1. What reforms does the platform propose to improve the functioning of American democracy?
2. How does the platform seem to define economic freedom?

CHAPTER 19

Safe for Democracy: The United States and World War I, 1916–1920

120. Woodrow Wilson, A World "Safe for Democracy" (1917)

Source: 65th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Document No. 5.

More than any other individual in the early twentieth century, President Woodrow Wilson articulated a new vision of America's relationship to the rest of the world. His foreign policy, called by historians "liberal internationalism," rested on the conviction that economic and political progress went hand in hand, and that it was the job of the United States to promote both free markets and political democracy. He came to see World War I as a great opportunity to promote these goals.

Although Wilson declared American neutrality when the war began in Europe in 1914 and ran for reelection in 1916 pledging to keep the United States out of the war, Germany's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare early in 1917, including the targeting of American ships transporting goods to England, convinced Wilson that the United States must enter the war. On April 2, 1917, he called on Congress for a declaration of war against Germany. His speech promised that victory would lead to a new world order based on "peace and justice" among the "free and

self-governing peoples of the world." In his most celebrated sentence, he declared, "the world must be made safe for democracy."

OUR OBJECT . . . is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power and to set up among the really free and self-governed peoples of the world such a concert of purpose and of action as will henceforth ensure the observance of those principles. Neutrality is no longer feasible or desirable where the peace of the world is involved and the freedom of its peoples, and the menace to that peace and freedom lies in the existence of autocratic governments backed by organized force which is controlled wholly by their will, not by the will of their people. We have seen the last of neutrality in such circumstances. We are at the beginning of an age in which it will be insisted that the same standards of conduct and of responsibility for wrong done shall be observed among nations and their governments that are observed among the individual citizens of civilized states.

We have no quarrel with the German people. We have no feeling toward them but one of sympathy and friendship. It was not upon their impulse that their government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval. It was a war determined upon as wars used to be determined upon in the old, unhappy days when peoples were nowhere consulted by their rulers and wars were provoked and waged in the interest of dynasties or of little groups of ambitious men who were accustomed to use their fellow men as pawns and tools.

Self-governed nations do not fill their neighbor states with spies or set the course of intrigue to bring about some critical posture of affairs which will give them an opportunity to strike and make conquest. Such designs can be successfully worked out only under cover and where no one has the right to ask questions. Cunningly contrived plans of deception or aggression, carried, it may be, from generation to generation, can be worked out and kept from the light

only within the privacy of courts or behind the carefully guarded confidences of a narrow and privileged class. They are happily impossible where public opinion commands and insists upon full information concerning all the nation's affairs.

A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations. No autocratic government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants. It must be a league of honor, a partnership of opinion. . . . Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honor steady to a common end and prefer the interests of mankind to any narrow interest of their own. . . .

The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them.

Questions

1. What changes in the relationship between the United States and the rest of the world does Wilson foresee emerging from World War I?
2. Why does Wilson believe that autocratic governments, not democratic ones, are the cause of wars?

121. A Critique of the Versailles Peace Conference (1919)

Source: Mao Zedong: "So much for national self-determination!" from Mao's Road to Power Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949, Volume 1: The Pre-Marxist Period, 1912-1920, ed. Stuart R. Schram (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1991), p. 337. Translation copyright © 1992 by The John King Fairbank Center for East Asian Research. Reprinted with permission of M. E. Sharpe, Inc.

In early 1918, nine months after the United States entered World War I, President Wilson issued the Fourteen Points, a blueprint for the postwar world. Among the key principles were national self-determination, freedom of the seas, worldwide free trade, redrawing of the map of the colonial world with colonized people being given "equal weight" in deciding their own futures, and the establishment of a League of Nations to preserve peace. After the war ended with the victory of the United States and its allies, Wilson traveled to Versailles, France, to take part in drafting the peace treaty.

Unfortunately, the final result violated many of the principles Wilson had enunciated. He was outmaneuvered by his Allied counterparts—David Lloyd George of England, Georges Clemenceau of France, Vittorio Orlando of Italy, and Makino Nobuaki of Japan—all of whom coveted former German colonies and spheres of influence. In the end, the principle of self-determination was applied to eastern Europe, where new nations were carved out of the remnants of the Austro-Hungarian empire, but not Asia or Africa. Asian and African nationalists, who had taken Wilson's rhetoric seriously, were bitterly disappointed. Mao Zedong—then a young student activist and later the leader of the revolution that would bring communists to power in China—penned two short pieces that reflected the widespread disappointment in the Treaty of Versailles.

SO MUCH FOR NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION!

Poland and Czechoslovakia, in reestablishing their national existence, have presided over the death of Germany. The Allies did their utmost to help them in this, in the name of "national self-determination." The Arabs benefit from the splitting up of Turkey, and therefore were allowed to become semi-independent. The desire of the Jews to restore their nation in Palestine will not succeed because it is of no great concern to the Allied powers. . . . Korea bewails the loss of its independence; so many of its people have died, and so much of its land has been devastated, but it was simply ignored by the Peace Conference. So much for national self-determination! I think it is really shameful!

POOR WILSON

Wilson in Paris was like an ant on a hot skillet. He didn't know what to do. He was surrounded by thieves like Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Makino, and Orlando. He heard nothing except accounts of receiving certain amounts of territory and of reparations worth so much in gold. He did nothing except to attend various kinds of meetings where he could not speak his mind. One day a . . . telegram read, "President Wilson has finally agreed with Clemenceau's view that Germany not be admitted to the League of Nations." When I saw the words "finally agreed," I felt very sorry for him for a long time. Poor Wilson!

Question

1. According to Mao, in what parts of the world was the principle of national self-determination adhered to, and where was it violated?
2. Why does Mao feel sorry for President Wilson?

122. Carrie Chapman Catt, Address to Congress on Women's Suffrage (1917)

Source: Carrie Chapman Catt, An Address to the Congress of the United States (New York, 1917).

Carrie Chapman Catt, a long-time campaigner for votes for women, served as president of the National American Women Suffrage Association from 1900 to 1904 and again from 1915 to 1920. Many women activists had been associated with the pacifist movement and opposed American entry into World War I. In 1917, Catt shocked them by announcing the association's support for the Wilson administration and American participation in World War I. Catt reasoned that by taking part in the war effort, women would finally win the right to vote.

In the winter of 1917, Catt addressed Congress urging support for a constitutional amendment to enfranchise women. To bolster her argument, she invoked the nation's founding principles, and Wilson's claim that the United States was the leader in the worldwide struggle for democracy. Catt's strategy bore fruit when Congress in 1918 approved the Nineteenth Amendment, which became part of the Constitution two years later.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE IS INEVITABLE. . . .

First, the history of our country. Ours is a nation born of revolution, of rebellion against a system of government so securely entrenched in the customs and traditions of human society that in 1776 it seemed impregnable. From the beginning of things, nations had been ruled by kings and for kings, while the people served and paid the cost. The American Revolutionists boldly proclaimed the heresies: "Taxation without representation is tyranny." "Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." The colonists won, and the nation which was established as a result of their victory has held unflinchingly that these two fundamental principles of democratic government are not only the spiritual source of our national existence but have been our chief historic pride and at all times the sheet anchor of our liberties.

Eighty years after the Revolution, Abraham Lincoln welded those two maxims into a new one: "Ours is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people." Fifty years more passed and the president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, in a mighty crisis of the nation, proclaimed to the world: "We are fighting for the things which we have always carried nearest to our hearts: for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government."

All the way between these immortal aphorisms political leaders have declared unabated faith in their truth. Not one American has arisen to question their logic in the 141 years of our national existence.

However stupidly our country may have evaded the logical application at times, it has never swerved from its devotion to the theory of democracy as expressed by those two axioms. . . .

With such a history behind it, how can our nation escape the logic it has never failed to follow, when its last unenfranchised class calls for the vote? Behold our Uncle Sam floating the banner with one hand, "Taxation without representation is tyranny," and with the other seizing the billions of dollars paid in taxes by women to whom he refuses "representation." Behold him again, welcoming the boys of twenty-one and the newly made immigrant citizen to "a voice in their own government" while he denies that fundamental right of democracy to thousands of women public school teachers from whom many of these men learn all they know of citizenship and patriotism, to women college presidents, to women who preach in our pulpits, interpret law in our courts, preside over our hospitals, write books and magazines, and serve in every uplifting moral and social enterprise. Is there a single man who can justify such inequality of treatment, such outrageous discrimination? Not one. . . .

Second, the suffrage for women already established in the United States makes women suffrage for the nation inevitable. When Elihu Root, as president of the American Society of International Law, at the eleventh annual meeting in Washington, April 26, 1917, said, "The world cannot be half democratic and half autocratic. It must be all democratic or all Prussian. There can be no compromise," he voiced a general truth. Precisely the same intuition has already taught the blindest and most hostile foe of woman suffrage that our nation cannot long continue a condition under which government in half its territory rests upon the consent of half of the people and in the other half upon the consent of all the people; a condition which grants representation to the taxed in half of its territory and denies it in the other half; a condition which permits women in some states to share in the election of the president, senators, and representatives and denies them that privilege in others. It is too obvious to require demonstration that woman suffrage, now covering half

our territory, will eventually be ordained in all the nation. No one will deny it. The only question left is when and how will it be completely established.

Third, the leadership of the United States in world democracy compels the enfranchisement of its own women. The maxims of the Declaration were once called "fundamental principles of government." They are now called "American principles" or even "Americanisms." They have become the slogans of every movement toward political liberty the world around, of every effort to widen the suffrage for men or women in any land. Not a people, race, or class striving for freedom is there anywhere in the world that has not made our axioms the chief weapon of the struggle. More, all men and women the world around, with farsighted vision into the verities of things, know that the world tragedy of our day is not now being waged over the assassination of an archduke, nor commercial competition, nor national ambitions, nor the freedom of the seas. It is a death grapple between the forces which deny and those which uphold the truths of the Declaration of Independence. . . .

Do you realize that in no other country in the world with democratic tendencies is suffrage so completely denied as in a considerable number of our own states? There are thirteen black states where no suffrage for women exists, and fourteen others where suffrage for women is more limited than in many foreign countries.

Do you realize that when you ask women to take their cause to state referendum you compel them to do this: that you drive women of education, refinement, achievement, to beg men who cannot read for their political freedom?

Do you realize that such anomalies as a college president asking her janitor to give her a vote are overstraining the patience and driving women to desperation?

Do you realize that women in increasing numbers indignantly resent the long delay in their enfranchisement?

Your party platforms have pledged women suffrage. Then why not be honest, frank friends of our cause, adopt it in reality as your own, make it a party program, and "fight with us"? As a party

measure—a measure of all parties—why not put the amendment through Congress and the legislatures? We shall all be better friends, we shall have a happier nation, we women will be free to support loyally the party of our choice, and we shall be far prouder of our history.

"There is one thing mightier than kings and armies"—aye, than Congresses and political parties—"the power of an idea when its time has come to move." The time for woman suffrage has come. The woman's hour has struck. If parties prefer to postpone action longer and thus do battle with this idea, they challenge the inevitable. The idea will not perish; the party which opposes it may. Every delay, every trick, every political dishonesty from now on will antagonize the women of the land more and more, and when the party or parties which have so delayed women suffrage finally let it come, their sincerity will be doubted and their appeal to the new voters will be met with suspicion. This is the psychology of the situation. Can you afford the risk? Think it over.

We know you will meet opposition. There are a few "women haters" left, a few "old males of the tribe," . . . who know better than women what is good for them. There are women, too, with "slave souls" and "clinging vines" for backbones. There are female dolls and male dandies. But the world does not wait for such as these, nor does liberty pause to heed the plaint of men and women with a grouch. She does not wait for those who have a special interest to serve, nor a selfish reason for depriving other people of freedom. Holding her torch aloft, liberty is pointing the way onward and upward and saying to America, "Come."

To you and the supporters of our cause in Senate and House, and the number is large, the suffragists of the nation express their grateful thanks. This address is not meant for you. We are more truly appreciative of all you have done than any words can express. We ask you to make a last, hard fight for the amendment during the present session. Since last we asked a vote on this amendment, your position has been fortified by the addition to suffrage territory of Great Britain, Canada, and New York.

Some of you have been too indifferent to give more than casual attention to this question. It is worthy of your immediate consideration. A question big enough to engage the attention of our allies in wartime is too big a question for you to neglect.

Some of you have grown old in party service. Are you willing that those who take your places by and by shall blame you for having failed to keep pace with the world and thus having lost for them a party advantage? Is there any real gain for you, for your party, for your nation by delay? Do you want to drive the progressive men and women out of your party?

Some of you hold to the doctrine of states' rights as applying to woman suffrage. Adherence to that theory will keep the United States far behind all other democratic nations upon this question. A theory which prevents a nation from keeping up with the trend of world progress cannot be justified.

Gentlemen, we hereby petition you, our only designated representatives, to redress our grievances by the immediate passage of the Federal Suffrage Amendment and to use your influence to secure its ratification in your own state, in order that the women of our nation may be endowed with political freedom before the next presidential election, and that our nation may resume its world leadership in democracy.

Woman suffrage is coming—you know it. Will you, Honorable Senators and Members of the House of Representatives, help or hinder it?

Questions

1. Why does Catt claim that denying women the right to vote violates the principle of democracy?
2. How does Catt characterize women who do not support the campaign for suffrage?

123. Eugene V. Debs, Speech to the Jury (1918)

Source: *The Debs White Book (Girard, Kans., 1920), pp. 37-57.*

Despite President Wilson's claim that the United States entered World War I in 1917 to "make the world safe for democracy," American intervention was followed at home by the most massive suppression of freedom of expression in the country's history. The Espionage Act of 1917 prohibited not only spying and interfering with the draft but also "false statements" that might impede military success. In 1918, the Sedition Act made it a crime to make spoken or printed statements intended to cast "contempt, scorn, or disrepute" on the "form of government" or that advocated interference with the war effort.

The government charged over 2,000 individuals with violating these laws. The most prominent victim was Eugene V. Debs, the leader of the Socialist Party, convicted in 1918 under the Espionage Act for delivering an antiwar speech. Before his sentencing, Debs gave the court a lesson in the history of American freedom, tracing the tradition of dissent from Tom Paine to the abolitionists and pointing out that the nation had never engaged in a war without internal opposition. Sentenced to ten years in prison, Debs was released in 1921 by Woodrow Wilson's successor, Warren G. Harding.

MAY IT PLEASE the court, and gentlemen of the jury:

For the first time in my life I appear before a jury in a court of law to answer to an indictment for crime. I am not a lawyer. I know little about court procedure, about the rules of evidence or legal practice. I know only that you gentlemen are to hear the evidence brought against me, that the court is to instruct you in the law, and that you are then to determine by your verdict whether I shall be branded with criminal guilt and be consigned, perhaps to the end of my life, in a felon's cell.

...

I wish to admit the truth of all that has been testified to in this proceeding. I have no disposition to deny anything that is true. I

would not, if I could, escape the results of an adverse verdict. I would not retract a word that I have uttered that I believe to be true to save myself from going to the penitentiary for the rest of my days.

Gentlemen, you have heard the report of my speech at Canton on June 16, and I submit that there is not a word in that speech to warrant the charges set out in the indictment. I admit having delivered the speech. I admit the accuracy of the speech in all of its main features as reported in this proceeding.

In what I had to say there my purpose was to have the people understand something about the social system in which we live and to prepare them to change this system by perfectly peaceable and orderly means into what I, as a Socialist, conceive to be a real democracy.

From what you heard in the address of the counsel for the prosecution, you might naturally infer that I am an advocate of force and violence. It is not true. I have never advocated violence in any form. I have always believed in education, in intelligence, in enlightenment; and I have always made my appeal to the reason and to the conscience of the people.

I admit being opposed to the present social system. I am doing what little I can, and have been for many years, to bring about a change that shall do away with the rule of the great body of the people by a relatively small class and establish in this country an industrial and social democracy.

...

Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Paine and their compeers were the rebels of their day. When they began to chafe under the rule of a foreign king and to sow the seed of resistance among the colonists they were opposed by the people and denounced by the press. . . . But they had the moral courage to be true to their convictions, to stand erect and defy all the forces of reaction and detraction; and that is why their names shine in history, and why the great respectable majority of their day sleep in forgotten graves.

...

William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Gerrit Smith, Thaddeus Stevens and other leaders of the abolition movement who were regarded as public enemies and treated accordingly, were true to their faith and stood their ground. They are all in history. You are now teaching your children to revere their memories, while all of their detractors are in oblivion.

...

From the beginning of the war to this day I have never by word or act been guilty of the charges embraced in this indictment. If I have criticized, if I have condemned, it is because I believed it to be my duty, and that it was my right to do so under the laws of the land. I have had ample precedents for my attitude. This country has been engaged in a number of wars and every one of them has been condemned by some of the people, among them some of the most eminent men of their time. The war of the American Revolution was violently opposed. The Tory press representing the "upper classes" denounced its leaders as criminals and outlaws.

The war of 1812 was opposed and condemned by some of the most influential citizens; the Mexican war was vehemently opposed and bitterly denounced, even after the war had been declared and was in progress, by Abraham Lincoln, Charles Sumner, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and many other well-known and influential citizens. These men denounced the President, they condemned his administration while the war was being waged, and they charged in substance that the war was a crime against humanity. They were not indicted; they were not charged with treason nor tried for crime. They are honored today by all of their countrymen.

The Civil War between the states met with violent resistance and passionate condemnation. In the year 1864 the Democratic Party met in national convention at Chicago and passed a resolution condemning the war as a failure. What would you say if the Socialist Party were to meet in convention today and condemn the present war as a failure? You charge us with being disloyalists and traitors.

Were the Democrats of 1864 disloyalists and traitors because they condemned the war as a failure?

And if so, why were they not indicted and prosecuted accordingly? I believe in the Constitution. Isn't it strange that we Socialists stand almost alone today in upholding and defending the Constitution of the United States? The revolutionary fathers who had been oppressed under king rule understood that free speech, a free press and the right of free assemblage by the people were fundamental principles in democratic government.

• • •

That is the right I exercised at Canton on the sixteenth day of last June; and for the exercise of that right, I now have to answer to this indictment. I believe in the right of free speech, in war as well as in peace. I would not, under any circumstances suppress free speech. It is far more dangerous to attempt to gag the people than to allow them to speak freely what is in their hearts.

I have told you that I am no lawyer, but it seems to me that I know enough to know that if Congress enacts any law that conflicts with this provision in the Constitution, that law is void. If the Espionage Law finally stands, then the Constitution of the United States is dead. If that law is not the negation of every fundamental principle established by the Constitution, then certainly I am unable to read or to understand the English language.

• • •

I am not on trial here. There is an infinitely greater issue that is being tried today in this court, though you may not be conscious of it. American institutions are on trial here before a court of American citizens. The future will render the final verdict.

Questions

1. Why does Debs insist that the Espionage Act represents "the negation of every fundamental principle established by the Constitution"?

2. Why does Debs recount the history of political dissent and opposition to previous American wars?

124. Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America" (1916)

Source: *Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America," Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 118 (July 1916), pp. 86-97.*

The increased immigration of the early twentieth century heightened awareness of ethnic and racial difference and spurred among many native-born Americans demands for "Americanization"—the creation of a more homogenous national culture. A minority of Progressives questioned Americanization efforts and insisted on respect for immigrant sub-cultures. Randolph Bourne's 1916 essay, "Trans-National America," exposed the fundamental flaw in the Americanization model. No single model of American culture existed, Bourne pointed out. Interaction between individuals and groups had produced the nation's music, poetry, and other cultural expressions. Bourne envisioned a democratic, cosmopolitan society in which immigrants and natives alike submerged their group identities in a new "trans-national" culture. Once the United States entered World War I, however, the Americanization campaign intensified. But Bourne's arguments would be rediscovered later in the twentieth century, when a more pluralistic vision of American society took hold.

NO REVERBERATORY EFFECT of the great war has caused American public opinion more solicitude than the failure of the "melting-pot." The discovery of diverse nationalistic feelings among our great alien population has come to most people as an intense shock. It has brought out the unpleasant inconsistencies of our traditional beliefs. We have had to watch hard-hearted old Brahmins virtuously indignant at

the spectacle of the immigrant refusing to be melted, while they jeer at patriots like Mary Antin who write about "our forefathers." We have had to listen to publicists who express themselves as stunned by the evidence of vigorous nationalistic and cultural movements in this country among Germans, Scandinavians, Bohemians, and Poles, while in the same breath they insist that the alien shall be forcibly assimilated to the Anglo-Saxon tradition which they unquestioningly label "American."

As the unpleasant truth has come upon us that assimilation in this country was proceeding on lines very different from those we had marked out for it, we found ourselves inclined to blame those who were thwarting our prophecies. The truth became culpable. We blamed the war, we blamed the Germans. And then we discovered with a moral shock that these movements had been making great headway before the war even began. We found that the tendency, reprehensible and paradoxical as it might be, has been for the national clusters of immigrants, as they became more and more firmly established and more and more prosperous, to cultivate more and more assiduously the literatures and cultural traditions of their homelands. Assimilation, in other words, instead of washing out the memories of Europe, made them more and more intensely real. Just as these clusters became more and more objectively American, did they become more and more German or Scandinavian or Bohemian or Polish.

To face the fact that our aliens are already strong enough to take a share in the direction of their own destiny, and that the strong cultural movements represented by the foreign press, schools, and colonies are a challenge to our facile attempts, is not, however, to admit the failure of Americanization. It is not to fear the failure of democracy. It is rather to urge us to an investigation of what Americanism may rightly mean. It is to ask ourselves whether our ideal has been broad or narrow—whether perhaps the time has not come to assert a higher ideal than the "melting-pot." Surely we cannot be certain of our spiritual democracy when, claiming to melt the nations within

us to a comprehension of our free and democratic institutions, we fly into panic at the first sign of their own will and tendency. We act as if we wanted Americanization to take place only on our own terms, and not by the consent of the governed. All our elaborate machinery of settlement and school and union, of social and political naturalization, however, will move with friction just in so far as it neglects to take into account this strong and virile insistence that America shall be what the immigrant will have a hand in making it, and not what a ruling class, descendant of those British stocks which were the first permanent immigrants, decide that America shall be made. This is the condition which confronts us, and which demands a clear and general readjustment of our attitude and our ideal.

• • •

The non-English American can scarcely be blamed if he sometimes thinks of the Anglo-Saxon predominance in America as little more than a predominance of priority. The Anglo-Saxon was merely the first immigrant, the first to found a colony. He has never really ceased to be the descendant of immigrants, nor has he ever succeeded in transforming that colony into a real nation, with a tenacious, richly woven fabric of native culture. Colonials from the other nations have come and settled down beside him. They found no definite native culture which should startle them out of their colonialism, and consequently they looked back to their mother-country, as the earlier Anglo-Saxon immigrant was looking back to his. What has been offered the newcomer has been the chance to learn English, to become a citizen, to salute the flag. And those elements of our ruling classes who are responsible for the public schools, the settlements, all the organizations for amelioration in the cities, have every reason to be proud of the care and labor which they have devoted to absorbing the immigrant. His opportunities the immigrant has taken to gladly, with almost a pathetic eagerness to make his way in the new land without friction or disturbance. The common language has made not only for the necessary communication, but for all the amenities of life.

If freedom means the right to do pretty much as one pleases, so long as one does not interfere with others, the immigrant has found freedom, and the ruling element has been singularly liberal in its treatment of the invading hordes. But if freedom means a democratic cooperation in determining the ideals and purposes and industrial and social institutions of a country, then the immigrant has not been free, and the Anglo-Saxon element is guilty of just what every dominant race is guilty of in every European country: the imposition of its own culture upon the minority peoples. The fact that this imposition has been so mild and, indeed, semiconscious does not alter its quality. And the war has brought out just the degree to which that purpose of "Americanizing," that is, "Anglo-Saxonizing," the immigrant has failed.

...

There is no distinctively American culture. It is apparently our lot rather to be a federation of cultures. This we have been for half a century, and the war has made it ever more evident that this is what we are destined to remain.

...

What we have achieved has been rather a cosmopolitan federation of national colonies, of foreign cultures, from whom the sting of devastating competition has been removed. America is already the world-federation in miniature, the continent where for the first time in history has been achieved that miracle of hope, the peaceful living side by side, with character substantially preserved, of the most heterogeneous peoples under the sun. Nowhere else has such contiguity been anything but the breeder of misery. Here, notwithstanding our tragic failures of adjustment, the outlines are already too clear not to give us a new vision and a new orientation of the American mind in the world.

We cannot Americanize America worthily by sentimentalizing and moralizing history. When the best schools are expressly renouncing the questionable duty of teaching patriotism by means of history, it is not the time to force shibboleth upon the immigrant. This form

of Americanization has been heard because it appealed to the vestiges of our old sentimentalized and moralized patriotism. This has so far held the field as the expression of the new American's new devotion. The inflections of other voices have been drowned. They must be heard. We must see if the lesson of the war has not been for hundreds of these later Americans a vivid realization of their transnationality; a new consciousness of what America meant to them as a citizenship in the world. It is the vague historic idealisms which have provided the fuel for the European flame. Our American ideal can make no progress until we do away with this romantic gilding of the past.

Questions

1. Why does Bourne write that the "melting-pot" had failed?
2. Why does he argue that immigrants "have not been free"?

125. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Returning Soldiers" (1919)

Source: W. E. B. Du Bois "Returning Soldiers." W. W. Norton & Company wishes to thank the Crisis Publishing Company, Inc., the publisher of the magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for the use of this material first published in the May 1919 issue of Crisis Magazine.

Scholar, poet, agitator, father of pan-Africanism, founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), W. E. B. Du Bois was one of the towering figures of twentieth-century America. As editor of *The Crisis*, the NAACP's magazine, Du Bois brought the plight and achievements of black Americans to hundreds of thousands of readers.

When the United States entered World War I, Du Bois called on blacks to "close ranks" and enlist in the army, even though the military subjected

them to pervasive discrimination. As in the Civil War, he argued, military service would stake a claim to equal citizenship. But as race riots erupted in many American cities, Du Bois's hopes disintegrated. In 1919, he issued a searing indictment of American race relations, and called on returning black soldiers to take up the struggle for racial justice.

WE ARE RETURNING from war! The Crisis and tens of thousands of black men were drafted into a great struggle. For bleeding France and what she means and has meant and will mean to us and humanity and against the threat of German race arrogance, we fought gladly and to the last drop of blood; for America and her highest ideals, we fought in far-off hope; for the dominant southern oligarchy entrenched in Washington, we fought in bitter resignation. For the America that represents and gloats in lynching, disfranchisement, caste, brutality and devilish insult—for this, in the hateful upturning and mixing of things, we were forced by vindictive fate to fight, also.

But today we return! We return from the slavery of uniform which the world's madness demanded us to don to the freedom of civil garb. We stand again to look America squarely in the face and call a spade a spade. We sing: This country of ours, despite all its better souls have done and dreamed, is yet a shameful land.

It lynches.

And lynching is barbarism of a degree of contemptible nastiness unparalleled in human history. Yet for fifty years we have lynched two Negroes a week, and we have kept this up right through the war.

It disfranchises its own citizens.

Disfranchisement is the deliberate theft and robbery of the only protection of poor against rich and black against white. The land that disfranchises its citizens and calls itself a democracy lies and knows it lies.

It encourages ignorance.

It has never really tried to educate the Negro. A dominant minority does not want Negroes educated. It wants servants, dogs, whores

and monkeys. And when this land allows a reactionary group by its stolen political power to force as many black folk into these categories as it possibly can, it cries in contemptible hypocrisy: "They threaten us with degeneracy; they cannot be educated."

It steals from us.

It organizes industry to cheat us. It cheats us out of our land; it cheats us out of our labor. It confiscates our savings. It reduces our wages. It raises our rent. It steals our profit. It taxes us without representation. It keeps us consistently and universally poor, and then feeds us on charity and derides our poverty.

It insults us.

It has organized a nation-wide and latterly a world-wide propaganda of deliberate and continuous insult and defamation of black blood wherever found. It decrees that it shall not be possible in travel nor residence, work nor play, education nor instruction for a black man to exist without tacit or open acknowledgment of his inferiority to the dirtiest white dog. And it looks upon any attempt to question or even discuss this dogma as arrogance, unwarranted assumption and treason.

This is the country to which we Soldiers of Democracy return. This is the fatherland for which we fought! But it is *our* fatherland. It was right for us to fight. The faults of *our* country are *our* faults. Under similar circumstances, we would fight again. But by the God of Heaven, we are cowards and jackasses if now that that war is over, we do not marshal every ounce of our brain and brawn to fight a sterner, longer, more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our own land.

We return.

We return from fighting.

We return fighting.

Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America or know the reason why.

Questions

1. Which aspects of the condition of black Americans in 1919 does Du Bois consider most "shameful"?
2. Why does he refer to black soldiers as "Soldiers of Democracy"?

126. Marcus Garvey on Africa for the Africans (1921)

Source: "Speech Delivered at Liberty Hall, New York City, August 21, 1921," in Amy Jacques-Garvey, ed., Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey (New York, 1923-1925), Vol. 2, pp. 93-97.

World War I redrew the racial map of the United States. With immigration from Europe suspended, northern employers for the first time offered industrial jobs to southern blacks. The result was the Great Migration, in which tens of thousands of African-Americans left the rural South for cities like New York and Chicago. In the new, densely populated black ghettos, disappointment with conditions in the North inspired widespread support for a separatist movement launched by Marcus Garvey, a recent immigrant from Jamaica. Throughout the world, Garvey pointed out, the war had inspired movements for national self-determination—in Ireland, eastern Europe, and Europe's Asian and African colonies. Blacks, he insisted, should enjoy the same internationally recognized identity enjoyed by other peoples. The government soon deported Garvey after convicting him of mail fraud. But the massive following his movement achieved testified to the sense of both racial pride and betrayal kindled in black communities during and after the war.

FOUR YEARS AGO, realizing the oppression and the hardships from which we suffered, we organized ourselves into an organization for the purpose of bettering our condition, and founding a government

of our own. The four years of organization have brought good results, in that from an obscure, despised race we have grown into a mighty power, a mighty force whose influence is being felt throughout the length and breadth of the world. The Universal Negro Improvement Association existed but in name four years ago, today it is known as the greatest moving force among Negroes. We have accomplished this through unity of effort and unity of purpose, it is a fair demonstration of what we will be able to accomplish in the very near future, when the millions who are outside the pale of the Universal Negro Improvement Association will have linked themselves up with us.

By our success of the last four years we will be able to estimate the grander success of a free and redeemed Africa. In climbing the heights to where we are today, we have had to surmount difficulties, we have had to climb over obstacles, but the obstacles were stepping stones to the future greatness of this Cause we represent. Day by day we are writing a new history, recording new deeds of valor performed by this race of ours. It is true that the world has not yet valued us at our true worth but we are climbing up so fast and with such force that every day the world is changing its attitude towards us. Wheresoever you turn your eyes today you will find the moving influence of the Universal Negro Improvement Association among Negroes from all corners of the globe. We hear among Negroes the cry of "Africa for the Africans." This cry has become a positive, determined one. It is a cry that is raised simultaneously the world over because of the universal oppression that affects the Negro. You who are congregated here tonight as Delegates representing the hundreds of branches of the Universal Negro Improvement Association in different parts of the world will realize that we in New York are positive in this great desire of a free and redeemed Africa. We have established this Liberty Hall as the centre from which we send out the sparks of liberty to the four corners of the globe, and if you have caught the spark in your section, we want you to keep it a-burning for the great Cause we represent.

There is a mad rush among races everywhere towards national independence. Everywhere we hear the cry of liberty, of freedom,

and a demand for democracy. In our corner of the world we are raising the cry for liberty, freedom and democracy. Men who have raised the cry for freedom and liberty in ages past have always made up their minds to die for the realization of the dream. We who are assembled in this Convention as Delegates representing the Negroes of the world give out the same spirit that the fathers of liberty in this country gave out over one hundred years ago. We give out a spirit that knows no compromise, a spirit that refuses to turn back, a spirit that says "Liberty or Death", and in prosecution of this great ideal—the ideal of a free and redeemed Africa, men may scorn, men may spurn us, and may say that we are on the wrong side of life, but let me tell you that way in which you are travelling is just the way all peoples who are free have travelled in the past. If you want liberty you yourselves must strike the blow. If you must be free you must become so through your own effort, through your own initiative. Those who have discouraged you in the past are those who have enslaved you for centuries and it is not expected that they will admit that you have a right to strike out at this late hour for freedom, liberty and democracy.

...

It falls to our lot to tear off the shackles that bind Mother Africa. Can you do it? You did it in the Revolutionary War. You did it in the Civil War; You did it at the Battles of the Marne and Verdun; You did it in Mesopotamia. You can do it marching up the battle heights of Africa. Let the world know that 400,000,000 Negroes are prepared to die or live as free men. Despise us as much as you care. Ignore us as much as you care. We are coming 400,000,000 strong. We are coming with our woes behind us, with the memory of suffering behind us—woes and suffering of three hundred years—they shall be our inspiration. My bulwark of strength in the conflict for freedom in Africa, will be the three hundred years of persecution and hardship left behind in this Western Hemisphere. The more I remember the suffering of my fore-fathers, the more I remember the lynchings and burnings in the Southern States of America, the more I will fight on even though the battle seems doubtful. Tell me that I must turn

back, and I laugh you to scorn. Go on! Go on! Climb ye the heights of liberty and cease not in well doing until you have planted the banner of the Red, the Black and the Green on the hilltops of Africa.

Questions

1. How does Garvey define black freedom?
2. How do you think Garvey felt that African independence would benefit black Americans?

127. John A. Fitch on the Great Steel Strike (1919)

Source: John A. Fitch, "The Closed Shop," *The Survey* (November 8, 1919), pp. 53-56, 86, 91.

Among American workers, wartime language linking patriotism with democracy and freedom inspired hopes that an era of social justice was at hand. In 1919, over 4 million workers engaged in strikes—the greatest wave of labor unrest in American history. The strike wave reached its peak in the era's greatest labor uprising, the steel strike. Centered in Pittsburgh and Chicago, it united some 365,000 mostly immigrant workers in demands for union recognition, higher wages, and an eight-hour workday. Before 1917, the steel mills were little autocracies, where managers arbitrarily established wages and working conditions and suppressed all efforts at union organizing. "For why this war?" asked a Polish immigrant steel worker at a union meeting attended by the writer John Fitch, who visited Pittsburgh to report on the strike. "For why we buy Liberty bonds? For the mills? No, for freedom and America—for everybody. No more [work like a] horse and wagon. For eight-hour day." By 1920, with middle-class opinion having turned against the labor movement and native-born workers abandoning their immigrant counterparts, the strike collapsed.

WHAT ARE THE chief issues in the steel strike? Is the strike revolution in disguise or is it a bona fide trade union struggle? Is the issue the closed union shop or the closed anti-union shop? Is the strike an effort of a minority to dominate, led by rank outsiders who came into the steel district as professional agitators? Or is it the expression of long pent-up desires held by large numbers of genuine steel workers, under a welcomed leadership? Is it a fight of Americans against foreigners? Or is it an old-fashioned dispute of anti-union employers against organized labor in any form, such as has long since been threshed out and settled in other major American industries in favor of collective bargaining?

It was to obtain the latest evidence bearing on these questions at the point of greatest interest and of greatest friction that I went to Pittsburgh in mid-October at the time that the Senate committee under the chairmanship of Senator Kenyon went there for a similar reason. I attended the committee hearings and then went out to the mill towns to meet the strikers, the citizens, the police and everyone else whom I could reach. I got some evidence and herewith I pass it on just as it came to me:

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It has been alleged that the strike is one of foreigners alone and that there is some sort of issue between them and the Americans. That is certainly not the case in Johnstown, Pa., where the Cambria Steel Company plant is completely tied up—Americans and foreigners standing firm together. It is not true in Cleveland where thousands of skilled Americans have joined the unions nor is it true in Youngstown and Steubenville, O., or in Gary or South Chicago. At all of those points Americans in large numbers are in the unions and are out on strike.

In the Pittsburgh mill towns, however, it is apparent that the strikers are largely foreign-born and that the Americans are at work. Everywhere you encounter irritation. "These organizers didn't appeal to the Americans," you are told; "they just went among the foreigners." This is what you are told everywhere by business and professional men.

The cleavage between native American stock and foreigners, long a marked feature of life in Pittsburgh mill towns, has been accentuated during this strike. Among the strikers I found naturalized citizens and native-born citizens, but they were all Hunkies because they or their fathers were born in Europe. One young fellow was of the third generation in this country. His grandfather came from Hungary in 1848, about the time America was going wild over Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot. But he is a Hunky. I was especially interested when I learned that his father also is a steel worker and on strike. "Your father must have been working in '92," I remarked, wondering if he were in the famous Homestead strike of that year. "Working in '92?" he demanded, growing red in the face. "The hell he was! He was on strike. Let me tell you scabbing doesn't run in our family." I hastened to explain that I had no intention of accusing his father of being a strike breaker.

In the Pittsburgh district the Americans are mostly at work. Whether this is due to their superior economic condition—the best jobs all belong to the Americans—or whether it is their distrust of the Hunky or their fear of discharge and blacklist, it is difficult to say. It is certain that they have had experience with the reprisals that follow organizing campaigns. It is plain also that forces opposed to the strike are making the most of the traditional antagonism between Americans and Hunkies. But the foreigners represent two-thirds of the employes in most steel mills. In any strike, therefore, a majority of the strikers would probably be foreigners.

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Since 1909 unionism has not been permitted at any steel corporation mill and in most of them there is no collective bargaining of any sort. There has even been refusal to receive petitions—as in the case of groups of workmen in McKeesport and Braddock, who wanted the eight-hour day.

And these policies of ten years are still the policies of the United States Steel Corporation. During my recent trip to Pittsburgh, L. H. Burnett, assistant to the president of the Carnegie Steel Company, told me that committees of men might confer over grievances, but

that if a committee wanted to negotiate with the officials over wages and hours, it would not be met. He stated that it was the policy of the company to discharge union men who were active or who were organizing within the plant.

Out in the mill towns the strikers told me of being discharged for joining the union. In half an hour at Homestead I talked with a half dozen men who claimed to have been disciplined in that way. I talked with three or four at Braddock and with two at Clairton, all of whom happened to be in strike headquarters when I called. Strikers are not permitted to gather in McKeesport, and I talked with no discharged men there, but business and professional men of that city who are opposed to the strike told me it had always been the policy of the National Tube Company to discharge men who were trying to organize a union. It was a McKeesport paper that remarked, in connection with Judge Gary's testimony at Washington that the United States Steel Corporation does not discharge men for joining unions, that Judge Gary "ought to know better than to make such a statement."

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These open-hearth men work six days in the week in normal times, but during the war they worked seven days a week, working a long shift of twenty-four hours every second week. Blast furnace men spoke up and said they worked twelve hours a day and on a seven-day basis, all the time—twenty-four hours on at one week-end and twenty-four hours off at the next. Men on the rolls were twelve-hour, six-day men. Shop men, machinists, blacksmiths, mill wrights and repair men have a ten-hour day and a six-day week in theory, but when needed they must jump in and work until a breakdown is repaired. Twenty-four hours' continuous work is common, and thirty-six and forty-eight hours' by no means unknown.

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I came away from Pittsburgh more than ever convinced that the issues of the strike are hours and the right of collective bargaining. Until there is such a reduction in hours of labor in the steel industry as will permit men to recuperate after a day's work, to mingle with

their fellows and to play, there can be no opportunity for the development of good citizenship in the mill towns. So long as 50 per cent of the men work twelve hours a day, thousands of them seven days a week with a long shift of eighteen or twenty-four hours every second week, no one can claim for the steel industry the maintenance of an "American" standard of living.

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In this strike the foreigners of Pittsburgh are shaking off that old reproach that they are undermining American standards of living. They are standing up and fighting for American standards and are doing it lawfully and with amazing patience while the constituted authorities are harassing them on every side. They are fighting for the restoration of constitutional guarantees, torn down by public officials of western Pennsylvania who have sworn to uphold the Constitution. Revolutionists? I went into a strikers' meeting in Homestead, and Joseph Cannon, an organizer and one of the orators of the American labor movement, was speaking. "Men," he was saying,

we want you to have eight hours so you can learn English. And then you must study American history. Read the Declaration of Independence. Read the history of the American Revolution of George Washington at Valley Forge, his soldiers without shoes in the dead of winter. Read of the hardships they endured and how they fought for liberty. And read of what the foreigners have done to build America. Why, men, did you know that 75 per cent of Washington's soldiers were foreigners? That 50 per cent of the men who fought to end the slavery of the black man in 1861 were foreign born? In every war America has ever had, the foreigner has played his part and has kept Old Glory flying.

You should have heard the thunder of applause. I stood where I could see the men's faces. Foreign-born they were for the most part, Slavic in origin almost altogether, and as they heard this appeal to American tradition every man stood the straighter, and the expression on every face was that of men who felt a kinship with the soldiers of Valley Forge.

These are the men whom it is proposed to "Americanize" as a remedy for industrial unrest. The best way to do that, I think, will be to Americanize their working conditions and their local government, so that they may have time for thinking and time and opportunity to hold such meetings as those they are holding now. Not since 1892 had there been such meetings in Homestead.

While in Pittsburgh, I heard about a great speech made at a strikers' meeting by a Pole. Someone who was there wrote it down for me. It was probably this immigrant's first public speech in the English language and it was something of a struggle; but he had something which had to be said.

"Mr. Chairman," he said. "Mr. Chairman—just like horse and wagon. Put horse in wagon, work all day. Take horse out of wagon—put in stable. Take horse out of stable, put in wagon. Same way like mills. Work all day. Come home—go sleep. Get up—go work in mills—come home. Wife say, 'John, children sick. You help with children.' You say, 'Oh, go to hell'—go sleep. Wife say, 'John, you go town.' You say, 'No'—go sleep. No know what the hell you do. For why this war? For why we buy Liberty bonds? For mills? No, for freedom and America—for everybody. No more horse and wagon. For eight-hour day."

Questions

1. How do the striking workers understand economic freedom?
2. Why do you think that in some instances, native-born and immigrant workers adopted different attitudes toward the strike?

CHAPTER 20

From Business Culture to Great Depression: The Twenties, 1920–1932

128. André Siegfried on the "New Society," from the *Atlantic Monthly* (1928)

Source: André Siegfried, "The Gulf Between," *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 141 (March 1928), pp. 289–95.

André Siegfried, a Frenchman who had visited the United States five times since the beginning of the century, commented in 1928 that American life had changed radically during the previous thirty years. A "new society," he wrote, came into being, in which Americans considered their "standard of living" a "sacred acquisition, which they will defend at any price." In this new "mass civilization," widespread acceptance of going into debt to purchase consumer goods had replaced the values of thrift and self-denial, central to nineteenth-century notions of upstanding character. Work, once seen as a source of pride in craft skill or collective empowerment via trade unions, now came to be valued as a path to individual fulfillment through consumption and entertainment. Siegfried considered the economy "sound" (a judgment soon to be disproven by the advent of the Great Depression), but