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The War to End War, 1917–1918

It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war.

Woodrow Wilson, War Message, April 2, 1917

Prologue: The United States maintained a shaky neutrality for more than two years after war engulfed Europe in the summer of 1914. In practice, however, U.S. policies favored the Allies (chiefly Britain and France) against Germany and Austria-Hungary (the Central Powers). Facing ultimate starvation, the Germans finally proclaimed a desperate all-out campaign of submarine warfare in January 1917. As U.S. merchant ships were torpedoed on the high seas, Wilson reluctantly asked for a declaration of war. With a substantial minority dissenting, Congress agreed. War mobilization proceeded in the United States with unprecedented emotional fervor, deliberately cultivated by the government. Civil liberties were endangered, and "pacifists" were harassed. Wilson eventually rallied public opinion with his fourteen-point peace proposal, and U.S. troops made a significant military contribution in the final days of fighting. But Wilson proved incapable of securing congressional approval of the peace treaty he had helped to negotiate.

A. War with Germany

1. President Wilson Breaks Diplomatic Relations (1917)

After stern warnings from President Wilson, Germany generally avoided sinking unresisting passenger ships without warning. But in March 1916 a German submarine torpedoed a French liner, the Sussex, *and caused some eighty casualties, including injuries to several Americans. Wilson indignantly presented an ultimatum to Berlin threatening a severance of diplomatic relations—an almost certain prelude to war—unless Germany discontinued these inhumane tactics. The Germans reluctantly acquiesced. Finally, however, driven to the wall by the British blockade, they dramatically announced, on January 31, 1917, the opening of unrestricted submarine warfare on virtually all ships plying the war zone, including U.S. vessels.*

[1] *Congressional Record,* 64th Cong., 2d sess. (February 3, 1917), pp. 2578–2579.

Wilson, whose hand had now been called, went sorrowfully before Congress to deliver this speech. Was he naive or idealistic? Was he hasty in accepting the German U-boat challenge?

I think that you will agree with me that, in view of this [submarine] declaration . . . this Government has no alternative, consistent with the dignity and honor of the United States, but to take the course which . . . it announced that it would take. . . .

I have, therefore, directed the Secretary of State to announce to His Excellency the German Ambassador that all diplomatic relations between the United States and the German Empire are severed. . . .

Notwithstanding this unexpected action of the German Government, this sudden and deeply deplorable renunciation of its assurances, given this Government at one of the most critical moments of tension in the relations of the two governments, I refuse to believe that it is the intention of the German authorities to do in fact what they have warned us they will feel at liberty to do. I cannot bring myself to believe that they will indeed pay no regard to the ancient friendship between their people and our own, or to the solemn obligations which have been exchanged between them, and destroy American ships and take the lives of American citizens in the willful prosecution of the ruthless naval program they have announced their intention to adopt. Only actual overt acts on their part can make me believe it even now.

If this inveterate confidence on my part in the sobriety and prudent foresight of their purpose should unhappily prove unfounded—if American ships and American lives should in fact be sacrificed by their naval commanders in heedless contravention of the just and reasonable understandings of international law and the obvious dictates of humanity—I shall take the liberty of coming again before the Congress, to ask that authority be given me to use any means that may be necessary for the protection of our seamen and our people in the prosecution of their peaceful and legitimate errands on the high seas. I can do nothing less. I take it for granted that all neutral governments will take the same course.

We do not desire any hostile conflict with the Imperial German Government. We are the sincere friends of the German people, and earnestly desire to remain at peace with the Government which speaks for them. We shall not believe that they are hostile to us unless and until we are obliged to believe it; and we purpose nothing more than the reasonable defense of the undoubted rights of our people.

We wish to serve no selfish ends. We seek merely to stand true alike in thought and in action to the immemorial principles of our people which I sought to express in my address to the Senate only two weeks ago—seek merely to vindicate our right to liberty and justice and an unmolested life. These are the bases of peace, not war. God grant we may not be challenged to defend them by acts of willful injustice on the part of the Government of Germany!

[Wilson first undertook to arm U.S. merchantmen against the submarines ("armed neutrality"). When this tactic failed and German U-boats began to sink U.S. vessels, he again went before Congress, on April 2, 1917. Referring principally to these sinkings, he asked for a formal resolution acknowledging the fact that Germany had "thrust" war on the United States. "We have no quarrel with the German people," he declared—only with their government. With militaristic forces rampant,

"there can be no assured security for the democratic governments of the world." Hence, "The world must be made safe for democracy." War is "terrible." "But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free."]

2. Representative Claude Kitchin Assails the War Resolution (1917)

Congress responded promptly to Wilson's request for a war resolution. But the lopsided though far-from-unanimous vote—82 to 6 in the Senate and 373 to 50 in the House—revealed a widespread opposition to hostilities, especially in the German American areas. A flaming antiwar speech came from the lips of Claude Kitchin of North Carolina, an eloquent and beloved string-tie congressman, whose outburst produced a deluge of unflattering letters and telegrams. "Go to Germany," demanded one detractor. "They need fertilizer!" Ascertain what truth there was in Kitchin's allegation that Wilson's inconsistent and unneutral policies were taking the nation into war. Did Kitchin deserve to be called pro-German?

Great Britain every day, every hour, for two years has violated American rights on the seas. We have persistently protested. She has denied us not only entrance into the ports of the Central Powers but has closed to us by force the ports of neutrals. She has unlawfully seized our ships and our cargoes. She has rifled our mails. She has declared a war zone sufficiently large to cover all the ports of her enemy. She made the entire North Sea a military area—strewed it with hidden mines and told the neutral nations of the world to stay out or be blown up. We protested.* No American ship was sunk, no American life was destroyed, because we submitted and did not go in. We kept out of war. We sacrificed no honor. We surrendered permanently no essential rights. We knew that these acts of Great Britain, though in plain violation of international law and of our rights on the seas, were not aimed at us. They were directed at her enemy. They were inspired by military necessity. Rather than plunge this country into war, we were willing to forgo for the time our rights. I approved that course then; I approve it now.

Germany declares a war zone sufficiently large to cover the ports of her enemy. She infests it with submarines and warns the neutral world to stay out, though in plain violation of our rights and of international law. We know that these acts are aimed not directly at us but intended to injure and cripple her enemy, with which she is in a death struggle.

We refuse to yield; we refuse to forgo our rights for the time. We insist upon going in.

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[2]*Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 1st sess. (April 5, 1917), pp. 332–333.

*Kitchin was mistaken. The United States did not formally protest against the British mined zone; more than two years later, it merely reserved its rights.

In my judgment, we could keep out of the war with Germany as we kept out of the war with Great Britain, by keeping our ships and our citizens out of the war zone of Germany as we did out of the war zone of Great Britain. And we would sacrifice no more honor, surrender no more rights, in the one case than in the other. Or we could resort to armed neutrality, which the President recently urged and for which I voted on March 1.

But we are told that Germany has destroyed American lives while Great Britain destroyed only property. Great Britain destroyed no American lives because this nation kept her ships and her citizens out of her war zone which she sowed with hidden mines.

But are we quite sure that the real reason for war with Germany is the destruction of lives as distinguished from property, that to avenge the killing of innocent Americans and to protect American lives war becomes a duty?

Mexican bandits raided American towns, shot to death sleeping men, women, and children in their own homes. We did not go to war* to avenge these deaths. . . .

We were willing to forgo our rights rather than plunge this country into war while half the world was in conflagration. I approved that course then; I approve it now.

Why can we not, why should we not, forgo for the time being the violation of our rights by Germany, and do as we did with Great Britain, do as we did with Mexico, and thus save the universe from being wrapped in the flames of war?

I have hoped and prayed that God would forbid our country going into war with another for doing that which perhaps under the same circumstances we ourselves would do.

B. The War for the American Mind

1. Un-Christlike Preachers (1918)

Ministers of the gospel, swallowing Allied propaganda and falling prey to the wartime hysteria, engaged in un-Christian excesses. "It is religious to hate the Kaiser," declared the Reverend James R. Day, chancellor of Syracuse University, "because the Bible teaches us to hate the Devil and all his works." Less elegantly, a prominent Baptist pastor in Cleveland cried, "To hell with the Kaiser!" Here a prominent Methodist bishop and author, Dr. William A. Quayle, pays his disrespects to Germany in a magazine article. Did he accept Wilson's view that the United States was fighting only Germany's rulers?

Let us set down sternly that we are at war with the Germans, not the Junkers [German aristocrats], not autocracy, not Prussianism, not the Kaiser. . . . The German people is what we war with. The German people is committing the unspeakable horrors which set the whole world aghast. The German people is not and has not been conducting war. It is and has been conducting murder. Hold fast to that. The

*Technically, the United States did not go to war, but Wilson sent General Pershing into Mexico in 1916–1917 to pursue the bandit Villa.

[1]*Northwestern Christian Advocate*, quoted in *Literary Digest* 59 (October 19, 1918): 28.

Supreme Court of New York declared the sinking of the *Lusitania* an act of piracy. Piracy is not war. All decencies, honors, humanities, international agreements, and laws have been smashed by them day and night from the first rape of Belgium to now. The new atrocity which appeared this week was spraying prisoners with burning oil. This is Germany's most recent jest. It makes them laugh so!

They have violated every treaty with the United States; they have lied from start to finish and to everybody. A treaty was a scrap of paper.* . . .

Germany has ravished the women of Belgium, Servia, Roumania, Poland, Armenia. Germany murdered the passengers of the *Lusitania* and struck a medal to celebrate that German triumph, dating it two days before the horrible occurrence. Germany has ruined cathedrals and cities in sheer wanton fury, in such fashion as has not been done in all the wars waged in Europe since the days of the building of the cathedrals. Germany has poisoned wells, crucified inhabitants and soldiers, burned people in their houses, and this by system. Germany has denatured men and boys, has wantonly defaced the living and the dying and the dead. An eye-witness tells of seeing women dead at a table with their tongues nailed to the table and left to die.

Germany has stolen things little and big: playthings from children, finery from women, pictures of incalculable worth, bank-deposits, railroads, factories. Germany has sunk hospital-ships, has bombed hospitals and Red Cross camps. Germany has disclosed neither decency nor honor from the day it started war, nor has a single voice in Germany to date been lifted up against the orgies of ruthlessness which turn the soul sick and which constitute the chief barbarity of history. Germany remains unblushing and unconscious of its indecency. Germany's egotism still struts like a Kaiser. And to climax its horrid crimes, Germany has inflicted compulsory polygamy on the virgins of its own land.

[If such tales were given currency by well-educated clergymen schooled in Christian forbearance, one can hardly blame rank-and-file Americans for believing the same accounts. Actually there were cases of rape and violence affecting civilians on both sides; the Germans were involved to a greater extent because they fought almost the entire war on enemy territory. The Lusitania *medal was struck off* after *the sinking; the story of the "crucified Canadian" was a complete hoax; the French cathedral at Rheims was damaged after the towers had been used for military observation. The rest of this account reflects an uncritical belief in the thoroughly unreliable stories in the Bryce report in Chapter 29.]*

2. Abusing the Pro-Germans (1918)

The several million enemy aliens in the United States were under suspicion, especially those who did not buy Liberty Bonds. One of them was Robert Paul Prager, a young German residing in Illinois. He had tried to enlist in the navy but was

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*The phrase "scrap of paper" became one of the great propaganda weapons of the war. The German chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, had defended Germany's invasion of Belgium in 1914 by referring to the treaty of 1839 guaranteeing Belgian neutrality as a "scrap of paper."

[2]Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker* (1931), vol. 2, pp. 162–163.

rejected because he had lost an eye. After he had spoken out for socialism, he was seized by a drunken mob in 1918, stripped of his clothes, wrapped in an American flag, and hanged. A patriotic jury acquitted the ringleaders. This was the worst outrage of its kind, but another almost occurred, as Secretary of War N. D. Baker related in the following letter. What does it reveal of the American state of mind at this time? Why was such an incident much less likely to occur in World War II?

The spirit of the country seems unusually good, but there is a growing frenzy of suspicion and hostility toward disloyalty. I am afraid we are going to have a good many instances of people roughly treated on very slight evidence of disloyalty. Already a number of men and some women have been "tarred and feathered," and a portion of the press is urging with great vehemence more strenuous efforts at detection and punishment. This usually takes the form of advocating "drum-head courts-martial"* and "being stood up against a wall and shot," which are perhaps none too bad for real traitors, but are very suggestive of summary discipline to arouse mob spirit, which unhappily does not take time to weigh evidence.

In Cleveland a few days ago a foreign-looking man got into a street car and, taking a seat, noticed pasted in the window next to him a Liberty Loan poster, which he immediately tore down, tore into small bits, and stamped under his feet. The people in the car surged around him with the demand that he be lynched, when a Secret Service man showed his badge and placed him under arrest, taking him in a car to the police station, where he was searched and found to have two Liberty Bonds in his pocket and to be a non-English Pole. When an interpreter was procured, it was discovered that the circular which he had destroyed had had on it a picture of the German Emperor, which had so infuriated the fellow that he destroyed the circular to show his vehement hatred of the common enemy. As he was unable to speak a single word of English, he would undoubtedly have been hanged but for the intervention and entirely accidental presence of the Secret Service agent.

I am afraid the grave danger in this sort of thing, apart from its injustice, is that the German Government will adopt retaliatory measures. While the government of the United States is not only not responsible for these things, but very zealously trying to prevent them, the German Government draws no fine distinctions.

3. Robert La Follette Demands His Rights (1917)

Senator Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin—undersized, pompadoured, and fiery—was one of the most eloquent reformers of his generation. Representing a state with a heavy concentration of German Americans, he had spoken out vehemently against war with Germany and had voted against it. He and his five dissenting colleagues were pilloried in the press as traitors for voting their consciences. On October 6, 1917, La Follette rose and quoted (from the press) a charge to a federal grand jury in Texas by a district judge. The jurist reportedly had said that these six senators ought to be convicted of treason and shot. "I wish I could pay for the ammunition," he continued. "I would like to attend the execution, and if I were in the firing squad I would not want to be the

*Originally a hasty court-martial in the field, around a drum as a table.

[3]*Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 1st sess. (October 6, 1917), pp. 7878–7879.

marksman who had the blank shell." La Follette then went on to present this classic defense of free speech. Why was free speech so severely threatened in this particular war?

But, sir, it is not alone Members of Congress that the war party in this country has sought to intimidate. The mandate seems to have gone forth to the sovereign people of this country that they must be silent while those things are being done by their Government which most vitally concern their well-being, their happiness, and their lives.

Today—for weeks past—honest and law-abiding citizens of this country are being terrorized and outraged in their rights by those sworn to uphold the laws and protect the rights of the people. I have in my possession numerous affidavits establishing the fact that people are being unlawfully arrested, thrown into jail, held incommunicado for days, only to be eventually discharged without ever having been taken into court, because they have committed no crime. Private residences are being invaded, loyal citizens of undoubted integrity and probity arrested, cross-examined, and the most sacred constitutional rights guaranteed to every American citizen are being violated.

It appears to be the purpose of those conducting this campaign to throw the country into a state of terror, to coerce public opinion, to stifle criticism, and suppress discussion of the great issues involved in this war.

I think all men recognize that in time of war the citizen must surrender some rights for the common good which he is entitled to enjoy in time of peace. *But, sir, the right to control their own Government, according to constitutional forms, is not one of the rights that the citizens of this country are called upon to surrender in time of war.*

Rather, in time of war, the citizen must be more alert to the preservation of his right to control his Government. He must be most watchful of the encroachment of the military upon the civil power. He must beware of those precedents in support of arbitrary action by administrative officials which, excused on the plea of necessity in wartime, become the fixed rule when the necessity has passed and normal conditions have been restored.

More than all, the citizen and his representative in Congress in time of war must maintain his right of free speech. More than in times of peace, it is necessary that the channels for free public discussion of governmental policies shall be open and unclogged.

I believe, Mr. President, that I am now touching upon the most important question in this country today—and that is the right of the citizens of this country and their representatives in Congress to discuss in an orderly way, frankly and publicly and without fear, from the platform and through the press, every important phase of this war; its causes, the manner in which it should be conducted, and the terms upon which peace should be made. . . .

I am contending for this right, because the exercise of it is necessary to the welfare, to the existence, of this Government, to the successful conduct of this war, and to a peace which shall be enduring and for the best interest of this country. . . .

Mr. President, our Government, above all others, is founded on the right of the people freely to discuss all matters pertaining to their Government, in war not less than in peace. . . . How can that popular will express itself between elections except by meetings, by speeches, by publications, by petitions, and by addresses to the representatives of the people?

Any man who seeks to set a limit upon those rights, whether in war or peace, aims a blow at the most vital part of our Government. And then as the time for election approaches, and the official is called to account for his stewardship—not a day, not a week, not a month, before the election, but a year or more before it, if the people choose—they must have the right to the freest possible discussion of every question upon which their representative has acted, of the merits of every measure he has supported or opposed, of every vote he has cast and every speech that he has made. And before this great fundamental right every other must, if necessary, give way, for in no other manner can representative government be preserved.

4. Zechariah Chafee Upholds Free Speech (1919)

The socialists, many of whom were antiwar, ran afoul of the Espionage Act of 1917. Prominent among them was Rose Pastor Stokes, a Russian-born Jew who had worked in the United States as a cigar maker and who became a prominent social worker and propagandist for socialism. Referring to U.S. soldiers, she remarked that they were "not fighting for democracy but for the protection and safeguarding of Morgan's millions." In a letter to the Kansas City Star *she wrote: "No government which is for the profiteers can also be for the people, and I am for the people, while the Government is for the profiteers." She was sentenced to ten years in prison, although a higher court later reversed the decision. President Wilson approved of her original conviction. Professor Zechariah Chafee, Jr., of the Harvard Law School, a prominent liberal, made the following comments on these espionage cases shortly after the war ended. How did he support his assumption that the suppression of free speech can be self-defeating and dangerous in the long run?*

Never in the history of our country, since the Alien and Sedition Laws of 1798, has the meaning of free speech been the subject of such sharp controversy as today. Over two hundred prosecutions and other judicial proceedings during the war, involving speeches, newspaper articles, pamphlets, and books, have been followed since the armistice by a widespread legislative consideration of bills punishing the advocacy of extreme radicalism. . . .

The courts have treated opinions as statements of fact, and then condemned them as false because they differed from the President's speech or the resolution of Congress declaring war. They have made it impossible for an opponent of the war to write an article or even a letter in a newspaper of general circulation, because it will be read in some training camp where it might cause insubordination, or interfere with military success. He cannot address a large audience, because it is liable to include a few men in uniform; and some judges have held him punishable if it contains men between eighteen and forty-five; while Judge Van Valkenburgh, in *United States* v. *Rose Pastor Stokes,* would not even require that, because what is said to mothers, sisters, and sweethearts may lessen their enthusiasm for the war, and "our armies in the field and our navies upon the seas can operate and succeed only so far as they are supported and maintained by the folks at home." . . .

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[4]*Harvard Law Review* 32 (June 1919): 923–933, 965, 971–973.

Although we have not gone so far as Great Britain in disregarding constitutional guarantees, we have gone much farther than in any other war, even in the Civil War, with the enemy at our gates. Undoubtedly some utterances had to be suppressed. We have passed through a period of danger, and have reasonably supposed the danger to be greater than it actually was, but the prosecutions in Great Britain during a similar period of peril in the French Revolution have not since been regarded with pride.

Action in proportion to the emergency was justified, but we have censored and punished speech which was very far from direct and dangerous interference with the conduct of the war. The chief responsibility for this must rest, not upon Congress, which was content for a long period with the moderate language of the Espionage Act of 1917, but upon the officials of the Department of Justice and the Post Office, who turned that statute into a drag-net for pacifists, and upon the judges who upheld and approved this distortion of law.

It may be questioned, too, how much has actually been gained. Men have been imprisoned, but their words have not ceased to spread. The poetry in *The Masses* was excluded from the mails only to be given a far wider circulation in two issues of the *Federal Reporter*. The mere publication of Mrs. Stokes' statement in the Kansas City *Star,* "I am for the people and the Government is for the profiteers," was considered so dangerous to the morale of the training camps that she was sentenced to ten years in prison, and yet it was repeated by every important newspaper in the country during the trial. There is an unconscious irony in all suppression. . . .

Those who gave their lives for freedom would be the last to thank us for throwing aside so lightly the great traditions of our race. Not satisfied to have justice and almost all the people with our cause, we insisted on an artificial unanimity of opinion behind the war. Keen intellectual grasp of the President's aims by the nation at large was very difficult when the opponents of his idealism ranged unchecked, while the men who urged greater idealism went to prison. In our efforts to silence those who advocated peace without victory, we prevented at the very start that vigorous threshing out of fundamentals which might to-day have saved us from a victory without peace.

C. The Propaganda Front

1. George Creel Spreads Fear Propaganda (c. 1918)

George Creel—a young, dynamic, but tactless journalist—headed the nation's great propaganda engine, the Committee on Public Information. He not only prepared documentary movies and unleashed tens of thousands of orators but also issued some 75 million copies of pamphlets. He also employed a galaxy of distinguished historians and other scholars to prepare these propaganda booklets, many of them in paper covers of red, white, and blue. One title, How the War Came to America, *enjoyed a*

[1]J. S. P. Tatlock, *Why America Fights Germany,* War Information Series no. 15, Cantonment Edition (U.S. Committee on Public Information, March 1918), pp. 9–10.

fantastic distribution of 7 million copies. Professor J. S. P. Tatlock, a Chaucer specialist at Stanford University, wrote the following highly imaginative account, inspired in part by Allied propaganda like the Bryce report (see Chapter 29). Distributed as a part of a pamphlet entitled Why America Fights Germany, *it boasted a circulation of about 750,000 copies. To what emotions does it appeal most strongly?*

Now let us picture what a sudden invasion of the United States by these Germans would mean; sudden, because their settled way is always to attack suddenly.

First, they set themselves to capture New York City. While their fleet blockades the harbor and shells the city and the forts from far at sea, their troops land somewhere near and advance toward the city in order to cut its rail communications, starve it into surrender, and then plunder it.

One body of from 50,000 to 100,000 men lands, let us suppose, at Barnegat Bay, New Jersey, and advances without meeting resistance, for the brave but small American army is scattered elsewhere. They pass through Lakewood, a station on the Central Railroad of New Jersey. They first demand wine for the officers and beer for the men. Angered to find an American town does not contain large quantities of either, they pillage and burn the post office and most of the hotels and stores. Then they demand $1,000,000 from the residents. One feeble old woman tries to conceal $20 which she has been hoarding in her desk drawer; she is taken out and hanged (to save a cartridge). Some of the teachers in two district schools meet a fate which makes them envy her. The Catholic priest and Methodist minister are thrown into a pig-sty, while the German soldiers look on and laugh. Some of the officers quarter themselves in a handsome house on the edge of the town, insult the ladies of the family, and destroy and defile the contents of the house.

By this time some of the soldiers have managed to get drunk; one of them discharges his gun accidentally, the cry goes up that the residents are firing on the troops, and then hell breaks loose. Robbery, murder, and outrage run riot. Fifty leading citizens are lined up against the First National Bank Building, and shot. Most of the town and the beautiful pinewoods are burned, and then the troops move on to treat New Brunswick in the same way—if they get there.

This is not just a snappy story. It is not fancy. The general plan of campaign against America has been announced repeatedly by German military men. *And every horrible detail is just what the German troops have done in Belgium and France.*

2. Woodrow Wilson Versus Theodore Roosevelt on the Fourteen Points (1918)

President Wilson's war-aims speeches were lofty and eloquent but rather vague and long-winded. An American journalist in Russia suggested that he compress his views into crisp, placardlike paragraphs. This he did in his famed Fourteen Points address to Congress on January 8, 1918. By promising independence (self-determination) to minority groups under enemy rule and by raising up hopes everywhere for a better

[2]*Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 2d sess. (January 8, 1918), p. 691, and *Kansas City Star*, October 30, 1918. The full text may also be found in Ralph Stout, ed., *Roosevelt in the Kansas City "Star"* (1921), pp. 241–242, 243–246.

tomorrow, the Fourteen Points undermined the foe's will to resist while simultaneously inspiring the Allies. George Creel's propaganda machine broadcast the points in leaflet form throughout the world, while Allied rockets and shells showered them over enemy lines. German desertions multiplied. Form some judgment as to whether Wilson's aims were completely clear and consistent. Determine which ones would be most likely to weaken the resistance of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The frustrated Colonel Roosevelt fulminated against the Fourteen Points in the Kansas City Star. *Given that before 1917 he had been anti-Wilson, pro-tariff, anti-German, pro-Ally, and internationalist-minded, what are the most important inconsistencies in his position?*

Wilson's Points

I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

[Wilson finally meant secret negotiations but public commitments. He had earlier laid himself open to criticism by landing the marines in Haiti and Santo Domingo in 1915 and 1916 to restore order.]

II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action [of the League of Nations] for the enforcement of international covenants.

[Big-navy Britain, fearing to blunt its blockade weapon, refused to accept this point.]

III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers, and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace, and associating themselves [in the League of Nations] for its maintenance.

[This meant, although not too clearly put, that the United States could still maintain tariffs but could not discriminate among fellow members of

Roosevelt's Complaints

The President has recently waged war on Haiti and San Domingo, and rendered democracy within these two small former republics not merely unsafe, but non-existent. He has kept all that he has done in the matter absolutely secret. If he means what he says, he will at once announce what open covenant of peace he has openly arrived at with these two little republics, which he has deprived of their right of self-determination.

It makes no distinction between freeing the seas from murder, like that continually practiced by Germany, and freeing them from blockade of contraband merchandise, which is the practice of a right universally enjoyed by belligerents, and at this moment practiced by the United States. Either this proposal is meaningless, or it is a mischievous concession to Germany.

The third point promises free trade among all the nations, unless the words are designedly used to conceal President Wilson's true meaning. This would deny to our country the right to make a tariff to protect its citizens, and especially its workingmen, against Germany or China or any other country. Apparently this is desired on the ground that the incidental domestic disaster to this country will prevent other countries

Wilson's Points	Roosevelt's Complaints
the League of Nations. Any commercial favors granted to one fellow member would automatically be extended to all.]	from feeling hostile to us. The supposition is foolish. England practiced free trade and yet Germany hated England particularly. . . .
IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety. *[This meant a force no larger than necessary to control domestic disorders and prevent foreign invasion.]*	Either this is language deliberately used to deceive, or else it means that we are to scrap our army and navy, and prevent riot by means of a national constabulary, like the state constabulary of New York or Pennsylvania.
V. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all [wartime] colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that, in determining all such questions of sovereignty, the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the Government whose title is to be determined. *[German colonies captured by Britain and Japan might be returned, if this course seemed "equitable."]*	Unless the language is deliberately used to deceive, this means that we are to restore to our brutal enemy the colonies taken by our allies while they were defending us from this enemy. The proposition is probably meaningless. If it is not, it is monstrous.
VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory [inhabited by Russians], and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy, and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations, under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind. . . . *[Wilson had in mind having the German invader evacuate Russian territory, and helping the Russian Poles and other non-Russian nationalities to*	Point VI deals with Russia. It probably means nothing, but if it means anything, it provides that America shall share on equal terms with other nations, including Germany, Austria, and Turkey [the Central Powers], in giving Russia assistance. The whole proposition would not be particularly out of place in a college sophomore's exercise in rhetoric.

Wilson's Points **Roosevelt's Complaints**

achieve self-determination. He would also lend a helping hand to the new Bolshevik government.]

VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

[Germany, disregarding a neutrality treaty of 1839, had struck through Belgium at France in 1914. The warminded Roosevelt at first approved this act as one of military necessity, but he soon changed his views. The word "restored" in Point VII implied that the Germans would be assessed an indemnity for the damage they had done.]

Point VII deals with Belgium and is entirely proper and commonplace.

VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

[Wilson intended that Alsace-Lorraine, seized by Prussia (Germany) in 1871, should be returned to France.]

Point VIII deals with Alsace-Lorraine and is couched in language which betrays Mr. Wilson's besetting sin—his inability to speak in a straightforward manner. He may mean that Alsace and Lorraine must be restored to France, in which case he is right. He may mean that a plebiscite must be held, in which case he is playing Germany's evil game.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

[Wilson would extend "self-determination" to nearby Italian peoples not under the Italian flag.]

Point IX deals with Italy, and is right.

Wilson's Points

X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

[This point raised difficulties because of the quarreling minorities of the "succession states" that rose from the ruins of Austria-Hungary.]

XI. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

[This point was also invalidated by the "succession states," including Yugoslavia, which embraced Serbia.]

XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

[Wilson's ideal was self-determination for the Greeks, Armenians, Arabs, and other non-Turks in the Turkish empire, much of whose land became mandates of France and Britain under the League of Nations.]

Roosevelt's Complaints

Point X deals with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and is so foolish that even President Wilson has abandoned it.

[Wilson later stressed independence rather than local autonomy.]

Point XI proposes that we, together with other nations, including apparently Germany, Austria, and Hungary, shall guarantee justice in the Balkan Peninsula. As this would also guarantee our being from time to time engaged in war over matters in which we had no interest whatever, it is worth while inquiring whether President Wilson proposes that we wage these wars with the national constabulary to which he desired to reduce our armed forces.

Point XII proposes to perpetuate the infamy of Turkish rule in Europe, and as a sop to the conscience of humanity proposes to give the subject races autonomy, a slippery word which in a case like this is useful only for rhetorical purposes.

Wilson's Points	Roosevelt's Complaints
XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant. *[Poland was to be restored from the territory of Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary, despite injustices to German and other minorities.]*	Point XIII proposes an independent Poland, which is right; and then proposes that we guarantee its integrity in the event of future war, which is preposterous unless we intend to become a military nation more fit for overseas warfare than Germany is at present.
XIV. A general association [League] of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike. In regard to these essential rectifications of wrong and assertions of right, we feel ourselves to be intimate partners of all the governments and peoples associated together against the Imperialists. We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end.	In its essence Mr. Wilson's proposition for a League of Nations seems to be akin to the Holy Alliance of the nations of Europe a century ago, which worked such mischief that the Monroe Doctrine was called into being especially to combat it. If it is designed to do away with nationalism, it will work nothing but mischief. If it is devised in sane fashion as an addition to nationalism and as an addition to preparing our own strength for our own defense, it may do a small amount of good. But it will certainly accomplish nothing if more than a moderate amount is attempted, and probably the best first step would be to make the existing league of the Allies a going concern.

D. The Face of War

1. General John Pershing Defines American Fighting Tactics (1917–1918)

Generals, it has often been said, have a habit of fighting the previous war—a maxim to which jut-jawed General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force, was no exception. Pershing had studied Civil War tactics at West Point in the late nineteenth century and saw no reason why they should not be

[1]John J. Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1931), vol. 1, pp. 150–154; vol. 2, p. 358.

applied in France in the twentieth century. He expressed criticism bordering on contempt for the French and British fascination with fixed, entrenched warfare. Pershing insisted, therefore, that U.S. troops be trained in battle techniques different from those offered to European troops. This approach contributed to appallingly high U.S. casualty rates when the American soldiers, or "doughboys," eventually entered combat. How does Pershing here defend his tactical preferences? What factors might have motivated him to adopt them?

The most important question that confronted us in the preparation of our forces of citizen soldiery for efficient service was training. Except for the Spanish-American War, nearly twenty years before, actual combat experience of the Regular Army had been limited to the independent action of minor commands in the Philippines and to two expeditions into Mexico, each with forces smaller than a modern American division. The World War involved the handling of masses where even a division was relatively a small unit. It was one thing to call one or two million men to the colors, and quite another thing to transform them into an organized, instructed army capable of meeting and holding its own in the battle against the best trained force in Europe with three years of actual war experience to its credit.

Few people can realize what a stupendous undertaking it was to teach these vast numbers their various duties when such a large percentage of them were ignorant of practically everything pertaining to the business of the soldier in war. First of all, most of the officer personnel available had little or no military experience, and had to be trained in the manifold duties of commanders. They had to learn the interior economy of their units—messing, housing, clothing, and, in general, caring for their men—as well as methods of instruction and the art of leading them in battle. This great task was, of course, under the direction of the War Department. . . .

The British methods of teaching trench warfare appealed to me very strongly. They taught their men to be aggressive and undertook to perfect them in hand-to-hand fighting with bayonet, grenade and dagger. A certain amount of this kind of training was necessary to prepare the troops for trench warfare. Moreover it served to stimulate their morale by giving them confidence in their own personal prowess. Through the kindness of Sir Douglas Haig [commander in chief of the British army in France], we were fortunate early in our experience to have assigned to us Lieutenant General R. H. K. Butler and other officers of the British Army in addition to French officers to assist in this individual training. Later, several French and British officers also came to lecture at a number of our schools.

We found difficulty, however, in using these Allied instructors, in that the French and, to a large extent, the British, had practically settled down to the conviction that developments since 1914 had changed the principles of warfare. Both held that new conditions imposed by trench fighting had rendered previous conceptions of training more or less obsolete and that preparation for open warfare was no longer necessary. . . .

If the French doctrine had prevailed our instruction would have been limited to a brief period of training for trench fighting. A new army brought up entirely on such principles would have been seriously handicapped without the protection of the trenches. It would probably have lacked the aggressiveness to break through the enemy's lines and the knowledge of how to carry on thereafter. It was my

opinion that the victory could not be won by the costly process of attrition, but it must be won by driving the enemy out into the open and engaging him in a war of movement. Instruction in this kind of warfare was based upon individual and group initiative, resourcefulness and tactical judgment, which were also of great advantage in trench warfare. Therefore, we took decided issue with the Allies and, without neglecting thorough preparation for trench fighting, undertook to train mainly for open combat, with the object from the start of vigorously forcing the offensive. . . .

For the purpose of impressing our own doctrine upon officers, a training program was issued which laid great stress on open warfare methods and offensive action. The following is a pertinent extract from my instructions on this point:

> The above methods to be employed must remain and become distinctly our own. All instruction must contemplate the assumption of a vigorous offensive. This purpose will be emphasized in every phase of training until it becomes a settled habit of thought.

Intimately connected with the question of training for open warfare was the matter of rifle practice. The earliest of my cablegrams on this subject was in August, in which it was urged that thorough instruction in rifle practice should be carried on at home because of the difficulty of giving it in France:

> Study here shows value and desirability of retaining our existing small arms target practice course. In view of great difficulty in securing ranges in France due to density of the population and cultivation. Recommend as far as practicable the complete course be given in the United States before troops embark. Special emphasis should be placed on rapid fire.

The armies on the Western Front in the recent battles that I had witnessed had all but given up the use of the rifle. Machine guns, grenades, Stokes mortars, and one-pounders had become the main reliance of the average Allied soldier. These were all valuable weapons for specific purposes but they could not replace the combination of an efficient soldier and his rifle. Numerous instances were reported in the Allied armies of men chasing an individual enemy throwing grenades at him instead of using the rifle. Such was the effect of association that continuous effort was necessary to counteract this tendency among our own officers and men and inspire them with confidence in the efficacy of rifle fire. . . .

My view was that the rifle and bayonet still remained the essential weapons of the infantry, and my cables, stressing the fact that the basic principles of warfare had not changed, were sent in an endeavor to influence the courses of training at home. Unfortunately, however, no fixed policy of instruction in the various arms, under a single authority, was ever carried out there. Unresponsive to my advice, the inclination was to accept the views of French specialists and to limit training to the narrow field of trench warfare. Therefore, in large measure, the fundamentals so thoroughly taught at West Point for a century were more or less neglected. The responsibility for the failure at home to take positive action on my recommendations in such matters must fall upon the War Department General Staff.

There were other causes . . . that led to confusion and irregularity in training to such an extent that we were often compelled during the last stages of the war to send men into battle with little knowledge of warfare and sometimes with no rifle practice at all. . . .

[On September 5, 1918, Pershing issued the following instructions to his army, then preparing for its first major battle at St. Mihiel.]

Combat Instructions (Extract)

From a tactical point of view, the method of combat in trench warfare presents a marked contrast to that employed in open warfare, and the attempt by assaulting infantry to use trench warfare methods in an open warfare combat will be successful only at great cost. Trench warfare is marked by uniform formations, the regulation of space and time by higher commands down to the smallest details . . . fixed distances and intervals between units and individuals . . . little initiative. . . . Open warfare is marked by . . . irregularity of formations, comparatively little regulation of space and time by higher commanders, the greatest possible use of the infantry's own fire power to enable it to get forward, variable distances and intervals between units and individuals . . . brief orders and the greatest possible use of individual initiative by all troops engaged in the action. . . . The infantry commander must oppose machine guns by fire from his rifles, his automatics and his rifle grenades and must close with their crews under cover of this fire and of ground beyond their flanks. . . . The success of every unit from the platoon to the division must be exploited to the fullest extent. Where strong resistance is encountered, reënforcements must not be thrown in to make a frontal attack at this point, but must be pushed through gaps created by successful units, to attack these strong points in the flank or rear.

2. A "Doughboy" Describes the Fighting Front (1918)

Of the 2 million young American men who served in the American Expeditionary Force, about half saw combat. Many of these troops had been raised on heroic stories about grandfathers and uncles who had fought in the Civil War, and they expected the war in France to provide the same kind of opportunities for glory that their forebears had found at Antietam and Shiloh, Bull Run and Fredericksburg. For the most part, they were bitterly disappointed when they discovered that modern warfare was a decidedly unheroic, dirty, impersonal, and bloody business. The following passages, taken from the battlefield diary of a thirty-one-year-old draftee from upstate New York who was assigned to an engineering company, vividly convey one soldier's reactions to his baptism of fire. What aspects of combat did he find most remarkable? How does his description of warfare fit with General Pershing's expectations about the role of the individual rifleman and the tactics of mobility and "open warfare"?

Thursday, September 12, 1918. Hiked through dark woods. No lights allowed, guided by holding on the pack of the man ahead. Stumbled through underbrush for about half mile into an open field where we waited in soaking rain until about 10:00 P.M. We then started on our hike to the St. Mihiel [France] front, arriving on the crest of a hill at 1:00 A.M. I saw a sight which I shall never forget. It was the zero hour and in one instant the entire front as far as the eye could reach in either direction was a sheet of flame, while the heavy artillery made the earth quake. The barrage was so intense that for a time we could not make out whether the Americans or Germans

[2]From the diary of Eugene Kennedy. Courtesy of Eugene Kennedy Collection, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University.

were putting it over. After timing the interval between flash and report we knew that the heaviest artillery was less than a mile away and consequently it was ours. We waded through pools and mud across open lots into a woods on a hill and had to pitch tents in mud. Blankets all wet and we are soaked to the skin. Have carried full pack from 10:00 P.M. to 2:00 A.M., without a rest. . . . Despite the cannonading I slept until 8:00 A.M. and awoke to find every discharge of 14-inch artillery shaking our tent like a leaf. Remarkable how we could sleep. No breakfast. . . . The doughboys had gone over the top at 5:00 A.M. and the French were shelling the back areas toward Metz. . . . Firing is incessant, so is rain. See an air battle just before turning in.

Friday, September 13, 1918. Called at 3:00 A.M. Struck tents and started to hike at 5:00 A.M. with full packs and a pick. Put on gas mask at alert position and hiked about five miles to St. Jean, where we unslung full packs and went on about four miles further with short packs and picks. Passed several batteries and saw many dead horses who gave out at start of push. Our doughboys are still shoving and "Jerry" [the Germans] is dropping so many shells on road into no man's land that we stayed back in field and made no effort to repair shell-torn road. Plenty of German prisoners being brought back. . . . Guns booming all the time.

Saturday, September 14, 1918. Hiked up to same road again with rifle, belt, helmet, gas-mask, and pick. . . . First time under shell fire. Major Judge's horse killed. Gibbs has a finger knocked off each hand [by a sniper's bullet] while burying some of our men killed in opening drive. Clothing, bandages, equipment of all sorts, dead horses and every kind of debris strewn all over. . . .

Tuesday, September 17, 1918. Rolled packs and hiked with them up to road. Worked near town that is reduced to heap of stone. Trenches are 20 feet deep and in some places 15 feet across. The wire entanglement is beyond description. Several traps left by Germans. Man in our division had his arm blown off picking up a crucifix.

[Along with thousands of other doughboys, Kennedy was soon shifted from the St. Mihiel engagement to the major American battleground a few miles to the north, in the Argonne forest between the Meuse and Aire Rivers. Here he describes his role in this, the largest U.S. action of the war.]

Thursday, October 17, 1918. Struck tents at 8:00 A.M. and moved about four miles to Chatel. Pitched tents on a side hill so steep that we had to cut steps to ascend. Worked like hell to shovel out a spot to pitch tent on. Just across the valley in front of us about two hundred yards distant, there had occurred an explosion due to a mine planted by the "Bosche" [Germans] and set with a time fuse. It had blown two men (French), two horses, and the wagon into fragments. . . . Arriving on the scene we found Quinn ransacking the wagon. It was full of grub. We each loaded a burlap bag with cans of condensed milk, peas, lobster, salmon, and bread. I started back . . . when suddenly another mine exploded, the biggest I ever saw. Rocks and dirt flew sky high. Quinn was hit in the knee and had to go to hospital. . . . At 6:00 P.M. each of our four platoons left camp in units to go up front and throw three foot and one artillery bridge across the Aire River. On way to river we were heavily shelled and gassed. . . . We put a bridge across 75-foot span. . . . Third platoon men had to get into water and swim or stand in water to their necks. The toughest job we had so far.

Friday, October 18, 1918. Bright but cool. Men of third platoon who swam river are drying their clothes. . . . Waiting for night to work under cover of darkness.

Started up front at 6:00 P.M.. . . . Worked one half hour when "Jerry" shelled us so strong that we had to leave job. We could hear snipers' bullets sing past us and had to make our way back carefully along railroad track bank dodging shells every few steps. Gas so thick that masks had to be kept on, adding to the burden of carrying a rifle, pick, shovel, and hand saw. Had to run from one dug-out to another until it let up somewhat, when we made a break for road and hiked to camp about 3 kilometers, gas masks on most of the way, shells bursting both sides of road.

Monday, October 21, 1918. Fragment from shell struck mess-kit on my back. . . . Equipment, both American and German, thrown everywhere, especially Hun helmets and belts of machine gunners. . . . Went scouting . . . for narrow-gauge rails to replace the ones "Jerry" spoiled before evacuating. Negro engineers working on railroad same as at St. Mihiel, that's all they are good for. . . .

Friday, November 1, 1918. Started out at 4:00 A.M. The drive is on. Fritz is coming back at us. Machine guns cracking, flares and Verry lights, artillery from both sides. A real war and we are walking right into the zone, ducking shells all the way. The artillery is nerve racking and we don't know from which angle "Jerry" will fire next. Halted behind shelter of railroad track just outside of Grand Pre after being forced back off main road by shell fire. Trees splintered like toothpicks. Machine gunners on top of railroad bank. . . . "Jerry" drove Ewell and me into a two-by-four shell hole, snipers' bullets close.

Sunday, November 3, 1918. Many dead Germans along the road. One heap on a manure pile. . . . Devastation everywhere. Our barrage has rooted up the entire territory like a ploughed field. Dead horses galore, many of them have a hind quarter cut off—the Huns need food. Dead men here and there. The sight I enjoy better than a dead German is to see heaps of them. Rain again. Couldn't keep rain out of our faces and it was pouring hard. Got up at midnight and drove stakes to secure shelter-half over us, pulled our wet blankets out of mud and made the bed all over again. Slept like a log with all my equipment in the open. One hundred forty-two planes sighted in evening.

Sunday, November 10, 1918. First day off in over two months. . . . Took a bath and we were issued new underwear but the cooties [lice] got there first. . . . The papers show a picture of the Kaiser entitled "William the Lost," and stating that he had abdicated. Had a good dinner. Rumor at night that armistice was signed. Some fellows discharged their arms in the courtyard, but most of us were too well pleased with dry bunk to get up.

E. The Struggle over the Peace Treaty

1. The Text of Article X (1919)

Wilson regarded the League of Nations as the backbone of the Treaty of Versailles, and Article X of the League Covenant, which he had partly authored, as the heart of the League. He envisaged the members of the League constituting a kind of police

[1]*Senate Executive Documents*, 67th Cong., 4th sess. (1923), vol. 8, no. 348, p. 3339.

force to prevent aggression. What weaknesses are contained in the wording of this article?

The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve, as against external aggression, the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression, or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression, the Council shall advise upon the means by which the obligation shall be fulfilled.

[All member nations were represented in the Assembly of the League of Nations; only the great powers (originally Britain, France, Italy, and Japan) were represented in the Council. The same general scheme was adopted by the United Nations in 1945.]

2. Wilson Testifies for Article X (1919)

The already ominous mood of the Senate had grown uglier when Wilson conspicuously snubbed that body in framing the peace. The Republican majority was led by the aristocratic Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, who was also chairman of the potent Committee on Foreign Relations. He was determined to Republicanize and Americanize the pact by adding reservations that would adequately safeguard U.S. interests. To avert such a watering down, Wilson met with the entire Foreign Relations Committee at the White House on August 19, 1919, and underwent about three and a half hours of grilling. Much of the discussion revolved about Article X. How persuasive is Wilson's defense?

[The President.] Article X is in no respect of doubtful meaning, when read in the light of the Covenant as a whole. The Council of the League can only "advise upon" the means by which the obligations of that great article are to be given effect to. Unless the United States is a party to the policy or action in question, her own affirmative vote in the Council is necessary before any advice can be given, for a unanimous vote of the Council is required. If she is a party, the trouble is hers anyhow. And the unanimous vote of the Council is only advice in any case. Each Government is free to reject it if it pleases.

Nothing could have been made more clear to the [Paris] conference than the right of our Congress under our Constitution to exercise its independent judgment in all matters of peace and war. No attempt was made to question or limit that right.

The United States will, indeed, undertake under Article X to "respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League," and that engagement constitutes a very grave and solemn moral obligation. But it is a moral, not a legal, obligation, and leaves our Congress absolutely free to put its own interpretation upon it in all cases that call for action. It is binding in conscience only, not in law.

Article X seems to me to constitute the very backbone of the whole Covenant. Without it the League would be hardly more than an influential debating society. . . .

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[2] *Senate Documents*, no. 76, 66th Cong., 1st sess. (August 19, 1919), vol. 13, pp. 6, 19.

Senator [Warren G.] Harding. Right there, Mr. President, if there is nothing more than a moral obligation on the part of any member of the League, what avail Articles X and XI?

The President. Why, Senator, it is surprising that the question should be asked. If we undertake an obligation we are bound in the most solemn way to carry it out. . . . There is a national good conscience in such a matter. . . .

When I speak of a legal obligation, I mean one that specifically binds you to do a particular thing under certain sanctions. That is a legal obligation. Now a moral obligation is of course superior to a legal obligation, and, if I may say so, has a greater binding force. . . .

[Never too respectful of the "bungalow-minded" members of the Senate, Wilson remarked several days later that Senator Harding, destined to be his successor, "had a disturbingly dull mind, and that it seemed impossible to get any explanation to lodge in it."]

3. The Lodge-Hitchcock Reservations (1919)

Wilson finally agreed to accept mildly interpretative Senate reservations that the other powers would not have to approve. He balked, however, at the more restrictive terms of the fourteen Lodge reservations. These were made a part of the resolution of ratification and would require the assent of three of the four other major powers (Britain, France, Italy, Japan). To Wilson, such a course was unmanly and humiliating; besides, he detested Senator Lodge. He insisted that the Republican Lodge reservations, notably the one on Article X, devitalized the entire treaty. In the following, on the left, appears the Lodge reservation to Article X, which Wilson resentfully rejected. On the right appears the Democratic interpretative reservation, which Senator Hitchcock (the Senate minority leader) had drafted after consulting Wilson. This version Wilson was willing to accept. What are the main differences between the two versions? Are those differences substantial enough to justify Wilson's refusal to accept the Lodge reservation?*

Lodge Reservation to Article X (November 1919)

The United States assumes no obligation to preserve the territorial integrity or political independence of any other country or to interfere in controversies between nations—whether members of the League or not—under the provisions of Article X, or to employ the military or naval forces of the

Hitchcock Reservation to Article X (November 1919)

That the advice mentioned in Article X of the covenant of the League which the Council may give to the member nations as to the employment of their naval and military forces is merely advice which each member nation is free to accept or reject according to the conscience and judgment of

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[3]Reprinted with the permission of Scribner, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group, from *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal* by Thomas A. Bailey. Copyright © 1945 by Thomas A. Bailey, copyright renewed © 1973 by Thomas A. Bailey.

*The Hitchcock reservation follows almost verbatim a reservation that Wilson had himself secretly drafted in September 1919 and on which Hitchcock had based his. Ibid., p. 393.

Lodge Reservation to Article X (November 1919)	Hitchcock Reservation to Article X (November 1919)
United States under any article of the treaty for any purpose, unless in any particular case the Congress, which, under the Constitution, has the sole power to declare war or authorize the employment of the military or naval forces of the United States, shall by act or joint resolution so provide.	its then existing Government, and in the United States this advice can only be accepted by action of the Congress at the time in being, Congress alone under the Constitution of the United States having the power to declare war.

4. The Aborted Lodge Compromise (1919)

Colonel Edward House, Wilson's onetime intimate adviser, had fallen ill and was confined to his bed in New York. Wilson turned to Stephen Bonsal, a distinguished newspaper correspondent who had been attached to the U.S. peace mission in Paris. Bonsal was instructed to go to Washington, confer with Lodge, and ascertain the senator's minimum terms for compromise. The meeting took place late in October 1919, and on November 16 Bonsal recorded the following account of the conference. In what respects does this account qualify the traditional concept of Lodge as a vindictive and uncompromising former Harvard student who was locking horns with Woodrow Wilson, the former professor from Princeton?

The Senator and I went over the [League] Covenant, Article by Article. Here are some of the details. In our final session there was an official copy of the Treaty on the library table, also one of the so-called Lodge Reservations before the Senate but, so far as I can remember, we did not once refer to them. It was on the printed copy of the Covenant that I brought with me that the Senator made the changes and inserted the interlineations which, if accepted, he thought would smooth the way to ratification.

The changes ran to about forty words, the "inserts" to about fifty. It seemed to me they were more concerned with verbiage than with the object and the intent of the instrument. In my judgment, they were complementary to, rather than limiting, any substantial purpose of the Covenant. In this they differed sharply from the Reservations Lodge had introduced into the Senate and which are now blocking the path to ratification.

The Senator, frankly and repeatedly, stated that his interest, or, as he put it several times, his anxiety, centered around Article X, which the President often refers to as the "heart of the Covenant," and his suggestion, indeed his demand, was to the effect that none of the obligations or commitments incurred under this provision should be undertaken without the approval of the Senate and the concurrence of the House.

When Lodge had finished what he had to say, I expressed my pleasure at the helpful collaboration of the chairman of the Committee, and with reason, I think. What he asked for now was decidedly milder than the reservations before the

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[4]Excerpt from *Unfinished Business* by Stephen Bonsal (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1944), pp. 274–275.

Senate, but there was, I ventured to point out, one drawback to any change, even if merely of verbiage, because, in this case, the document would have to be referred back to all the co-signers of the Covenant, and this might open the gates to other changes and would certainly result in delay.

I also ventured to say that the clarification of Article X which he urged was implicit in the Article itself. I argued "it goes without saying," for a variety of obvious reasons, that the sanction of the Senate and the approval of the House, which alone can furnish the money, would have to be forthcoming before aggressive or even defensive action against an aggressor nation could be undertaken.

"If it goes without saying," commented the Senator somewhat tartly, "there is no harm in saying it—and much advantage."

Good-naturedly the Senator now chaffed me about the expression I had used, "it goes without saying," which he thought was a "barbarism." He then went on to express his opinion of the language in which the world charter was drawn, and it was a poor one.

"As an English production it does not rank high." Then, more in chaff than in earnest, he said: "It might get by at Princeton but certainly not at Harvard."

[With high hopes, Colonel House dispatched the new Lodge concessions to the White House. But on October 2, Wilson had suffered a devastating stroke. He was now virtually incapacitated, while his wife, Edith Bolling Galt Wilson, struggled to protect him from further stress. The president therefore offered no reply, no acknowledgment. Perhaps Mrs. Wilson thought the memorandum unimportant—or too important. Wilson might be upset and suffer a relapse. Or Wilson may have decided merely to treat Lodge's proffered hand with the contempt that he felt for the senator. Rebuffed and perhaps humiliated, Lodge now fought even more adamantly for his Fourteen Reservations.]

5. Wilson Defeats Henry Cabot Lodge's Reservations (1919)

The debate in the Senate ended in November 1919, and Lodge was ready for a vote on the Treaty of Versailles with his Fourteen Reservations attached. In general, these reaffirmed the United States' traditional or constitutional safeguards. But Wilson believed that if the odious Lodge reservations were voted down, the treaty would then be approved without "crippling" reservations. Yet the Democrats, now a minority, could not muster a simple majority, much less the two-thirds vote needed to approve a treaty. The naturally stubborn Wilson, shielded from disagreeable realities by his anxious wife, believed that the great body of public opinion was behind him and would prevail. He evidently had not been told, or would not believe, that public opinion was shifting around in favor of reservations. When the Democratic senator Hitchcock suggested compromise, Wilson sternly replied, "Let Lodge compromise." Mrs. Wilson tells the story. How does she describe the president's basic position?

All this time the fight for the reservations to the Covenant of the League was being pressed in the Senate. Deprived of Executive leadership because of the illness

[5]Edith B. Wilson, *My Memoir* (1939), pp. 296–297. Copyright 1938, 1939 by Edith Bolling Wilson.

of my husband, friends of the Treaty were on the defensive. The ground gained on the Western tour had been gradually lost until things were worse than when he started. Friends, including such a valued and persuasive friend as Mr. Bernard M. Baruch, begged Mr. Wilson to accept a compromise, saying "half a loaf is better than no bread." I cannot be unsympathetic with them, for in a moment of weakness I did the same. In my anxiety for the one I loved best in the world, the long-drawn-out fight was eating into my very soul, and I felt nothing mattered but to get the Treaty ratified, even with those reservations.

On November 19th the Senate was to vote on the reservations. Senator Hitchcock came to tell me that unless the Administration forces accepted them, the Treaty would be beaten—the struggle having narrowed down to a personal fight against the President by Lodge and his supporters. In desperation I went to my husband. "For my sake," I said, "won't you accept these reservations and get this awful thing settled?"

He turned his head on the pillow and stretching out his hand to take mine answered in a voice I shall never forget: "Little girl, don't you desert me; that I cannot stand. Can't you see that I have no moral right to accept any change in a paper I have signed without giving to every other signatory, even the Germans, the right to do the same thing? It is not I that will not accept; it is the Nation's honor that is at stake."

His eyes looked luminous as he spoke, and I knew that he was right. He went on quietly: "Better a thousand times to go down fighting than to dip your colours to dishonorable compromise."

I felt like one of his betrayers to have ever doubted. Rejoining Senator Hitchcock outside, I told him that for the first time I had seen the thing clearly and I would never ask my husband again to do what would be manifestly dishonorable. When I went back to the President's room, he dictated a letter to Senator Hitchcock, saying: "In my opinion the resolution in that form [embodying the reservations] does not provide for ratification but rather for nullification of the Treaty. . . . I trust that all true friends of the Treaty will refuse to support the Lodge resolution."

That same day the Senate voted. The Administration forces, voting against ratification *with* the Lodge reservations, defeated it. The vote was then on the ratification of the Treaty without reservations—the Treaty as Mr. Wilson had brought it from France. The result was defeat.

When the word came from the Capitol, I felt I could not bear it and that the shock might be serious for my husband. I went to his bedside and told him the fatal news. For a few moments he was silent, and then he said: "All the more reason I must get well and try again to bring this country to a sense of its great opportunity and greater responsibility."

6. Lodge Blames Wilson (1919)

The crucial vote had come in the Senate on November 19, 1919, when the treaty with the Lodge reservations commanded only 39 yeas to 55 nays. The bulk of the Democrats, heeding Wilson's plea, voted against it. The vote for the treaty without any reservations was 38 yeas to 53 nays. The bulk of the Republicans voted against it.

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[6]J. A. Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1953), p. 379.

Lodge wrote in bitterness as follows to his friend, former Secretary of State Elihu Root. Was he correct in his assessment of the blame?

If Wilson had not written his letter to the Democratic caucus, calling on them to kill the treaty rather than accept the reservations, the treaty would have been ratified on the 19th of November. There would have been enough Democrats voting with us to have done it. It was killed by Wilson. He has been the marplot from the beginning. All the delays and all the troubles have been made by him. . . . We have worked for more than two months over those reservations, and they represent an amount of labor and modification and concession that it would take me a long time to explain to you. He can have the treaty ratified at any moment if he will accept the reservations, and if he declines to do so we are not in the least afraid to meet him at the polls on that issue.

[A shocked public forced the Senate to reconsider the treaty, which now emerged with fifteen revamped Lodge reservations tacked on. Wilson, refusing to budge an inch from his previous position, sent another stern letter to the Democrats in the Senate urging them to vote down the odious package. Lodge, no less stubborn, made it clear that the Senate would have to gag down the treaty with his reservations or there would be no treaty. Faced with naked realities, twenty-one Democrats deserted Wilson and supported ratification. The final vote, on March 19, 1920, was 49 yeas to 35 nays, or 7 votes short of the necessary two-thirds. A total of 23 loyal Democrats voted "nay." Senator Ashurst of Arizona, a "disloyal" Democrat, declared bitterly, "As a friend of the President, as one who has loyally followed him, I solemnly declare to him this morning: If you want to kill your own child because the Senate straightens out its crooked limbs, you must take the responsibility and accept the verdict of history" (Congressional Record, 66th Cong., 2d sess. (March 19, 1920), p. 4164).]

Thought Provokers

1. To what extent were Wilson's own policies to blame for the United States' entry into the war? Could—or should—the confrontation with Germany have been avoided?
2. Why was there more anti-enemy hysteria in the United States in 1917–1918 than during World War II, when the nation was in graver danger? Why did conscientious objectors fare so badly? Why did the government mount such a vigorous propaganda effort?
3. What were Wilson's purposes in announcing the Fourteen Points? Why did the announcement come so late in the war (in January 1918, nine months after U.S. entry)?
4. Were the doughboys well prepared for the war they found in France? What was most surprising about the conditions they encountered?
5. Would the world have been different if the United States had accepted Article X and signed the Treaty of Versailles? In the last analysis, who was more responsible for keeping the United States out of the League of Nations, Wilson or Lodge?