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AMERICA REFORMED



Progressives and Progressivisms
1890s-1920s

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Building the Panama Canal (1906). Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-96773

Vino del mar, a Panamá,
a trabajar en la selva y a construir el Canal.
Le pagaron en plata
al hombre blanco le pagaron en oro
y la fiebre amarilla se llevó el alma de todos.

Mi abuelito fue un hombre, Antillano,
y vivió y murió en Panamá.

Hombre Antillano, quiero reconocer tu
voluntad de hierro, tu sacrificio.
Diste la vida para construir un camino
que uniese a los océanos
dentra del corazón de Panamá.

El tiempo ha transcurrido
pero la discriminación continúa;
debemos trabajar juntos hasta encontrarle
una cura.

Hombre Antillano, vino del Caribe y encontró
una casa y un nuevo comienzo en Panamá.
Mi abuelito fue un hombre, Antillano,
y vivió y murió en Panamá.

He came from the sea, to Panama
to work in the jungle and to build a Canal.
They paid you in silver
and paid the white man in gold
and the yellow fever took the souls of all.

My grandfather was a West Indian man,
and he lived and died in Panama.

West Indian man, I want to recognize your
iron will, your sacrifice.
You gave your life to build a road
that united the oceans
through the heart of Panama.

Time has passed
but discrimination continues;
we have to work together to find
a cure.

West Indian man, came from the Caribbean and found
a home and a new beginning in Panama.
My grandfather was a West Indian man,
and he lived and died in Panama.*

Hombre Antillano by Rubén Blades

In 1914, the first ships passed through the Panama Canal. Opening the canal enhanced the American quest to become the leading economic power in the world. The transcontinental railroad lines had opened overland transport from coast to coast. How to move goods quickly by sea had remained a problem. Now the canal united the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Because the United States also controlled the strip of land along either side of the canal, the so-called Panama Canal Zone, 1914 also culminated almost two decades of the country's efforts to control the Caribbean and perhaps even establish hegemony over economic trade and development from the Canadian border to the tip of Central America and throughout the surrounding waters. Controlling the canal also gave U.S. naval ships unfettered and quick passage between the two coasts and out onto the oceans. But uniting the two oceans also meant, as Rubén Blades put it in his song to his grandfather, expropriating other peoples' lands and exploiting them for the benefit of U.S. development.

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Bringing Democracy to the World

We will not renounce our part in the mission of our race,
trustee, under God, of the civilization of the world.

—SENATOR ALBERT BEVERIDGE, 1900

BEFORE THE END of the nineteenth century, the United States did not have a foreign policy as we would think of it today. Since the time of President Jefferson, the United States had eschewed "entangling" foreign alliances, practicing isolationism rather than foreign affairs. There was tariff policy, but that was developed domestically, not in conjunction with other countries. There were occasional foreign spats through the nineteenth century, including, of course, the War of 1812. Treaties were signed with other countries as the need developed. There had been "incidents" to which the United States had had to respond, as when groups of Americans tried to invade Canada or when several Italian immigrants were lynched in New Orleans in 1891 and there had been a brief severing of diplomatic relations with Italy. The famous "54°40' or fight" sloganeering of the 1844 presidential campaign over the northern border of the United States had ended in a peaceful treaty agreement with England. President Monroe in 1823 had promulgated the "Monroe Doctrine" that warned European powers to refrain from any further ventures into the Western Hemisphere, and conflicts over the southern borders had produced the 1848 war with Mexico. The acquisition of the lower pieces of Arizona and New Mexico with the Gadsden Purchase of 1853 completed the continental United States. That same year, the U.S. Navy, under the command of Admiral Matthew Perry, sailed into Tokyo Bay on a mission to "open" Japan to foreign trade. Since the 1840s, the United States had declared that it had a "special relationship" with the Hawai'ian Islands, a situation developed from the settlement there of white businessmen.

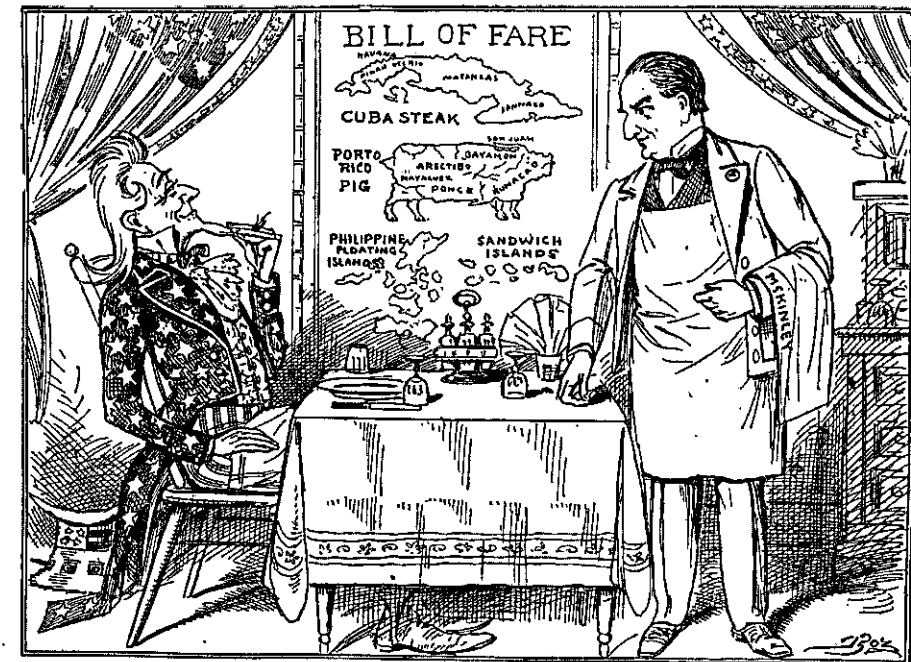
Yet, there was no official foreign policy apparatus inside the State Department. Foreign affairs were largely those incidents to which the United States responded on a need-to basis. In fact, the distinction that nineteenth-century Americans had made between foreign and domestic affairs, and how they thought of foreign affairs, was institutionalized in different cabinet positions: secretary of state, secretary of war, and secretary of the navy. Besides, Americans had been so busy pushing West and building the country that there seemed no need to pay much attention to the rest of the world. Economic growth, however, demanded constant expansion and as the western United States became settled and "civilized," the doctrine of "manifest destiny" that had been formulated to justify conquest of the continental territory offered the possibility of justifying foreign expansion. Bringing democracy to the world became the justification for economic expansion. As white Americans had justified seizing Indian territories to "civilize" these people, they now justified expanding democracy as their motive for colonizing other groups.

In the Progressive Era, strategic foreign expansion and the policy to carry it out were driven by a combination of perceived economic needs, ideas of cultural and racial superiority, and progressive ideas about reforming the world. None of these can be separated from each other, because in every area where the United States moved out into the world, these three elements intertwined.¹ Whether they approved or not of specific foreign policy developments, progressives had to come to terms with the new role America was playing in the world. For some of them, this meant justifying imperialism as a "progressive" movement; for other progressives, it meant recognizing how the United States was now part of a larger world in which the ideas of progressivism ought to be applied internationally.

MOVING THE BOUNDARIES

From 1898 to 1914, the United States engaged in an imperial endeavor outside its continental boundaries. Beginning with the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, the United States had looked upon the Caribbean basin as its own preserve. The western islands of the Caribbean were close to the eastern coast of the United States. Mexico bordered the United States and railroads had linked the two countries by the end of the century. The tiny nations of Central America were only a short distance from the southern United States by boat. The United

1. For overviews and interpretations of the development of U.S. foreign policy, see Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: The United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad Since 1750* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989); *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963; new edition, 1998); and "The 'Lion in the Path': The U.S. Emergence as a World Power," *Political Science Quarterly*, 101:5 (1986): 705-09 for analysis of foreign policy development by the late nineteenth century. See also, Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); Robert L. Beisner, *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900* (New York: Crowell, 1975); Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); and Robert E. Hannigan, *The New World Power: American Foreign Policy, 1898-1917* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

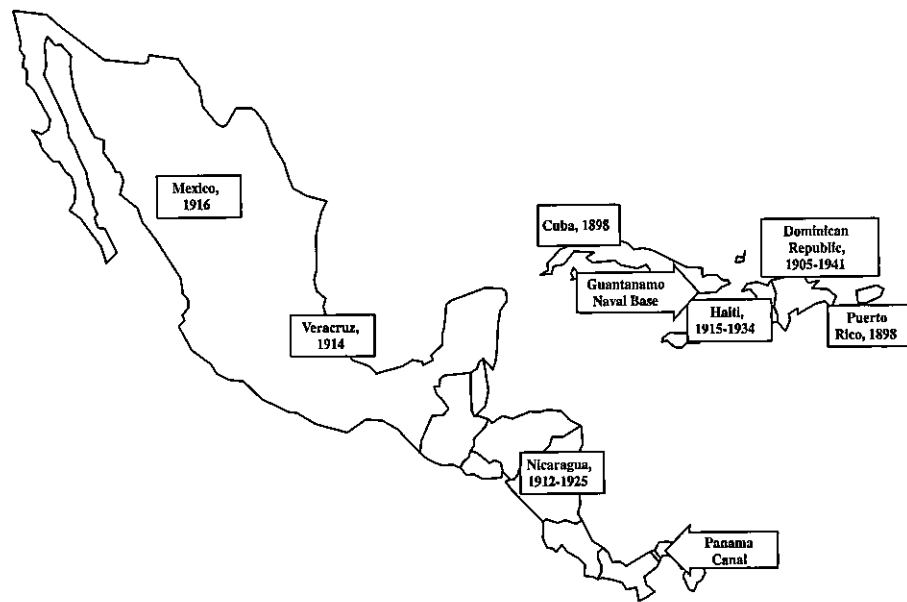


WELL, I HARDLY KNOW WHICH TO TAKE FIRST!

McKinley Gobbles It Up: Cuba Steak, Porto Rico Pig, Philippine Floating Islands (1898)
Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-55890

States coveted the natural resources of the entire area: from sugar and tropical fruits to oil and coal. A stable Caribbean region would make it possible to exploit these resources for American production and would assure easy access to much of South America for goods produced in the United States. Roadblocks to U.S. desires, however, were European control of many Caribbean islands and indigenous revolutions there. Opportunity for change came with the insurrection of Cubans against Spanish rule in 1898. Using the explosion aboard the U.S. warship, *The Maine*, in Havana Harbor as a pretext for entering the insurrection on the side of the Cubans, a combination of U.S. military and Cuban insurgency defeated the Spaniards within a few months. Having won the "splendid little war,"² declared in support of the Cuban people's right to democratic freedom, the United States now had to construct a peace. Annexation was clearly out of the question, so the United States neatly finessed the question with the 1901 Platt Amendment to the peace treaty. With the amendment,

2. I am going to avoid using any name for this war. American historians comfortably called it the Spanish-American war for decades, but this designation has been challenged because it does not recognize that the United States also practiced war against the peoples it colonized. At its most expansive, it has lately been referred to as the Spanish-American-Filipino-Cuban-Puerto Rican War.



Caribbean Incursions, 1898–1941

Cuba agreed to accept limitations to its diplomatic and financial relations with other countries, gave the United States the right to intervene in its affairs when necessary to preserve order on the island, and leased Guantánamo to the United States for a naval base. Puerto Rico came in the bargain: the autonomous government that had been established by its citizens' rebellion against Spain was abolished, the island was thereafter declared a U.S. territory, and its residents were granted U.S. citizenship in 1917. Spaniards living on the island, on the other hand, had been granted immediate citizenship, a reflection of the racial thinking that was in vogue during the Progressive Era.³

Despite this consolidation of U.S. interests in Cuba and Puerto Rico, the Caribbean basin remained unstable. Unrest in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Mexico, for example, threatened U.S. interests. Across the following years, the United States sent troops into these areas to restore order. At times the United States even took control of a country's assets, as was the case with the Dominican Republic in 1905: from 1916 to 1922, the Department of the Navy actually governed that country. The building of the Panama Canal was the crowning jewel in dominating the Caribbean and securing the area for American commerce.⁴

3. The lease to Guantánamo was renewed in 1934 and can only be abrogated with the consent of both countries. Thus, the United States maintains its presence on Cuban soil to this day. For Puerto Rico, see Michael González-Cruz, "The U.S. Invasion of Puerto Rico: Occupation and Resistance to the Colonial State, 1898 to the Present," *Latin American Perspectives*, 25 (September 1998): 7–26.

4. Samuel P. Hays, *The Response to Industrialism, 1885–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 174, and Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877–1919* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), 174.

On the Pacific side of the country, American sugar plantation owners who had settled in Hawai'i pressured Congress to annex the islands permanently to the United States in order to guarantee economic stability for business interests. In 1893, these businessmen—aided by a landing force of U.S. sailors and marines—seized control of the islands from Queen Lili'uokalani. Congress was reluctant to annex the islands and inclined toward heeding the petitions for independence submitted to it by the Hawai'ian Patriotic Leagues (one male, one female). In the wake of other events in 1898, however, President McKinley succeeding in securing passage of legislation permanently annexing them. Two years later, Hawai'i was declared a territory of the United States. Unlike the rhetoric that would surround the coming conquest of the Philippines, the reasons for annexing Hawai'i were bluntly economic: "We need Hawaii just as much and a great deal more than we did California. It is manifest destiny," President McKinley declared.⁵

Before he resigned his position as assistant secretary of the Navy to be commissioned in the military and bring his "Rough Riders" to Cuba, Theodore Roosevelt launched an initiative to seize the Philippines from Spain. U.S. commercial ships needed ports in Pacific islands where they could refuel for their long journeys across that ocean. Annexing Hawai'i was a stepping-stone across the Pacific.⁶ If Spain could be ousted from its possessions in that part of the world, a piecemeal approach to secure commerce in the Pacific would no longer be necessary. Admiral George Dewey, commander of the Pacific Fleet, quickly defeated the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. The United States took control of the Philippines, and along with them secured the other Spanish possession of Guam, an island located between Hawai'i and the Philippines. The Philippines were officially annexed to the United States in 1899. Ideas about race were prominent in arguments about this act of imperialism. Filipinos were declared ignorant, barbaric, degenerate, and semicivilized people whose seven-year rebellion against American occupation was "proof" that they were incapable of self-government. Mark Twain, always the satirist but this time with an edge of despair, wrote of the Philippines:

Extending the Blessings of Civilization to our Brother who Sits in Darkness has been a good trade and has paid well. . . . But the "Blessings of Civilization" ("JUSTICE, CHRISTIANITY, EDUCATION. . . and so on") are just an outside cover. . . . The real contents (the "Actual Thing") of Western civilization are the poverty of New York slums and the slaughter in South Africa and the Philippines, where "Civilization" was being resisted. . . . Is there no salvation for us but to adopt Civilization and lift ourselves down to its level?⁷

5. Copies of the 556-page petitions with more than 21,000 signatures of native Hawai'ians are preserved at the National Archives and Records Administration, in Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group 46. McKinley quoted in Painter, *Standing at Armageddon*, 150.

6. The United States occupied the uninhabited Midway Islands in 1867; it negotiated a treaty with Germany in 1899 to occupy half of the Samoan islands, including the port of Pago Pago, which is now called American Samoa.

7. Mark Twain, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," *The North American Review* (February 1901), quoted in Painter, *Standing at Armageddon*, 156.

The ultimate target of Pacific expansion was Asia. Despite the obvious cynicism of the old adage penned by nineteenth-century French author Alphonse Karr, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" ("the more things change, the more they stay the same"), when it comes to China the adage holds a certain truth. At the turn to the twentieth century, China was viewed as an enormous marketplace, just as it is today. But European powers already controlled large portions of China, and Japan was moving in as well. To confront the China "problem," U.S. Secretary of State John Hay proposed to these various powers the "Open Door Policy" under which all nations would have a right to free trade with China. Although no one replied affirmatively to this initiative, Hay simply declared that his proposal had been accepted. In the wake of a nationalist uprising in China—the so-called Boxer Rebellion—and fearing Russian encroachment into China, President McKinley in 1900 sent 55,000 U.S. troops into China to help quell the rebellion. From that point, the United States became inextricably bound up in Asian affairs. When President Roosevelt brokered the peace to the Russo-Japanese War (for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize), he further altered the political and economic landscape of Asia. The following year a treaty between the United States and Japan gave the latter a free hand in Korea in exchange for the former's control of the Philippines.⁸

The final frontier of U.S. foreign policy in the early years of the century was a detente of sorts with England. Despite ongoing friction between the United States and England since the revolutionary era, now leading politicians and businessmen in both countries were speaking of a common political, cultural, and economic heritage that made the two countries natural allies. England had been the predominant world power, controlling an empire that stretched across every continent. But its resources were stretched thin trying to maintain the empire, and the United States was looking to overtake it as the world's economic powerhouse. As the two countries were being drawn closer together economically, their individual foreign actions influenced one another. When Secretary of State Hay informed the British of U.S. intentions to go to war against Spain, England replied that it would be "guided [on Cuban issues] by the wishes of the President."⁹ Similarly, the United States maintained a neutral stance during the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa (1899–1902), even though much popular opinion sided with the Boers as defenders of their liberty against British economic imperialism. What else could the United States do? If it criticized British policy in South Africa, it would leave itself wide open for criticism of its policies in the Caribbean and Pacific.¹⁰

Moreover, Britain and the United States were in the process of signing treaties of agreement and noninterference in each other's affairs. In the 1901 Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, for instance, Britain acknowledged the rights of the United States to build the Panama Canal. In return, the United States agreed to provide equal access to the canal for ships of all nations. When the Taft admin-

8. Hays, *The Response to Industrialism*, 180–81.

9. Thomas Paterson, "United States Intervention in Cuba, 1898: Interpretations of the Spanish-American-Cuban-Filipino War," *The History Teacher*, 29 (May 1996): 341–61, quote from 344.

10. Richard B. Mulanax, *The Boer War in American Politics and Diplomacy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994).

istration mandated lower tolls for U.S. ships, England vigorously protested that this violated the treaty. The Wilson government had to deal with this protest and convinced Congress to repeal this legislation. But U.S. relations with England were not just over the canal and that particular treaty. Wilson believed it imperative to satisfy England on this issue because England was unhappy with U.S. involvement in Mexican affairs that had begun in the Taft administration. Repeal of exemptions for American ships, Wilson hoped, would solidify Anglo-American relations.¹¹

EXPANSIONISM AND PROGRESSIVISM

This imperial expansionism was driven by a combination (and some might say a perversion) of progressive ideas. Imperialism was an extension of the movement to order and regulate society, economics, and government. The mission of civilization that had rationalized treatment of Native Americans now was internationalized and applied to people throughout the world. Regulation of other societies, many Americans now believed, would make the world more orderly for Americans. The urge to foster everlasting opportunity and progress for the American people and for American capitalism underlay all foreign policy development. Historians have at times tried to disentangle the various elements of progressivism from one another in domestic as well as foreign developments.¹² In the end, the development and implementation of foreign policy up to and including World War I exposes how American ideas of capitalism and democracy were becoming inextricably linked in the minds of so many people. The progressive urge to save capitalism by lessening its worst aspects would now be put into play around the world. Not all progressives agreed with this linkage, nor with expansionism. But behind this new imperialism lay many of their ideas.

1. Order, Regulation, and the World Economy

By 1900, the United States dominated the world market in production of items ranging from petroleum and agricultural machinery to sewing machines and cameras. Its foreign investments rose dramatically from \$700 million in 1897 to \$2.5 billion in 1908; and again to \$3.5 billion by 1914. By 1913, U.S. businesses controlled 78 percent of the silver, lead, and copper mines in Mexico, as well as 58 percent of its oil production. Total U.S. investment in Mexico alone was approaching \$1 billion.¹³

American interests in this new international marketplace needed protection from the vicissitudes of laissez-faire policies in the same way that regulation

11. Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson: The New Freedom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956), 304–12, gives an extensive accounting of the canal toll issue.

12. See Daniel Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History*, 10 (December 1982): 113–32, for an excellent discussion of why not to try to discern one element of "progressivism" in any of the era's reform movements.

13. LaFeber, "The 'Lion in the Path,'" 711, and Painter, *Standing at Armageddon*, 285.

and order had been needed for domestic production and markets. The 1912 Progressive Party platform had declared it "imperative to the welfare of our people that we enlarge and extend our foreign commerce." This statement was meant to bolster the platform's plank for two new battleships a year—hence the disillusionment of some of the women at the convention—and clearly signified that leading progressive men intended to use military power to regulate foreign relations. Theodore Roosevelt railed against President Taft for not intervening in Mexico to protect U.S. oil interests there. When Mexican revolutionaries overthrew the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz and threatened American interests there, progressive followers of Roosevelt's New Nationalism called for massive intervention in order to "defend property and order against revolutionary chaos." When U.S. ships invaded the port of Veracruz in 1914, these progressive imperialists thought the action was insufficient. They rejoiced when Wilson finally sent the army into Mexico in 1916 under General "Black Jack" Pershing. Herbert Croly's 1909 book, *The Promise of American Life*, encapsulated why these progressives believed in the need to order and regulate the world:

The American nation, just in so far as it believes in its nationality and is ready to become more of a nation, must assume a more definite and a more responsible place in the international system. . . . In all probability no American international system will ever be established without the forcible pacification of one or more centers of disorder. . . . The United States has already made an effective beginning in this great work both by the pacification of Cuba and by the attempt to introduce a little order into the affairs of the turbulent Central American countries.

Croly's additional remark that the work had also been helped along by having a strong dictator in Mexico would presage the progressive support for U.S. intervention policies that would stabilize governments and economies in the Caribbean across the coming years.¹⁴ In the same way, President Wilson would be able to draw many progressives into supporting U.S. entry into World War I, that "European" conflict. Patriotic nationalism demanded international interventionism to secure an orderly world and to defeat any forces that threatened to disrupt this order.

Ordering world affairs cannot be separated out from economic interests, of course. Because so many progressives had connected economic prosperity to progress on the domestic scene, it made sense to some of them to practice it internationally. While in office, President Taft consciously practiced "Dollar Diplomacy": if something on the international scene benefitted U.S. economic interests, his administration pursued it. The expansion of state-centered power as an aspect of progressive ideas about a domestic political economy, thus, was brought into foreign policy. New Nationalist Republicans, following Roosevelt's lead, envisioned this as bringing order and stability to the world of property and

14. See Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 42–43; and William Leuchtenberg, "Progressivism and Imperialism: The Progressive Movement and American Foreign Policy, 1898–1916," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 39 (December 1952): 483–504. Croly quoted 501–02, from Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1909), 209, 302–03.

economics. Other progressives, however, remained so focused on specific social problems that they paid little attention to foreign developments outside their area of interest. Right up to the moment that war erupted in August 1914, progressives working on housing reform, urban planning, workmen's compensation, etc., were traveling in Europe. They thought more about being "citizens of the progressive world" than about international expansionism. In their minds, social politics overshadowed nationalist politics, and it is probably true that these progressives did not have "an economic understanding of the path to war deep enough." When war broke out they were genuinely surprised and hard-pressed to understand why it had happened.¹⁵

2. Expansion as Progress

Seeing expansion as an aspect of ordering and regulating the United States only partially accounts for the foreign policy pursued during the Progressive Era. Progress was becoming defined also as pushing American ideas and American values out into the world.

Moralism

An element of moral superiority underlying Progressive Era foreign policy sometimes coincided with, sometimes fought against, involvement in other countries' affairs. Assessments that Woodrow Wilson and William Jennings Bryan believed themselves to be "missionaries of democracy," or that both Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson were "Christian moralists," are correct. And, as with most missionaries, these men believed in their own righteousness. It has been said of Wilson and Bryan that they were "inspired by the confidence that they knew better how to promote the peace and well being of other countries than did the leaders of those countries themselves." Such language had already been used in 1904 when Roosevelt promulgated his Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, claiming for the United States the right to exercise international police power to end chronic unrest or wrongdoing in the Western Hemisphere. Roosevelt had couched his so-called Roosevelt Corollary in moralistic terms:

All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. . . . It is a mere truism to say that every nation, whether in America or anywhere else, which desires to maintain its freedom, its independence, must ultimately realize that the right of such independence can not be separated from the responsibility of making good use of it.

15. Cyrus Veaser, *Dollar Diplomacy and America's Rise to Global Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Dawley, *Changing the World*, 102–03; and Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 268–75, quotes, 268 and 275. See also, Emily S. Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

In making the case for this interventionism, Roosevelt was referring to the United States as helping Cuba to become a "just and stable civilization" through the Platt Amendment.¹⁶

Wilson also spoke in moralistic terms when dealing with Mexico. When revolutionaries seized the Mexican government in 1913, he refused to follow the traditional practice of recognizing whatever government was in place. For Wilson, it was an immoral government, installed through revolution and violence. Despite pleas of railroad and oil interests that recognition and non-interference would protect U.S. economic interests in Mexico, he withheld recognition for all of 1913 and into 1914 while trying to force the Mexican government to hold new elections. Wilson did not believe that Mexicans were incapable of better self-government, as some of those Americans with economic interests in Mexico believed. "When properly directed," he said, "there is no people not fitted for self-government." Yet he justified his interference in Mexican affairs by saying that "I do not hold that the Mexican people are at present as capable of self-government as other people—ours for example." Secure in his own moral righteousness, Wilson believed it was his duty to bring better government to Mexico. When a minor incident involving an American warship gave Wilson the excuse to order U.S. marines and sailors to occupy the port city of Veracruz, he was so certain of his position's morality that he was surprised when the Mexicans seemed to forget their internecine quarrels and turned on the American invaders.¹⁷ On a sliding scale of one to ten as to how negative were the ideas of progressive moralism—ten being the most negative—Wilson's can probably be judged at about a three. His deep roots in Protestantism—his father was a minister—had imbued him with a messianic sensibility. This does not excuse his paternalistic moralism toward other groups of people, but the genesis of such moralism was in social gospel progressivism. As the religious-based morality of the social gospel had preached attaining the Kingdom of God on earth for the United States, Wilson now sought to bring the Kingdom of God to the entire world.¹⁸

Mission of Civilization

Other progressives turned foreign policy into a mission to civilize other people by conquering them, such as had been the idea behind "civilizing" the Native Americans. As with Native Americans, the idea of civilizing them generally meant taking their land and occupying them more for U.S. benefit than for their own. The sardonic Mark Twain had a quip for this tendency also: "There must be two Americas: one that sets the captive free and one that takes a once-captive's new freedom away from him."¹⁹

16. Dawley, *Changing the World*, 79; Link, *The New Freedom*, 278; President Theodore Roosevelt, "Annual Message to Congress," December 6, 1904.

17. Link, *The New Freedom*, 394.

18. See John Morton Blum, *Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1956) and Malcolm D. Magee, "Above the Mountains of the Earth: The American Presbyterian Roots of Woodrow Wilson's Foreign Policy" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 2004).

19. Twain quoted in Dawley, *Changing the World*, 18.

The first articulation of this policy came with the occupation of the Philippines after the "splendid little war" ended in 1898. Senator Albert Beveridge was a fervent progressive whose causes included the abolition of child labor, the eight-hour day for labor, and government regulation of corporations. Beveridge also ardently supported annexing the Philippines, providing instructive example of how an arch-progressive could also promote imperialism by drawing upon the former crusades to justify the latter through an amalgam of racist ideology, ideas about the greatness of American democracy, and economic progress. As soon as Spain surrendered in 1898, Congress debated whether to occupy or to leave the Philippines. Beveridge immediately opted for occupation: "The opposition tells us that we ought not to rule a people without their consent. I answer, the rule of liberty, that all just governments derive their authority from the consent of the governed, applies only to those who are capable of self-government," he declared in a public speech. Two years later, in the midst of the Filipino uprising against the occupation, Beveridge again compared the Filipino people to children not capable of self-government, but now he went a bit further: "They are not capable of self-government. How could they be? They are not of a self-governing race. They are Orientals, Malays . . ." His racial thinking, messianic belief in American democracy, and the ideas of progress all came tumbling out in this speech:

Mr. President, this question is . . . elemental. It is racial. God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-contemplation and self-administration. No! He has made us the master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns. . . . And of all our race He has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America . . . We are trustees of the world's progress.

The average American may not have heard Beveridge's speeches, but a concrete vision was presented to the visitors to the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. The exhibit dedicated to the Philippines there was intended to show that Filipinos were not yet ready for self-government.²⁰

Populist crusader Bryan challenged Beveridge's ideas of a divine mission of civilization in his speech to the Democratic Convention of 1900. "If true Christianity consists of carrying out in our daily lives the teachings of Christ," he declared, "who will say that we are commanded to civilize with dynamite and proselyte with the sword?"²¹ Yet, Bryan's entire speech shows that he was most concerned that imperialism would benefit big business and would impose intolerable military burdens on farmers and workers to maintain an empire. After several upheavals in the Caribbean, Bryan, as secretary of state

20. Leuchtenberg, "Progressivism and Imperialism," 484 for first Beveridge quote. Beveridge speech from *Congressional Record*, 56th Cong., 1st Sess., 704-12. See also, George F. Becker, "Conditions Requisite to Our Success in the Philippine Islands," address delivered before the American Geographical Society, February 20, 1901, *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* (1901): 112-23 for similar ideas; and Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 227 for discussion of the 1904 Fair.

21. William Jennings Bryan, *Speeches* (New York, 1909).

under Wilson, even gave up his anti-imperialist stance. He supported intervention in Latin American countries in order to be a benevolent tutor in the arts of self-government to backward people.²² Other progressives responded less enthusiastically to imperialist conquest and intervention, but many of them shared the common belief that other groups of people were not yet ready to assume responsibility for their own progress, let alone contribute to the progress of the world.

The Panama-Pacific International Exhibition, held in 1915 in San Francisco to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal, clearly represented the idea of expansion as progress. The locations of three major exhibitions held in the United States from 1876 to 1915 metaphorically celebrated the expansion of the continental United States: from Philadelphia to Chicago to San Francisco, the United States was complete from coast to coast.²³ The San Francisco Exhibition, held in a city on the rim of the Pacific, also celebrated the U.S. extension out into the world. The 1915 Exhibition transformed the 1893 Exposition's "Court of Honor" into the "Court of the Universe" on which western, but particularly American, progress was displayed. In other regards, the layout remained the same as before so that the hierarchy of civilization was clear to everyone attending. One of the main entrances to the exhibition led along the Avenue of Progress, where the visitor could admire the "Palaces" of Mining and Metallurgy, Machinery, and Varied Industries. Another main entrance led into the "Court of the Universe" surrounded by the Agriculture, Liberal Arts, Manufactures, and Transportation "Palaces." The Panama Building was relegated to a small distant pavilion on a street named Cortez Way. Whether intentional or not, locating the Panama Building on a street named for a sixteenth-century European conqueror fittingly captured the American sense of western progress over lesser peoples.

"Americanizing" White Manhood

The connection of Americanism to racial ideals was quickly applied to foreign policy. It is easy to imagine that first in line to articulate this idea was Theodore Roosevelt. When the Filipinos revolted against occupation, Roosevelt urged a vigorous response to the conflict in a speech to a men's club in Chicago:

We cannot avoid the responsibilities that confront us in Hawaii, Cuba, Porto [sic] Rico, and the Philippines. . . . I preach to you, then, my countrymen, that our country calls not for the life of ease but for the life of strenuous endeavor. The twentieth century looms before us big with the fate of many nations. If we stand idly by, if we seek merely swollen, slothful ease and ignoble peace, if we shrink from the hard contexts where men must win at hazard of their lives and at the risk of all they hold dear, then the bolder and stronger peoples will pass us by, and will win for themselves the domination of the world.

Vigor, courage, strenuous work were the attributes of American manhood in Roosevelt's eyes. He and other like-minded Americans also compared this vigorous manhood against that of the men of the new colonies. Social geographer George Becker likened Filipinos to adolescents: "Any close observer finds among them a lack of the sense of responsibility and an absence of settled

22. See also, Dawley, *Changing the World*, 80–81.

23. The 1904 St. Louis Fair celebrated the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase.

principles of action not dissimilar to those with which we are familiar among American boys in their teens."²⁴

Unlike Roosevelt, Becker was not an admirer of war. He and others who considered themselves progressives, however, justified imperialism by thinking about benevolent progress as brought to the world by the United States. This caused them, either consciously or unconsciously, to construct a mental image of occupied peoples as lesser human beings. The fact that the Cubans themselves had not only rebelled against Spain but had played a significant role in the success of their insurrection was all but ignored by the press and leading political figures at the time. American will and willingness to fight and die were celebrated as the cause of victory and the reason for America's growing dominance in the world. The press portrayed the Cuban rebels sympathetically. They were courageous men revolting against the despicable Spaniards, but the American military was depicted as rushing to their rescue. Most accounts at the time would also neglect to mention how many of the U.S. military in Cuba were African Americans and Native Americans. Four black units of the regular army were among the first troops readied for the Cuban campaign. Rather ironically, these were units that had been used in the west to subdue Native Americans.²⁵ But Roosevelt's flamboyance and gift for self-promotion—he was even given the honorific thereafter of "Colonel" after his 1898 exploits—attracted the American press in Cuba to report on his exploits more than those of the regular army.

Roosevelt had also had a hand in trying to build a "white" army, by which is meant not just skin color but ideals of white manhood. In his personal account of his exploits he explained how he had filled the Rough Riders with men from the West and Southwest, those who came from the areas of the country "most recently won over to white civilization." Following his theory of "hybridity" he mixed in with them men from other European backgrounds and some mixed-blood Indians. He refused to admit any Asian or African American volunteers to the Rough Riders. Moreover, the "honor" of American manhood was invoked to justify war in 1898, just as it would be in 1914 when Wilson intervened in Mexico. Senator Beveridge even argued that it was government's purpose to "manufacture manhood." Empire was the new frontier that could build character among (white) American men.²⁶

24. Speech of Theodore Roosevelt to Chicago, 1899, printed in Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (New York: The Century Company, 1903); and Becker, "Conditions Requisite to Our Success in the Philippine Islands," 116. But see also, Chapter 12 of this book for the different perspective of an American woman living in Mexico at the time.

25. Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., "Black Americans and the Quest for Empire, 1898–1903," *Journal of Southern History*, 38 (November 1972), 547. Thanks to Dawn Ottevaere for pointing me to this essay.

26. For invaluable insight into the aspect of manhood and Cuba and the Philippines, see Kristen L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998). Theodore Roosevelt, *The Rough Riders* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), 22–23, quoted in Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 27–28. See also, Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). For Cubans, see Louis A. Pérez, *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). Albert Beveridge, *The Young Man and the World* (New York: Appleton, 1905), 338.

The building of the Panama Canal, as Rubén Blades sang about it, depicts this racial understanding of manliness and imperialism. Building the canal was dangerous, unhealthy work. Yellow fever epidemics had plagued its progress from the start and had contributed to a French company abandoning the initial attempts to build a canal. Despite medical advances in understanding the causes of the fever, the canal construction company took few chances of an epidemic among American workers. It employed many Caribbean men to do the actual hard work while white men did the supervising. Caribbean men were considered less "manly" in other regards: their labor was not equal to that of "white" men. As Blades correctly wrote, white men were paid in gold; Caribbean men in silver. Silver was worth half as much as gold. So, the land and the men of the Caribbean were exploited for American progress, and the people there were not deemed as valuable as were "whites." The United States could claim that it was bringing democracy to the world, but once again democracy was not equal for everyone, nor did it accord equal recognition to the work, sacrifices, and hopes of other people. As Blades recounted it: his grandfather went to make a new life in Panama. He helped build the canal. He and other Caribbeans lived and died in Panama, but their contributions to "progress" have rarely been recognized.²⁷

PROGRESSIVE INTERNATIONALISM

Not all progressives welcomed imperialism. A group of Bostonians founded the Anti-Imperialist League in late 1898. Within a year its membership reached 30,000. Anti-imperialism was the glue of the league, but it meant different things to its different members. On the one hand, there were those members who objected to having anything to do with people of different "races." Many other anti-imperialists were concerned with the undemocratic nature of imperialism, not only with how it was being practiced, but also that it would harm democracy in the United States. In a letter to Susan B. Anthony, Senator George Hoar (R-MA) feared that "the sense of justice and righteousness and the love of liberty which abolished slavery . . . and gave citizenship and suffrage to the colored people seems dead." Some suffragists compared the Filipino people's struggle for freedom to American women demanding suffrage: both were yearning for democratic equality and freedom. Other suffragists were anti-imperialists because they opposed war as brutal and undemocratic. Jane Addams was in the forefront of such anti-imperialism. Introducing her series of essays that were published as *Newer Ideals of Peace*, she consigned war to an outmoded and unreformed way of acting in the world that did not consider the lessons of collective global responsibility that progressivism was preaching. She also implicitly attacked the linkages being made between imperialism, war, and manhood.

We are much too timid and apologetic in regard to this newer humanitarianism, and do not yet realize what it may do for us in the way of courage and endurance.

27. For exploitation of Caribbean men, see Dawley, *Changing the World*, 90-91. See also, Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*.

We continue to defend war on the ground that it stirs the nobler blood and the higher imagination of the nation, and thus frees it from moral stagnation and the bonds of commercialism. We do not see that this is to borrow our virtues from a former age and to fail to utilize our own.

Robert LaFollette remained a fervent anti-imperialist who saw war, aggression, and conquest as part of capitalism's attempt to conquer democracy. When President Wilson repudiated a major loan agreement negotiated with the assistance of the J.P. Morgan Company with a consortium that wished to build a railroad in China, he rejoiced with this "rejection of Dollar Diplomacy. Humanity is to be placed higher than property in our international affair."²⁸

Addams and LaFollette, indeed most anti-imperialists, were internationalists, not isolationists. They had a very keen sense of the connections of the United States in the world and believed that progressivism was a worldwide cause. Many American progressives recognized that a multitude of problems facing their own society were part of a worldwide system, the defects of which could be resolved by regulating the marketplace economy, practicing mutuality and collectivism across national borders, and spreading democratic principles. They did not believe that expansionism was the means for reforming the conditions of the world. This sense of internationalism drove them to construct international progressive networks.

For African American progressives, internationalism and imperialism were difficult issues to confront. On the one hand, participation in the 1898 war was seen as a chance to prove both black manhood and black citizenship. Supporting the Cuban insurgency also presented the opportunity to free the "non-white" population of Cuba from white oppressors. On the other hand, anti-imperialist African Americans argued that because they were oppressed at home they had no business fighting for someone else's freedom before their own. The fact that the army was racially segregated also rankled even those African Americans who supported the war as their civic duty. The call for a Pan-African Conference to be held in England in the summer of 1900 to bring together people of African descent everywhere in the world presented African Americans with a new way to confront imperialism. W.E.B. DuBois and black Americans responded, joining delegates from Africa, North and South America, and the West Indies at this conference. DuBois drafted the conference "Address to the Nations of the World" and he declared "race uplift" to be a "progressive doctrine." Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and the writer Anna Julia Cooper who attended the 1900 Conference, both also saw the position of African Americans as part of a worldwide problem. As DuBois articulated it, the position of African Americans was "but a local phase of a world problem." Speaking in terms that would have been recognized by any progressive, DuBois asserted

28. Kristen Hoganson, "As Badly-Off as the Filipinos: U.S. Women's Suffragists and the Imperial Issue at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Women's History*, 13 (Summer 2001): 9-33, 13 for Hoar; Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 26-27; for LaFollette, Link, *The New Freedom*, 286, originally from *LaFollette's Weekly*, 5 (March 29, 1913), 1. For an illuminating comparison of the peace ideas of William James and Jane Addams, see Linda Schott, "Jane Addams and William James on Alternatives to War," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (April 1993): 241-54.

that the "color line" of imperialism merely "transferred the reign of commercial privilege and extraordinary profit from the exploitation of the European working class to the exploitation of backward races under the political domination of Europe." When war came to Europe, he again saw its imperial and racial implications. He charged that the white working class was being encouraged to support the war to show their superiority to the lesser peoples of the world.²⁹

For other progressives, preoccupation with social politics, as mentioned earlier, had produced a certain euphoria that international cooperation was overcoming nationalism. In 1914, more than 200 international conferences were scheduled to be held in Europe. These conferences, and the variety of reforms that were to be discussed at them, fostered an optimism among progressives that they were on the verge of constructing an international civic society: "a common, public sense, with institutions and visual forms matched to it." When war came in August of that year, most progressives were totally surprised and very dismayed. Before too long, however, American progressives rallied around the idea that the war experience in both Germany and England was producing an orderly and disciplined society. American progressives began to speak of a "war socialism," a collectivism that was altering the political economies of Europe into ones in which the state assumed control of crucial parts of the economy. Order, regulation, and controls on laissez-faire capitalism were celebrated by some progressives as achievements that would remain once the absurdity of war was finished. Editors of the progressive *New Republic* began to wonder "how much longer would the United States 'hang back in the nineteenth-century industrial chaos?'" On the brink of U.S. entry into the war Walter Lippmann exalted that "the progressive nations have discovered that the old unorganized competitive profiteering is unsound and wasteful."³⁰

From August 1914 until the United States officially entered the war in April 1917, different streams within progressivism had varying responses to the conflict. Progressives saw signs within the United States that war was having a salutary effect on reform. Wilson appeared now agreeable to promoting a domestic reform agenda that embraced more social welfare. The Keating-Owen Child Labor Act passed Congress; railroad workers gained the eight-hour day with the Adamson Act; a new tax act of 1916 increased levies on the wealthy and enacted a federal inheritance tax. Wilson appointed to the Supreme Court Louis Brandeis, the man whose progressive attacks on big business and support for social welfare measures had earned him the label of "the people's lawyer." Progressives called his nomination "a landmark in the history of

29. Gatewood, "Black Americans and the Quest for Empire," 548-55. J.R. Hooker, "The Pan African Conference of 1900," *Transition*, 46 (1974): 20-24, 24 for DuBois and "progressive doctrine." See also, Robin D.G. Kelley, "But a Local Phase of a World Problem: Black History's Global Vision, 1883-1950," *Journal of American History*, 86 (December 1999): 1045-77, DuBois quotes 1054. See W.E.B. DuBois, "The African Roots of War," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 115 (May 1915): 707-14, for his complete critique. For more on DuBois, see *W.E.B. DuBois: A Reader*, David Levering Lewis, ed. (New York: Henry Holt, 1995).

30. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 268-79, quotes, 273, 278.

American democracy"; American Jews were overjoyed; labor greeted the nomination enthusiastically. Wall Street and big business were appalled.³¹ All of this happened in the context of Wilson's moves to prepare the United States for the possibility of entering the "European" conflict. If entering the war were to become inevitable, then some progressives believed they could take heart at the signs that war would facilitate greater domestic reform.

None of these successes meant that all progressives would automatically support the decision to go to war. They did, however, prepare them for accepting Wilson's arguments that this war was an outgrowth of democratic progressivism. He claimed it would be a war to save the world for democracy. Siding with the victor would give the United States a chance to be the ultimate peace broker who could bring about true democracy and internationalism once the war was won. A snippet from Wilson's war address to Congress reveals his thinking:

It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. 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.

Such rhetoric could allow progressives to believe that once the war was won with American power, which they were sure would be the case, nationalistic individualism would be shattered and a new internationalism would take its place. They believed that winning a war over tyranny, as they came to see it, would allow them to break free from a narrowly defined idea of progressivism as "American" and construct it as universal. Winning the war would bring the United States more fully into a world of shared values.³²

Moreover, the ideas now espoused by progressives such as Lippman and the editors of *The New Republic* about the need for a strong, regulatory state heralded a shifting focus among their progressivism. They were replacing ideas about collectivism and government action in the public interest with calls to a new sense of civic nationalism that spoke about the national interest.³³ This may seem at first glance an arbitrary distinction, but it was not. Defining a "public" interest had always been a slippery problem for progressives. Whose public interest was always a question. If one governed in the national interest instead, the definitional problem could seemingly be solved as the nation theoretically covered all of the public. Yet, as opponents of war

31. Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson: Confusions and Crises, 1915-1916* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), 323-28, quote, 327; Dawley, *Changing the World*, 120-21 and 234.

32. *Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 1st sess., 102-04. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 279. See also, James Livingston, "The War and the Intellectuals: Bourne, Dewey, and the Fate of Pragmatism," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 2 (October 2003): 431-50.

33. Dawley, *Changing the World*, 122-23, discusses this matter.

would object, governing from a national interest could allow any group or any idea to dominate others and perhaps inevitably lead to defining any objection as anti-American. Republican progressive Robert LaFollette perceived it this way. He had enthusiastically backed the domestic reform agenda of the Democrat Wilson, but LaFollette's progressivism saw no public interest in interventions, war, or the U.S. entry into it, only a business interest. For LaFollette, the enemy remained big business and its exploitation of the public interest. The interventions in the Caribbean, he thought, had "reduced the U.S. Marines to a collection agency for Yankee creditors." He decried the willingness of nations to "sacrifice lives for private gain." He believed that the \$50 million loaned to France by J.P. Morgan and Company in 1915—indeed the more than \$2 billion that U.S. banks had lent to France and England by 1917—had more to do with war profiteering than with promoting democracy. If Germany won the war, England and France would never repay the loans. He was one of six senators who voted against going to war, declaring that "the poor, sir, who are the ones called upon to rot in the trenches, have not organized power" to resist. Progressive Senator George Norris feared that "We are going into war upon the command of gold . . . I feel that we are about to put the dollar sign on the American Flag."³⁴

The idea of war and conflict as enhancing American manhood was ever-present in the rhetoric surrounding war. Theodore Roosevelt was keen to go to war and to enact compulsory male military service. He declared that "the military tent where they all sleep side by side will rank next to the public school among the great agents of democratization." As usual, he did not mean to include African American, Native American, or Hispanic men. But even the non-belligerent progressive Raymond Robins was won over to accepting this kind of reasoning. As the Republican Convention of 1916 was considering whether to include a war resolution and whether to call for male military service, Robins concluded that compulsory military training "will do more in one generation to break down class and section prejudice, develop disciplined, vigorous and efficient citizenship, and to unify the diverse groups of our national life in a vital Americanism than all other forces combined."³⁵

It is true, as historian Daniel Rodgers has written, that the war brought social progressives "en masse into government and quasi-government service," where they could play a role in reorganizing the relationships between state and society. Florence Kelley and Josephine Goldmark, working through the Children's Bureau and the National Consumers' League, were important consultants to the government.³⁶ Once the United States became an actual bel-

34. Nancy Unger, *Fighting Bob LaFollette: The Righteous Reformer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 235–40. See Dawley, *Changing the World*, 32, for quote on U.S. Marines and his staunch anti-interventionism. For Norris, see David Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 21.

35. Robins quoted in Leuchtenberg, "Progressivism and Imperialism," 497; Roosevelt in Kennedy, *Over Here*, 17.

36. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 283–84.

ligerent in the war, most progressives hoped that by working with the government during war they would be active participants in restructuring society in the aftermath. It had been growing increasingly evident to many of them that domestic progressivism had not solved many of the country's racial, labor, or gender problems. They hoped that the collective wartime activities and new cooperative measures that they were able to implement would carry over afterwards. These hopes would be sorely disappointed.

It was early springtime that the strike was on
They moved us miners out of doors
Out from the houses that the company owned
We moved into the tents at old Ludlow.

We were so afraid they would kill our children
We dug us a cave that was seven foot deep
Carried our young ones and a pregnant woman
Down inside the cave to sleep.

That very night you soldiers waited
Until us miners fell asleep
You snuck around our little tent town
Soaked our tents with your kerosene.

You struck a match and the blaze it started
You pulled the triggers of your gattling guns
I made a run for the children but the fire wall
stopped me
Thirteen children died from your guns.

We took some cement and walled that cave up
Where you killed those thirteen children inside
I said, "God bless the Mine Workers' Union"
And then I hung my head and cried.*

"The Ludlow Massacre"
Woody Guthrie

The mining town of Ludlow, Colorado, sat alongside the Purgatory River in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, the property of John D. Rockefeller, owned the mines of Ludlow. Mining was a hazardous occupation and Colorado Fuel and Iron was not particularly concerned to protect its employees. Between 1904 and 1914, around 200 miners were killed in its mines, where they labored for less than \$2 a day, often paid in scrip that they could only redeem at company stores. They lived in houses owned by the company. The Western Federation of Miners had tried to organize the Colorado mines early in the century, but with the help of the forces of law and order the companies had thwarted their attempts. In late 1913, about 9,000 miners walked off their jobs. Evicted from company houses, they set up tent colonies and refused to be moved.

On April 20, 1914, the tent colony at Ludlow was attacked by the state militia, sent into the area by the governor at the urging of the company. When the onslaught was over, there were twenty dead bodies in the colony. Two women and eleven children were among the dead; they had burned or suffocated to death when the attackers set fire to the tents. Enraged miners descended on Ludlow and battled the company and the militia until President Wilson was forced to call in the army to restore order. When order was restored, the strike was effectively broken. Miners were either blacklisted or returned to their jobs with no concessions from the company.

That same April 20, Wilson had ordered the military assault on Veracruz, Mexico, near the Tampico oilfields in which Rockefeller was a major stockholder. The June 1914 issue of the radical magazine *The Masses*, with its blood-red cover featuring a huge miner firing a rifle and holding a dead child in his other hand, had two main stories: Ludlow and Mexico. The message was clear. Despite all progressive reform, business still controlled the country. The location of Ludlow was perhaps prophetic: it was purgatory for the miners and the Sangre de Cristo (blood of Christ) was surely running.

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Domestic Troubles, Foreign Engagement

Political democracy can only exist where there is industrial democracy.

—COMMISSION ON INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, 1912

God Gave Me My Money.

—JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, 1905

THE YEAR 1914 was not an especially auspicious one for progressives interested in social reform. Try as they might to warm to Woodrow Wilson, his New Freedom still did not pursue the social reform agenda that many of them wanted. He had acquiesced in the racial segregation of the federal government, resisted federal government social policies that would restrict states' rights, refused to support national woman suffrage, and had only intervened in the Colorado mine strike after failing personally to convince Rockefeller to compromise with the miners.

One reason the Colorado miners' strike was so intransigent was that a global business recession had begun late in 1913. With the United States now tied into the world marketplace, it could not escape the recession that was, in part, caused by events in Europe. In response, production in the United States dropped and unemployment rose. These events forced Wilson to reconsider his idea that the country would be reformed by breaking up monopolies. He now began to move closer to Roosevelt's position that big business was here to stay and that government and business should work together on economic regulation. A stream of businessmen, including J.P. Morgan, flooded into the White House for chats, in which the president assured them that he was on their side. Robert La Follette was distressed as Wilson appointed conservatives to the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) and the Federal Reserve Board, fearing that "progressive" control of these key areas of regulation was about to end. When a coalition of conservative Democrats and Republicans confirmed

the ICC nominations, LaFollette charged that Wilson had triumphed "over progressive Democrats and progressive Republicans by securing the support of all that remains of the old Aldrich oligarchy."¹

The Democrats lost seats in the congressional elections of 1914, although they maintained control of Congress. Wilson put an optimistic face on the results. He expressed the opinion that so much economic regulation had been accomplished, including much better relations between labor and business, that the country was well along the road to progress. Yet, 1914 showed that was clearly not the case. The right of workers to organize unions was being forcefully rejected by business, as Ludlow exposed again to the public. By the winter of 1914-15 the war in Europe had worsened the economic picture in the United States. Unemployment made that winter especially cruel and tumultuous. Nationally, about 11.5 percent of the workforce was unemployed. In industrial cities the total was higher: more than 13 percent in Chicago and above 20 percent in Duluth, Minnesota. The U.S. Labor Bureau estimated unemployment in New York City at slightly above 16 percent in early 1915. "Armies" of unemployed men began marching to Washington again as they had done in the depression of 1893-94. Outbreak of war in August 1914 further exacerbated domestic conditions as food prices began rising: the cost of bread, for example, rose 20 percent. The Women's Trade Union League was organizing marches of unemployed women. The IWW was making gains in the western states and leading unemployment marches. Socialists were rallying against the war. Women had organized a Peace Party that was not only marching against the war, it was connecting with female peace activists all across Europe.²

In the face of growing disorder and radical agitation, social justice progressives struggled to maintain their reform agenda of collectivity and democracy. Hull House held meetings of the unemployed, with Addams still hoping that the collective voice would make an impression on the city's employers. But when the unemployed marched through the streets without a permit they were beaten and several were arrested by the police, including seven women. As they had done in the past, wealthy Chicago women such as Mary Wilmarth bailed out many of those arrested, and Sophonisba Breckinridge declared that she would testify on their behalf at any trial. But even at Hull House more radical elements began to seize the upper hand. At a following meeting protestors resolved to continue using the public streets to

[demonstrate] our poverty to the world, and by so doing forcing the authorities to do something for the unemployed and their dependents . . . we the unemployed of Chicago, are determined to use the liberty of the public streets, and shall continue to use the public streets and fight for the rights of same until we have acquired our purpose—namely: the cry for bread and work be heeded.

1. Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson: The New Freedom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956), 447-50, for the ICC appointment and LaFollette's losing fight to stop it; quote, 450, originally from *LaFollette's Weekly*, 6 (April 18, 1914): 9.

2. Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), 295-96.



Major Strike Areas, 1886-1919

Despite the pleas of Addams and Breckinridge not to do so, these demonstrators had again poured into the streets carrying banners crying "Starvation or revolution, which?" or "Why should we starve in the midst of plenty?"³

WORLD WAR I

Given the volatility of domestic conditions, the war in Europe was a mixed blessing both for the Wilson administration and for many progressives. On the one hand, the economy slowly recovered by the spring of 1915, largely due to orders for war supplies from Europe. American banks prospered as loans to the belligerents reached \$2.25 billion by 1916. Merchant ships carried a steady stream of American goods across the Atlantic as Wilson pronounced the United States neutral and declared that the United States was free to trade with whomever it wanted. He also declared that American ships should be inviolate in the Atlantic and that Americans should be free to travel across the ocean without fear of harm. In hindsight these policies could only have led to disaster. The bulk of American loans went to Britain and France. If they lost the war, those loans would go unpaid and American banks would collapse. As the

3. *Chicago Tribune*, February 1, 1915.

German side grew more desperate, American shipping came increasingly under fire and American property and lives were lost in the new submarine warfare. Each incident put more pressure on Wilson's neutrality policy, but his administration held firm to the principle that American business should be free to trade unimpeded with any European country. In the 1916 presidential campaign Wilson and the Democrats pledged not to go to war, yet early in 1915 Wilson had started a "preparedness" campaign that many progressives feared would lead the United States into war. He authorized construction of new warships for the navy and almost tripled the size of the regular army. He sent the army into Mexico in mid-1916.

In the administration, only Wilson's secretary of state, the old populist William Jennings Bryan, objected to these policies. In June 1915, he resigned his position and began a peace crusade. In speeches across the country he warned Americans that a new fight was now on "between the people and the special interests." Progressive Frederic Howe attacked business and war-profiteering and Robert LaFollette declared profit as the chief motive behind all of Wilson's international policies. He demanded an immediate embargo on selling armaments to the belligerents.⁴

Radicals charged that preparedness was causing even more labor injustice. The socialist Kate Richards O'Hare furiously denounced the war as a capitalist venture. "The Congress of the United States," she declared, "has the power to stop the war in Europe almost instantly by forbidding the exportation of food and ammunition." "Money," she went on to say

that has been stolen by corrupt officials and worse than wasted on armament and preparation for war would provide funds to give labor to every unemployed man and make possible all manner of public industries . . . the constitutional power to issue money with which to wage a war of destruction could just as readily be invoked to wage a war on poverty and unemployment.⁵

Socialists and the IWW, led by the Italian-American anarchist Carlo Tresca, conducted a bitter labor strike in 1916 in the iron ore mines of the Mesabi Range in northern Minnesota. The mining company, a subsidiary of U.S. Steel, refused to negotiate. The strikers suffered beatings, arrests, and deaths, until the strike was broken. Preparedness required steel and the Wilson administration was not about to intervene on the part of the strikers. The chances that socialism, a minor movement in the United States, could actually succeed in keeping the United States out of war were even further diminished as European socialist movements succumbed to nationalist sentiment and supported the war. So American socialists were fighting a lonely ideological battle against the inexorable pull of war.

Progressive women formed the Women's Peace Party in 1915 to try to prevent U.S. involvement in the war, and there would be an important gender di-

4. Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: Confusions and Crises, 1915-1916* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960), 30-33; Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 118; and Nancy Unger, *Fighting Bob LaFollette: The Righteous Reformer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 235-40.

5. Kate Richards O'Hare, "I Denounce," *The National Rip-Saw*, 12 (March 1915).



Protesting the Violence Against the Striking Minnesota Miners (1916)
Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-21716

mension to their response to war as there was to that of socialist Josephine Conger Kaneko. As she expressed it, war was "a thoroughly masculine quantity."⁶ This gender dimension to foreign policy will be discussed in detail in Chapter 12 so that it can receive the attention it deserves. Before that, the rest of this chapter will consider the impact of war on the country and progressivism, beginning with the challenge of the presidential election of 1916.

PROGRESSIVISM AND WAR

1. The 1916 Presidential Campaign

By the November 1916 election, war had been raging in Europe for more than two years. Wilson was certain to be renominated by the Democrats, but anti-war sentiment still ran high in the United States, so the Democrats needed to promise peace. Despite his preparedness campaign, Wilson pronounced himself the candidate of peace and ran on the slogan "He kept us out of war." He emphasized his neutrality toward Europe and the peace made with Mexico by

6. Mari Jo Buhl, *Women and American Socialism, 1870-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 312.

the time of the convention. He defended his interference in Mexico as a just cause, proclaiming that he was "more interested in the fortunes of oppressed men and pitiful women and children than in any property, rights whatsoever." For progressives disheartened by his foreign policy, he pointed to his support of the Keating-Owen Child Labor Act, a workmen's compensation act for federal employees, and the Adamson Act for railroad workers. All Wilson's points in the campaign emphasized fighting oppression at home and abroad, a goal that he would reiterate in his later war message. Finally, Wilson promised that his second administration would "build an America in which the nations of the world 'shall at last come to see upon what deep foundation of humanity and justice our passion for peace rests.'"⁷

By portraying the Democrats as the true party of progressivism who were now promoting social welfare legislation and direct government amelioration of labor relations, Wilson undercut progressivism in the Republican Party. Republican nominee Charles Evans Hughes played into the Democrats' hands, first by attacking the Adamson Act as government interference in the rights of business to control labor and then attacking the neutrality campaign and labeling the president's preparedness campaign as too weak. In contrast to Wilson's themes of humanity and justice, the Hughes campaign called for an "America first and America efficient."⁸

In the 1916 campaign both parties had to take account of the growing numbers of women voters. Four million women were now eligible to vote for president. Both parties endorsed women suffrage, but neither promised to support the national suffrage amendment and neither candidate was forthcoming with personal promises to support the amendment's passage. Progressive women were torn between the two candidates. Frances Kellor opted for Hughes and headed a Women's Committee of the National Hughes Alliance. Other prominent progressives Harriet Vittum and Margaret Dreier Robins of Chicago also supported Hughes. The women of the Hughes committee had staunchly backed Theodore Roosevelt in 1912 and even though the party no longer seemed to be pursuing social welfare they could not break away altogether from the Republican Party. The women's committee organized and financed a women's campaign train that left New York on October 2, making "whistle-stops" in cities across the country. Other former Progressive Party women did, however, switch parties, saying they were making the best choice out of a bad bargain. In Illinois, Jane Addams and Mary Wilmarth voted for Wilson. Wilmarth wrote to her friend Ellen Gates Starr that she was "oppressed with the call for decision as to my first vote for President." She vehemently objected to his Mexico policy, his military build up, and his segregation of the federal government. On the other hand, she welcomed other aspects of his policy that emphasized social justice: his willingness to work with Julia Lathrop as head of the Children's Bureau and support for anti-child labor. She also disliked Hughes' statements about Ameri-

7. Arthur S. Link and William M. Leary, "Election of 1916," in *The Coming to Power: Critical Presidential Elections in American History*, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Fred L. Israel, and William P. Hanson, eds. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1972), 296-321; and Maureen A. Flanagan, "The Election of 1916," in *American Presidential Campaigns and Elections*, vol. 2, Ballard C. Campbell and William G. Shade, eds. (New York: Sharpe Reference, 2003), 646-62.

8. Link and Leary, "Election of 1916," 307.

canism and applauded Wilson for having vetoed yet another attempt to enact a literacy test for immigrants. Lillian Wald declared for Wilson also. Whether women controlled the outcome is hard to say because we do not have voting statistics to tell us. But of the women suffrage states, Hughes won only Illinois. He even lost California, where women had voted since 1911. California was among the most progressive of states and the progressive Republican Hiram Johnson was elected governor in that same election.⁹

The really thrilling victory for women in 1916 was the election in Montana of Jeannette Rankin to Congress. Rankin won despite being a Republican in a state that voted for Wilson. Rankin had engaged in social justice causes for several years and her campaign platform promised that she would work for the eight-hour day for women, maternal and child health care, and the national suffrage amendment. She also pledged to support a strong national defense. In spite of this last pledge, a few days after being seated in Congress, she demonstrated her peace credentials and voted against going to war.¹⁰

2. Progressives and War

Unfortunately, those progressives who had voted for Wilson on the basis of his peace proclamations saw their hopes dashed within a short time. Wilson's neutrality policy grew increasingly useless as Germany had continued to pursue a strategy of submarine warfare that threatened American shipping, property, and lives. Under heavy pressure from businessmen and bankers as well as members of his own administration he broke relations with Germany and asked for congressional support in arming U.S. merchant ships. Finally, on April 2, 1917, he asked Congress for a declaration of war.

As soon as Wilson had declared his preparedness campaign, progressives had organized to oppose it, fearing that it would lead to war and disaster for their reform crusades. In late November 1915, a group gathered at Lillian Wald's Henry Street Settlement and formed an Anti-Militarism Committee, soon renamed the American Union Against Militarism (AUAM). Its members included Wald, Addams, Kelley, Howe, and Paul Kellogg, the editor of *The Survey*, the journal of the social-science-oriented progressives. Wald declared that war was "inevitably disastrous to the humane instincts which had been asserting themselves in the social order." Howe warned that war "is usually identified with a reaction at home. It checks social legislation."¹¹ The AUAM announced that it would fight against any budget increases to be used for

9. Molly M. Wood, "Mapping a National Campaign Strategy: Partisan Women in the Presidential Election of 1916," in *We Have Come to Stay: American Women and Political Parties, 1860-1960*, Melanie S. Gustafson, Kristie Miller, and Elisabeth Israels Perry, eds. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999) and Mary Hawes Wilmarth to Ellen Gates Starr, October 21, 1916, Ellen Gates Starr Manuscript Collection, Sophie Smith Collection, Smith College Library. See also, Melanie S. Gustafson, *Women and the Republican Party, 1854-1924* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), ch. 6, and Jo Freeman, *A Room at a Time: How Women Entered Party Politics* (Latham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 76-80.

10. Freeman, *A Room at a Time*, 80.

11. David Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 33-34. The AUAM set up a civil liberties bureau that ultimately evolved into the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

armaments and then campaigned across the country against the growing militarism, holding frequent antiwar rallies, distributing leaflets and press releases, and mounting an exhibit titled "War Against War," the centerpiece of which was "a huge armored dinosaur symbolizing the military establishment lumbering along with a peasized brain"—the antiprogressive.¹²

As events of early 1917 seemed to bear out the fears that war was now in the offing, Jane Addams and an antiwar group, the Emergency Peace Federation, called on Wilson in late February to try to convince him not to go to war. Yet, progressives were not unified in thinking that war would bring disaster. The editors of the progressive *New Republic* were moving toward supporting war, using the progressive language of internationalism:

We must recognize that we are one great community and act as a member of it. Our entrance into it [the war] would weight it immeasurably in favor of liberalism and make the organization of a league for peace an immediately practicable object of statesmanship. By showing that we are ready now, as well as in the theoretical future, to defend the western world, the cornerstone of federation would be laid.¹³

Addams recalled that at her meeting with Wilson, he spoke in the same vein: "As head of a nation participating in the war the President of the United States would have a seat at the Peace Table," he told the delegation. "But if he remained the representative of a neutral country he could at best only 'call through a crack in the door.'"¹⁴

Wilson, the men of the *New Republic*, and many other progressives believed that war had become inevitable and that by entering it they would be able to bring progressive order and regulation to it. Paul Kellogg now abandoned the antimilitarism movement and wrote to Lillian Wald that "the time is ripe . . . to take both the war scare and the lesson which the military leaders of Europe are giving us in developing human and natural resources, as two motive factors in pushing through a program for human conservation and national growth that might otherwise take years to develop." Wald may not have been of total accord with such sentiments, but in July 1917 she too resigned from the AUAM.¹⁵

Once progressives had accepted the war as fact, they set out to bring order into the war effort and to tie winning the war to advancing a progressive domestic agenda. The National Women's Trade Union League sent Wilson a message outlining its war program. The women wanted nationalization of the railroads, strengthened rights of labor to organize and bargain collectively, and a heavy tax on the wealthy to finance the war. Walter Lippman declared that after the war was won "we shall stand committed as never before to the

12. Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 117. *The Survey* (January 1, 1916): 370-71.

13. "Justification," *The New Republic*, 10 (February 10, 1917) and "Defense of the Atlantic World," *ibid.* (February 17, 1917), quoted in Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson: Campaigns for Progressivism and Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 304.

14. Jane Addams, *Bread and Peace in Time of War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, revised edition, 2002), 38.

15. Kennedy, *Over Here*, 34.

realization of democracy in America. . . . We shall turn with fresh interest to our own tyrannies—to our Colorado mines, our autocratic steel industries, our sweatshops and our slums."¹⁶

Seeing war in this light allowed many progressives to contribute centrally to the war effort at home. Appeals were made to them to work in areas that particularly interested them. Florence Kelley, Josephine Goldmark, and Grace Abbott took positions overseeing the treatment of women workers and the enforcement of child labor provisions. Julia Lathrop helped to draft a new type of insurance policy for military members, which progressives hoped would be a prelude to new types of social insurance after the war. Labor leader and bootmaker Mary Anderson worked for the Women's Branch in the Army Ordnance Department, where she inspected the working conditions of women in the country's arsenals. Pauline Goldmark headed the Women's Service Section of the Railroad Administration. Goldmark took charge of bettering the condition of female railway workers but also acted as the unofficial advocate for women's rights in the industry. Samuel Gompers was given a spot on the National War Labor Board. New federal agencies recognized collective bargaining and the eight-hour day; better working conditions for women and children were mandated. To meet the needs for housing for war workers who began to flood into the shipyards and industries most necessary for the war effort, government actually began to enact housing policies. Progressive urban planners such as John Nolen were engaged to draw up plans and designs for new communities under two new agencies, the Emergency Fleet Corporation and the United States Housing Corporation. Progressives in individual cities promoted new housing plans, not just because housing was needed, but from their idea that democracy required that social space be well ordered and organized. For some progressives it could, and did, seem as if they had finally captured the national attention for their agenda that had eluded them for years.¹⁷

Other groups of progressives and their organizations carried on their reform work during the war. Social justice progressives used the military's discovery that young American males were not particularly healthy to continue working for maternal and child health care. The Women's City Club of New York made exposing this problem one of its top priorities. It investigated health conditions in the city, prepared statistical reports, and compared infant mortality rates unfavorably with those in other industrial countries. Earlier progressive campaigns to clean up cities and enact provisions for pure food and milk had made some headway in attacking health problems. Still, the United States had only the 18th lowest maternal death rate and 11th lowest infant mortality rate in the

16. *Ibid.*, 39-40; Lippmann quote originally from "The World Conflict in Relation to American Democracy," *Annals*, 72 (1917): 1-10.

17. Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 283-85, 288-89; Allen F. Davis, "Welfare, Reform, and World War I," *American Quarterly*, 19 (Autumn 1967): 516-33; and Maurine Weiner Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 61-86. See also, Robert Macieski, "'The Home of the Working Man Is the Balance Wheel of Democracy': Housing Reform in Wartime Bridgeport," *The Journal of Urban History*, 26 (September 2000): 715-32.

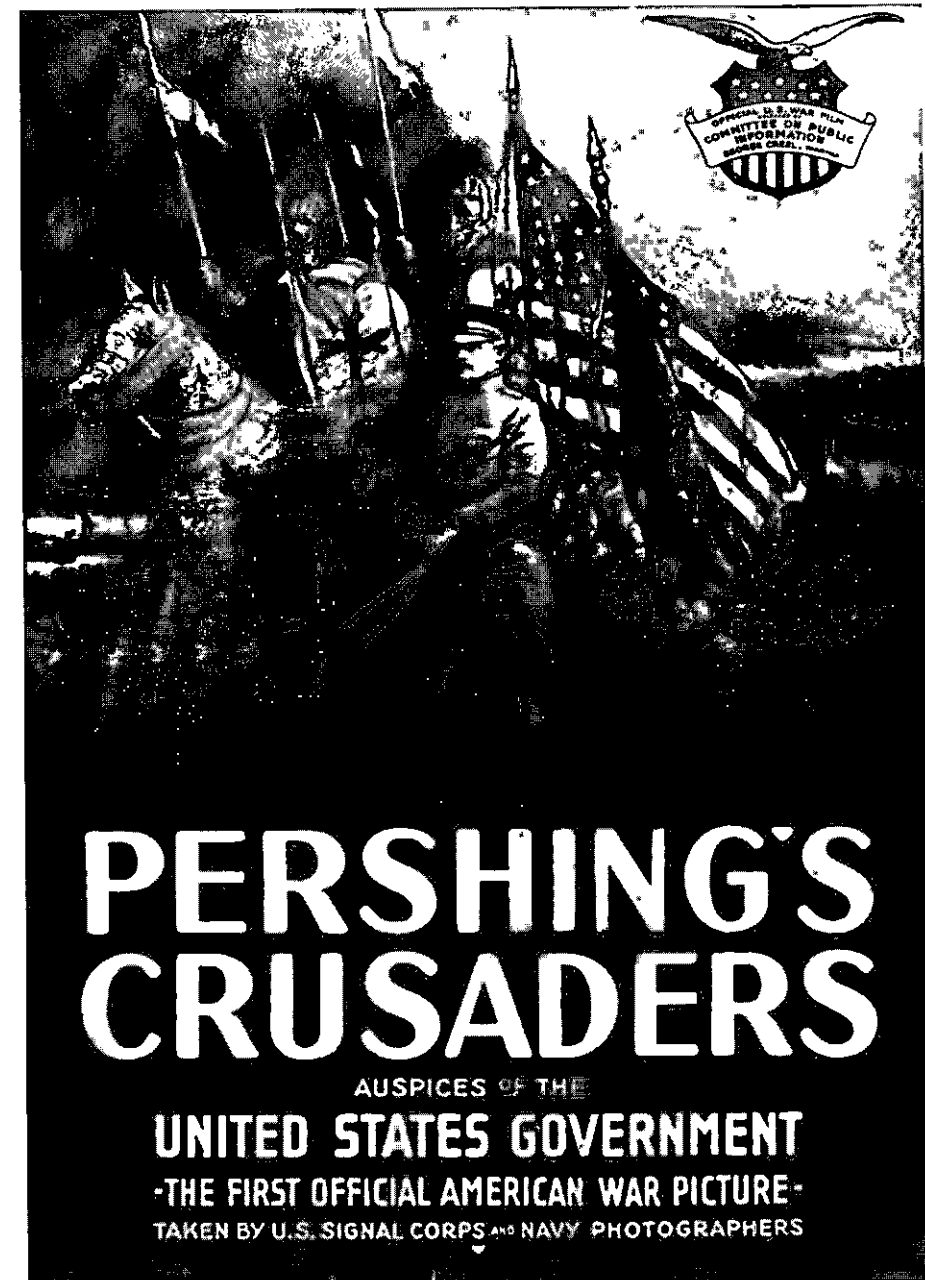
world. Business leaders and the AFL had continued to resist any national health insurance programs while European countries had been enacting them.¹⁸

In other places, women used the state-organized Councils on Defense or local defense councils to promote progressivism. In Illinois, Addams, Mary McDowell, Alice Hamilton, Sophonisba Breckinridge, and Louise DeKoven Bowen headed a Committee on Sanitation, Medicine and Public Health and used the war rhetoric to their advantage: the committee dedicated itself to "one of the most pressing home-front duties . . . to conserve the health of children as a vital strategic measure for winning the war." They succeeded in establishing a Child Welfare Department inside the Council of Defense, which they hoped would outlast the war itself. Black and white women's clubs in Atlanta used their role in organizing the home front to pursue their concerns about vice and protection for young women to reorganize public space in the city. African American clubwomen also used the war effort to demand more equal protection from the federal government. The women from the Neighborhood Union wrote directly to Wilson in spring 1918 demanding an end to lynching, pointing out that this was a type of undemocratic evil that the war was supposedly being fought to conquer. "While we are sacrificing the best blood of our sons upon our Nation's altar to help destroy Prussianism beyond the seas, we call upon you to use your high offices to destroy the lynching institution at our doors." Unfortunately for these women, Wilson was far too preoccupied with foreign affairs to engage in such a domestic crusade.¹⁹

These progressives' faith that victory in war would prolong progressivism and enhance democracy at home emanated from their beliefs in the power of publicity and education. Despite previous evidence to the contrary, progressives continued to believe that once social ills were demonstrated to Americans through social scientific evidence, they would welcome proposed reforms. Progressivism had always depended on the power of publicity: making the best case for the justice of what was being proposed to convince people to support the cause. It was not so much the progressive faith in publicity that was mistaken, but what the American people could be convinced to support. The Wilson administration took the idea and applied it to promoting the war effort. The president constituted a Committee on Public Information (CPI) headed by George Creel, a progressive muckraker who had endorsed the social centers movement as well as the popular democratic reforms of initiative and referendum. The CPI was charged with "selling the war" because, as Wilson declared, "It is not an army we must shape and train for war, it is a nation." Creel responded to his charge with fervor, declaring that his task was to bring

18. "Maternity Protection," *Bulletin*, Women's City Club of New York (June 1917) from WCCNY, Archives and Special Collections, Hunter College, New York, N.Y. (WCCNY microfilm, reel 17, frame 20). See Morton Keller, *Regulating a New Society: Public Policy and Social Change in America, 1900-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 194-96. Of the 30 percent of recruits rejected as unfit for service, the majority were suffering the ill effects of childhood disease.

19. Lynne Curry, *Modern Mothers in the Heartland: Gender, Health, and Progress in Illinois, 1900-1930* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), 111, and Sarah Mercer Judson, "Leisure Is a Foe to Any Man: The Pleasures and Dangers of Leisure in World War I Atlanta," *The Journal of Women's History*, 15 (Spring 2003): 92-115, quote from 106-07.



PERSHING'S CRUSADERS

AUSPICES OF THE

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

-THE FIRST OFFICIAL AMERICAN WAR PICTURE-

TAKEN BY U.S. SIGNAL CORPS AND NAVY PHOTOGRAPHERS

The Committee for Public Information Sets the Tone

Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-71272

about "no mere surface unity, but a passionate belief in the justice of America's cause that should weld the people of the United States into one white-hot mass instinct with fraternity, devotion, courage, and deathless determination." At the beginning of his work, he thought that persuasion, not coercion, was the democratic way. In addition to official publications from his office, he constituted a group he called "Four-Minute Men," who were to give short patriotic speeches in local communities. As the war dragged on, however, the methods of the CPI turned cruder. The agency began to exhort people to turn in anyone they suspected of being unpatriotic. It encouraged the Four-Minute Men to use atrocity stories to whip up war support.²⁰

Every war stirs up fervent support and engenders dissent. Repression of dissenters in wartime always results from the need to convince a democratic people of the justice of violent slaughter of other people. That Wilson, Creel, and other fervent participants in the CPI campaign thought it so necessary to have such unity of "passionate belief" reflects in part on the American need to create an identity. When Alexis de Tocqueville had toured the United States in the 1830s, he found it a country where "genuine independence of mind and real freedom of discussion" was essentially absent. Americans, he observed, seemed to feel a tremendous need to assure that they all agreed on values. Accepting this observation makes sense of the deep repression of dissent that would come during the war years. It was not sufficient for Wilson to have general agreement; he wanted the hearts and minds of all Americans behind him so that he would be certain of his values, certain that he was leading a just cause.²¹

The progressive faith in educating a democratic public was also turned to use for the war. In 1908, peace advocates had organized the American School Peace League to encourage the teaching of peace in public schools. With the outbreak of war, other forces now advocated using the schools for military training. The rhetoric of "strenuous masculinity" used to promote such training in schools would have delighted Theodore Roosevelt. Public schools and teachers were instructed to inculcate "patriotism, heroism, and sacrifice" in school children. They were told to portray the war in patriotic, democratic terms, to stress the differences between American democracy and German autocracy. Any teacher who resisted, or refused to take a loyalty oath, could be summarily fired. In one case in New York City, a Quaker pacifist with eighteen years of experience who resisted instructing her students in militarism was dismissed for "behavior unbecoming a teacher."²²

Faith in education and publicity were "comforting beliefs in a society wracked by new social ills but reluctant to repudiate the laissez-faire, anti-

20. Kevin Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public: The Struggle for Urban Participatory Democracy During the Progressive Era* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 106-07, for Creel and Wilson, and Kennedy, *Over Here*, 60-62. See also, George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920).

21. Tocqueville's observations cited in Kennedy, *Over Here*, 47. See also, 63 for more on Americans' longing for "a single consensual set of values."

22. Susan Zeiger, "The Schoolhouse Versus the Armory: U.S. Teachers and the Campaign Against Militarism in the Schools, 1914-1918," *The Journal of Women's History*, 15 (Spring 2003): 150-179, see esp. 158-59 and 167-68. See also, Kennedy, *Over Here*, 54-55.



Patriotic but Segregated: African American Infantry in France (1918)
Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-116442

statist heritage that Americans prized," according to one assessment. It might usefully have included the reluctance of Americans to repudiate racist and exclusionary ideologies to this illusion. Even the radical Ida B. Wells-Barnett, whose son served with the army in France, believed that participation in the war effort would finally result in a recognition of equal citizenship. W.E.B. DuBois had supported Wilson's decision to go to war and later urged African Americans to close ranks with "our own white fellow citizens," although union leader A. Philip Randolph opposed the war. DuBois' internationalism convinced him that this was essentially a colonial war, but that minority and colonized peoples around the world would benefit more if the Allies won rather than Germany. African Americans did have some reason for hope. Even before U.S. entry into the war, increasing numbers of industrial jobs created to meet European war orders as well as the promise of political equality were pulling tens of thousands of African Americans northward and away from the legally segregated South. With jobs contributing to the war effort, and African American men enlisting and answering the draft, African American progressives could be optimistic. On the other hand, there were ominous signs against such optimism. When black leaders had appealed to Wilson in 1917

for protection in the midst of a racial riot in East St. Louis, Illinois, Wilson ignored their pleas.²³

DEMOCRACY FOR THE WORLD, COERCION ON THE HOME FRONT

Despite hopes that war would provide an occasion for implementing some of their reform agendas, progressives could not overcome two critical aspects to war mobilization: the appeal to support the war became wrapped in ideas of "Americanism" and the war became defined as in the national interest. Events produced by these two issues helped to mute the long-term possibilities of a progressive agenda after the war. Moreover, Americans were treated to the spectacle of a foreign war to save the world for democracy being accompanied by coercion, violence, and the curtailment of free speech and the right to dissent at home.

1. 100 Percent Americanism

Both Wilson and Hughes had injected the rhetoric of "Americanism" into the 1916 campaign. Progressive Mary Wilmarth had been dismayed that Hughes' speech on Americanism put "policy above principle," she wrote to her friend Ellen Gates Starr. Wilmarth noted that Hughes had proclaimed that "whoever supports me supports an American policy and absolutely nothing else" and she then pointed out that there had been an "American policy in slave holding" and that communities in the country practiced slavery as a policy. Finally, she rejected his implication that America was "an equivalent word to United States of America." She could not countenance this kind of thinking, and her fears were prescient considering what was to come. Yet, Wilson was also speaking about Americanism, but at least in 1916 Wilmarth and other progressives could credit him with reforms that were creating a more humane society. Hughes, for his part, kept stressing American efficiency and economics.²⁴

When war was declared, too many average Americans heard "Americanism" equated with patriotism and supporting the war. It became important not just to define oneself as a patriotic American, but to root out those who might not be American enough. In a country with millions of immigrants, many of whom came from one side or the other of the European belligerent nations, ethnicity of the wrong sort was enough to put people under suspicion. Germans, of course, were the easiest target. Some of the reaction was silly. Anything German was suspect as un-American and sharply contrasted with American values. Sauerkraut, for example, was renamed liberty cabbage—Germans might

23. Kennedy, *Over Here*, 47, 279, 283. See Mark Ellis, "'Closing Ranks' and 'Seeking Honors': W.E.B. DuBois in World War I," *Journal of American History*, 79 (June 1992), 96–124. DuBois quote "Close Ranks," *The Crisis*, 16 (1918): 111. Elliot M. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964).

24. Mary Hawes Wilmarth to Ellen Gates Starr, letter of October 21, 1916, Ellen Gates Starr Manuscript Collection, Box 12, folder 43, in Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College Library.

eat sour cabbage, but real Americans ate liberty cabbage. (Most Americans probably did not know that in renaming French fries as freedom fries after France refused to support the Iraq invasion in 2003, they were repeating past history.) But repression of a much worse variety became all too common. German language teaching was forbidden in many schools. The governor of Iowa forbade the speaking of German on the telephone and in any public place. Perfectly law-abiding German-Americans and their shops and businesses were attacked. The mayor of New York City declared that there were only two kinds of people: "Americans and traitors." To sort them out, he constituted a Committee on National Defense to give loyalty oaths to all municipal employees, including teachers. The American Protective League (APL) recruited 250,000 volunteers committed to watch for, and report to the Department of Justice, any "disloyalty" in their communities.²⁵

Self-appointed vigilante groups went in search of suspects. In April 1918, a crowd of 500 cheering "Americans" lynched a young German immigrant coal miner in Collinsville, Illinois—not far from St. Louis with its large German community—for no discernable reason other than his heritage. The victim was bound in the flag, and when the mob's leaders were brought to trial they wore red, white, and blue. Their defense was that this was a "patriotic" murder. The jury acquitted them in less than an hour. It took Wilson over three months after this episode to condemn "mob violence" generally and he seems mainly to have been concerned that the German press was using this lynching for its own propaganda purposes.²⁶ By the time the war ended, it was clear that the campaign for 100 percent Americanism would carry over. "The war carried much further the shift from sympathy to fear, from cosmopolitan democracy to jealous nationalism," wrote historian John Higham.

By threat and rhetoric, 100 percent Americanizers opened a frontal assault on foreign influence in American life. They set about to stampede immigrants into citizenship, into adoption of the English language, and into unquestioning reverence for existing American institutions.

The wartime Americanism fervor showed how little progress progressives such as Jane Addams and Lillian Wald had made toward convincing Americans that mutual respect and acceptance of difference was the best way to construct an America where all could find a home. Although Addams and Wald, as well as John Dewey, continued to plead for a recognition that immigrant cultures had good things to offer American society, the forces behind 100 percent Americanism were victorious when they finally succeeded in passing the immigrant literacy bill over Wilson's veto.²⁷

25. Kennedy, *Over Here*, 67–68, and Painter, *Standing at Armageddon*, 329–30.

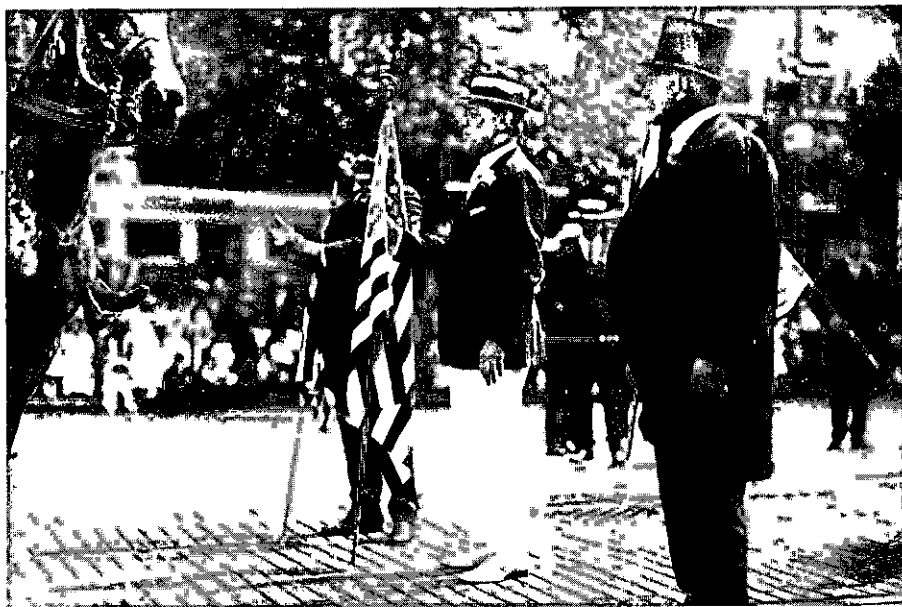
26. See Christopher Capozzola, "The Only Badge Needed Is Your Patriotic Fervor: Vigilance, Coercion, and the Law in World War I America," *The Journal of American History*, 88 (March 2002): 1354–83, 1354 for Wilson and this episode.

27. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of Nativism, 1860–1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, rev. edition, 2002), 236–53, quote from 247. Even Frances Kellor, whose sympathies were generally with immigrants, urged in a 1916 book, *Straight America*, that Americanization was vital for the national interest.

2. 100 Percent Loyalty

During a 1916 preparedness parade in New York City, participants marched under an electric sign that read "Absolute and Unqualified Loyalty to Our Country." President Wilson led such a parade in Washington, D.C., carrying the American flag. As with concepts such as national interest or public interest, loyalty became a contested issue during wartime. For many Americans, absolute and unqualified came to be defined as brooking no dissent, no negative word, no going against anything declared by the government. Legislation backed by military and public enforcement of this concept took hold quickly.

Congress passed the Espionage Act in June 1917. The act outlawed any obstruction of military operations during wartime and forbade the use of the mails to disseminate any material advocating treason, insurrection, or forcible resistance to any law of the United States in violation of this act. The U.S. Postmaster assumed authority for deciding which publications or mail might violate this law. He interpreted it broadly, even barring single issues of a publication that expressed an opinion that he judged inappropriate. Socialist publications, of course, were immediately banned from the mail and African American publications were investigated for potential subversion. States also applied the law to a whole range of cases, and individuals were convicted even for discussing whether conscription was constitutional. Almost as soon as war was declared, the AUAM wrote to Wilson expressing the organization's



Patriotism from the Top: Woodrow Wilson Carries the Flag in a Preparedness Parade, Washington, D.C. (1916)

Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-109786

concern "lest America, having declared a state of war, should sacrifice certain safeguards fundamental to the life of her democracy" and urging him to take a strong stand against any signs of repression. Wilson, unfortunately, was already moving in the other direction.²⁸

Within a year the progressives who were worried about democratic rights had even more reason for concern. The Espionage Act was strengthened by amendment, referred to as the Sedition Act, that made it easier, as the attorney general had requested, to prosecute any "disloyal utterances." The Act was breathtaking in its attack on free speech. It declared it unlawful for anyone to

willfully utter, print, write, or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States, or the Constitution of the United States, or the military or naval forces of the United States, or the flag of the United States, or the uniform of the Army or Navy of the United States, or any language intended to bring the form of government of the United States or [any of the above] into contempt, scorn, contumely, or disrepute . . .²⁹

Under its provisions the Socialist Party leader Eugene Debs was arrested and tried for a speech in which he had defended the rights of the IWW and criticized corporate and government leaders. The case against him was so weak that the U.S. Department of Justice, which had wanted the Sedition Act, refused to prosecute. The U.S. attorney for northern Ohio, where the speech had been given, took up the prosecution, however, and pursued it vigorously. At his trial, Debs simply cited a litany of patriots from the Revolution through the abolitionists who had dissented from government policy and defended freedom of speech in a democracy. The judge was unimpressed and sentenced Debs, who was in ill health, to ten years in prison.³⁰

The loyalty of workers, many of whom were immigrants, and some of whom had ties to socialism or the IWW, was also questioned. Wilson had requested, and Gompers and the AFL leadership had agreed to, a no-strike pledge from labor (although Gompers did soon repudiate it). But the AFL could never guarantee the cooperation of all its members, let alone the majority of workers who did not belong to the AFL. What happened to copper miners in Bisbee, Arizona, and Butte, Montana, most of whom had affiliated with the IWW-sponsored Metal Mine Workers Industrial Union, illustrates how these repressive laws inspired citizen vigilance and enforcement.

In mid-July thousands of the miners went out on strike against the Phelps-Dodge Corporation in Bisbee. Two citizens' vigilante committees, combined with the corporation's private police, were deputized to round up on charges of "vagrancy, treason, and of being disturbers of the peace . . . all those strange men who have congregated here." Men, women, and children were

28. See letter of Lillian Wald, et al. to the President of the United States, April 16, 1917, accessible from the Jewish Women's Archives website, <http://www.jwa.org>. Original letter at the New York Public Library, Manuscript and Archives Division.

29. Kennedy, *Over Here*, 26, 75, and 79-80; and Ellis, "'Closing Ranks' and 'Seeking Honors,'" 99 and 102.

30. Nick Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 294-95. Also arrested under these provisions were socialists Kate Richards O'Hare, Rose Pastor Stokes, Victor Berger, and more. O'Hare was sentenced to five years in prison.

indiscriminately rounded up, placed under armed guard, marched at gunpoint into sealed boxcars, and deported to a desert town in New Mexico. The Citizens' Protective League thereafter issued passports to Bisbee residents who were able to demonstrate their loyalty. No one could live, work, or obtain a draft exemption in Bisbee without taking a loyalty oath. The Wilson administration disapproved of this vigilantism, which it distinguished from vigilance, and the president had appointed a mediation commission to attempt to resolve this dispute, but such a mechanism failed to change things in Bisbee or to prevent future violence against miners. In Butte, Montana, troops and vigilantes took control of the town in the aftermath of a mine disaster that killed 164 miners. The vigilantes mutilated and then lynched Frank Little, a half-Indian IWW organizer. The events of Bisbee and Butte may not have pleased Wilson, but such actions were certainly inspired by his administration's emphasis on unquestioning and absolute loyalty.³¹

The draft was also used to compel Americans to support the war. Men of draft age—which was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1918—were expected to register voluntarily. In the first rounds of registration this went rather well. But even so, Wilson encouraged all citizens to help make sure that all eligible men registered. As the military losses in France began to mount, the Selective Service in mid-1918 issued a "work or fight order" that ordered local boards to draft immediately anyone not engaged in work essential to the war effort—or any workers going out on strike. Members of the APL also conducted "slacker" raids looking for eligible men who were avoiding the draft.³²

In an ironic twist, the emphasis that progressives had put on the local community now worked toward coercion of loyalty. The progressive social center advocates had thought of the neighborhood as the place where all people could decide together and their decisions would flow upward to create a better society. The shifting emphasis toward nationalism and the national interest changed the flow. Local draft boards became part of a hierarchy in which decisions flowed downward from the federal government to the neighborhood.³³ The Selective Service was run by local boards who had more opportunity to coerce. But by making the draft a local task, people could be more easily convinced that the draft was not so much federal intrusion as local decision making. Local boards could also practice favoritism. In some areas, significantly more white men received exemptions than black men. So, while some progressives descended on Washington hoping that wartime centralized regulation would bring further social reforms that would make society more democratic, other progressives watched their ideas of local democracy vanish.

31. Capozzola, "The Only Badge Needed Is Your Patriotic Fervor," 1365-69 provides a short summary of these events and also places them in the context of an American concept that democratic citizenry required social vigilance to keep law and order. See also, Dawley, *Changing the World*, 161-62.

32. Kennedy, *Over Here*, 150, 165-66.

33. Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public*, 106-09.

AFTERMATH

As the war was ending in late 1918, several issues coalesced to determine the course of reform for the future. First, the government quickly disbanded several federal agencies that some progressives had hoped would be the vanguard of continuing social reconstruction. Second, the Democrats suffered significant losses in the November congressional elections, revitalizing the Republican Party and demonstrating the weakness of the Democrats. Third, Wilson was far more preoccupied with winning the peace abroad than in domestic issues. Finally, 100 percent Americanism had a firmer grip on the American people than did ideas about continuing social reform. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia begun in 1917 had increased suspicion of anything foreign.

The fact that the wartime agencies disbanded so quickly, some within a few days of the armistice, demonstrated that social reconstruction accomplished through state agency had not sunk deep roots during the war. As late as June 1918, progressive writer Will Durant had confidently declared that "the new social order is coming and that is all there is to it." For his part, Wilson quickly abandoned any tentative plans for constituting a post-war Reconstruction agency and settled for saying there would only need to be "readjustment" while admitting at the same time that "he had little to recommend" in this regard. Yet, many progressives remained optimistic into 1919 and took the lead by forming their own reconstruction committees. Social workers, housing activists, children's welfare advocates, and public health promoters all kept working to reconstruct the country through established agencies and committees such as the Children's Bureau and the American Association for Labor Legislation. They traveled to England to study that country's reconstruction plans, conducted their own meetings, and showed up at government-sponsored hearings that were determining whether to retain or abandon wartime measures such as nationalization of the railroads. Labor lawyer Glenn Plumb (whose wife was a progressive activist in Chicago) proposed both that government continue to run the railroads and that their operation be guided by a tripartite association of labor, government, and the public. The railroad brotherhoods and agrarian interests supported the proposal; Gompers and the AFL rejected it, believing that wartime measures such as the eight-hour day and higher wages would carry on after the war. Steeply rising union membership during the war helped promote this sense of security. Then, when Wilson sent Gompers and other labor leaders to Europe as advance men for his peace proposals as soon as the war ended, labor's optimism increased. At home, a special industrial commission was convened to try to bring business and labor together. But when labor demanded that it have an equal voice in all future economic decision making, the commission failed. Then the *New York Times* attacked the Plumb Plan as "a very large step toward the principles of Lenin and Trotsky." Waves of labor strikes swept through the country across 1919

and enduring business, government, and even public hostility toward labor helped doom any further social reconstruction on the part of government.³⁴

Wilson's inattention to domestic affairs and his fear that additional Republicans in Congress would block his international peace plans made him leery of promoting social reconstruction. In fact, he had never been the reformer that many progressives had hoped he would be. At base, his progressivism had always been of the antimonopoly variety and his social and economic reforms had either been intended to break up monopolies or had been made necessary by the exigencies of preparedness and war. What he had earlier told Jane Adams was thus true. His attention was focused on entering the war so that he would have a seat at the peace table in order to promote his two primary aims of his Fourteen Points for peace: a League of Nations that would arbitrate international disputes and prevent international monopolies, and a pledge of self-determination for all people. Democratic losses in the 1918 elections made him even more reluctant to seek domestic reforms. To Wilson's bewilderment over what seemed to him to be the public's rejection of his leadership, George Creel reminded him of the effect of his domestic repression: "All the radical or liberal friends of your anti-imperialism war policy were either silenced or intimidated. . . . There was no voice left to argue for your sort of peace." Or as another progressive, Amos Pinchot, put it: Wilson had put "his enemies in office and his friends in jail."³⁵

Wilson sailed for Europe and the Versailles Peace Conference with the Democrats in disarray, the Republicans attacking him on both domestic and foreign policy, and a country descending into reaction. Nearly four million workers went out on strike in 1919, ranging from a general strike that began with a longshoreman's strike in early January in Seattle to a strike that virtually shut down the steel industry; even the Boston police struck for the right to join the AFL. Business and government aligned against labor, calling in militia and the military to break strikes. Across 1919 and into fall of the following year, federal troops were used twenty times to break strikes. The steelworkers, who often toiled seven days a week for as long as twelve hours a day, were denounced as disloyal foreigners and so-called progressives in Wilson's Cabinet authorized the army to intervene. Wilson had even considered enacting a peacetime sedition act to deal with such upheavals. As it was, the army marched into Gary, Indiana—the home of U.S. Steel—and declared martial law.³⁶

34. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 299–303 and 298 for quote of Will Durant and 305 for quote from the *New York Times*; see also, Kennedy, *Over Here*, 256–58; Julie Greene, *Pure and Simple Politics: The American Federation of Labor and Political Activism, 1881–1917* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Dawley, *Changing the World*, 262–64 and 283.

35. Kennedy, *Over Here*, 250 and 89.

36. Dawley, *Changing the World*, 265–66 and Kennedy, *Over Here*, 87. See also, David Brody, *Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, rev. edition, 1987); David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and Labor Activism, 1865–1925* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Dana Frank, *Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919–1929* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

The aftermath of the war indeed brought little good news for African Americans either. Demobilized white soldiers returned to industrial cities to claim back the jobs that African American migrants had taken during the war. Scaled-back production and the economic recession that started by early 1920, combined with racism, resulted in black men and women workers being fired and replaced by white men and women.³⁷ Almost twice as many African Americans were lynched in 1919 as had been in 1917. Northern cities where southern migrants had headed for the promise of economic and political opportunity now also faced a housing crisis that had been ignored during the wartime emergency. African American soldiers returned home determined to claim their rights as citizens having now served their country in wartime. What they found instead was white intransigence that led to racial rioting. Cities as diverse as Knoxville and Omaha witnessed these riots, but one of the worst outbreaks came in Chicago in the hot summer of 1919, when a white man threw rocks at a black boy swimming in Lake Michigan who had drifted into "white" territory. The boy died, police failed to charge the white attacker, and white and black residents fought each other in the streets, attacked streetcars, and burned homes and businesses. When the fighting stopped more blacks had been killed and injured than whites, and more black businesses and homes destroyed. Yet, the state's attorney declined to prosecute any of the white rioters.³⁸

Nor were African American hopes realized that the war might bring a new internationalism that would end imperialism and racism. As the war was ending, a National Equal Rights League meeting chose delegates to send to Europe to participate in peace gatherings that were taking place. Because Gompers and representatives of other areas of American society were being sent to Europe, the members of the Equal Rights League believed they were entitled to representation. But, as Ida B. Wells-Barnett reported, "none of us got to go because President Wilson forbade it." William Monroe Trotter and DuBois managed to get to Versailles but had little or no influence on the outcome. When the final version of the treaty maintained colonial rights, hopes of African Americans were even further dashed.³⁹

Part of this backlash against labor and African Americans reflected the fears produced in the United States by the 1917 Russian Revolution and socialist uprisings in Germany and elsewhere in Europe that followed war. Indeed, even during the war the army had drawn up "War Plans White," a secret plan to thwart revolution that targeted whole groups of Americans: "Presumed enemies

37. Gareth Cnaan, "'Part of the Loaf': Economic Conditions of Chicago's African-American Working Class During the 1920s," *Journal of Social History*, 35 (Fall 2001): 147–74.

38. William Tuttle, *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996 edition) and for wartime background, see Tuttle, "Contested Neighborhoods and Racial Violence: Prelude to the Chicago Riot of 1919," *Journal of Negro History*, 55 (October 1970): 266–88. See also, Tim Madigan, *The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001) and Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis* for other wartime and postwar racial rioting.

39. *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, Alfreda M. Duster, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 379.

included the entire population of immigrant Italians, Austrians, Hungarians, Poles, and other East European 'racial groups.'" African Americans were not to be trusted because of "their class consciousness, racial instincts, poverty, instinctive hostility to the white race and susceptibility to propaganda." Southern and east Europeans were suspected of bringing socialism and anarchism to the United States. After the war, the successes of Bolshevism abroad meant that every kind of political dissent inspired fears of revolution at home. In this hysterical environment, extreme measures became common. Following a series of dynamite bombs, including one sent to the home of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, the new Justice Department bureau was authorized to round up suspected terrorists and to invade meetings of any presumed radical groups. The Justice Department kept the anarchist labor agitator Carlo Tresca under close surveillance during the early 1920s, trying to discover whether he was a naturalized American citizen. The letters in the FBI surveillance file make it clear that the department was hoping to find that he was not and then to deport him. By the beginning of 1920, around 4,000, mainly immigrant "suspects" had been arrested. Almost 600 were eventually deported to Russia, including the professed anarchist Emma Goldman. Patriotic groups attacked meetings of presumed radicals. Business was able to wield these fears as a weapon against strikers. The mayor of Seattle, Ole Hanson, requested that federal troops be sent to the city, saying that the 60,000 strikers there were "deep Red revolutionists" who intended to seize government and implement Russian anarchy. Others claimed that labor agitation was being directed from Moscow. The House of Representatives refused to seat socialist Victor Berger, who had been elected from Wisconsin in 1918. Robert LaFollette raged helplessly against the hypocrisy of proclaiming to be making the world safe for democracy while persecuting people at home. He labeled Wilson's proposed League of Nations as just another aspect of an alliance of the powerful to subjugate and exploit the losers, just as winners had done after every other war.⁴⁰

Eugene Debs ran for president from jail in 1920 and earned almost one million votes. Still, these were only 3.4 percent of the total vote. The threat of a socialist takeover of the United States was never realistic. But the dream of industrial democracy that the Commission on Industrial Democracy had earlier proclaimed as vital for a democratic nation died in the ashes of World War I. So did many other progressive dreams. Health insurance plans were scuttled amid cries of bolshevism. The Keating-Owen legislation was overturned and a proposed child labor amendment failed. Plans to continue a national housing policy faded. The railroads were denationalized. Schemes for new agricultural colonies that would absorb returning soldiers and avoid the corporatization of agriculture secured only tepid support, and their rejection of African American or Asian American applicants further doomed any such programs. The Senate rejected the Versailles Peace Treaty and with it membership in the new League

40. Kennedy, *Over Here*, 288-92, gives a brief overall account of these events. The most thorough exploration remains Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (Minneapolis: McGraw Hill, 1964). For LaFollette, see Unger, *Fighting Bob LaFollette*, 265-73. For Tresca, see his FBI surveillance file at <http://foia.fbi.gov/foiaindex/tresca.htm>.

of Nations. Nationalism of a virulent variety usurped the progressive ideas of mutuality and collectivity. In 1919 the Supreme Court, led by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, upheld several of the wartime convictions, including that of Debs. This ruling set a new precedent that a determination of "clear and present danger" could be applied according to circumstance to limit freedom of speech. When Frederic Howe as commissioner of immigration for the port of New York delayed in deporting alien radicals he was forced out of his position. A progressive argument that social reconstruction was the cure for Bolshevism was lost in the Red Scare of 1919.⁴¹ If other businessmen were not as blunt as Rockefeller about God's provenance, they securely reasserted their control over the economy with the Republican victory of 1920.

41. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 349-50, 313, and 301; and Kennedy, *Over Here*, for the Supreme Court.



Peace, Not War: Women's Peace March, New York City (1914)
Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division,
LC-DIG-ggbain-17020

On August 29, 1914, 1,500 women, many clad in black mourning dress and others wearing black armbands, marched down Fifth Avenue in New York. To the beat of muffled drums, and led by a young woman carrying a banner picturing a dove and an olive branch and the word PEACE, these women were marching silently against war. The parade had been organized by Lillian Wald. Heading the marchers was Fanny Garrison Villard, the seventy-year-old daughter of the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Among those in the march were well-known progressive figures Wald and Addams, Mary Dreier and Leonora O'Reilly of the National Women's Trade Union League, suffrage leaders Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt, and more radical feminists Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Crystal Eastman. There was a contingent of 100 nurses from the Henry Street Settlement, "more than 100 socialist women, a group of 20 black women, and, in traditional dress, a Native American woman and a Chinese woman." What bound these disparate women together was a common rejection of war. War, as Jane Addams had earlier declared, was the old way of solving problems, not the progressive way. War meant nationalism, not internationalism. War was disastrous for women and children. War did not further democracy, rather, "war itself destroys democracy wherever it thrives and tends to entrench militarism."^{*}

^{*}For the parade, see Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: United States, 1877-1919* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), 296-97, and Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Some of Us Who Deal with the Social Fabric: Jane Addams Blends Peace and Social Justice," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 2 (January 2003): 91. Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch, and Alice Hamilton, *Women at the Hague*, Harriet Hyman Alonso, intro. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003 reprint), 37. See also, Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World's Peace and Women's Rights* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993).

Gender and Democracy in War and Peace

We do not admire the man of timid peace.

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT, 1899

Peace and bread had become inseparably connected in my mind.

—JANE ADDAMS, 1922

EDITH O'SHAUGHNESSY WAS married to a U.S. diplomat posted to Mexico from 1911-1914, the crucial years in the relationship between Mexico and the United States between the overthrow of the Díaz regime and the landing of U.S. troops at Veracruz. O'Shaughnessy went to Mexico thinking that the people there surely needed American help to overcome their backwardness. Her initial thoughts about Mexicans in many ways mirrored those of geographer Edward Becker. Other people were like children in need of help from the grown-up and responsible United States.

But her world was not that of the diplomat whose task was to carry out policy, nor was it that of the professional social scientist constructing theories around social structures. Hers was the everyday life of families, both hers and those of the women she employed as household help and the children that they often brought with them to work. Hers was also the world of deep poverty, encountered daily on the streets around her home. Home, parent, child were the three concepts around which her view of the world revolved. Seeing the world in this way, she began to believe that it was not Mexicans' inability to govern themselves, as some progressives and conservatives were charging and giving as the reason for U.S. intervention, but that it was precisely too much foreign intervention that was making it impossible for Mexicans to establish a stable government. She concluded that the United States "had used Mexico 'only as a quarry' for oil and precious metals." The United States—the parent—was not helping to create a home for the child—Mexico. Instead it was exploiting the country's turmoil to enrich itself.¹

1. Molly M. Wood, "A Diplomat's Wife in Mexico: Creating Political, Professional, and National Identities in the Early Twentieth Century," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, 25:3 (2004): 104-33, 116 for quote.

Her thinking is clearly paternalistic (or better put, maternalistic), but it caused her to have far more sympathy with Mexico and to abhor Wilson's Mexico policy more than most male progressives. William Jennings Bryan, for example, had turned in favor of more imperialism in the wake of continuing troubles in the Caribbean. O'Shaughnessy wanted the United States to emphasize the human needs of the Mexican people rather than the extraction of minerals and protection of U.S. property in developing a policy toward Mexico. On this basis she would campaign strenuously against Wilson in 1916.

One can deride the maternalistic instincts expressed by O'Shaughnessy and by other American women who traveled as diplomatic wives, religious missionaries, or educators to new U.S. possessions or other nonwestern countries.² It was the rare American who did not believe that she had more to offer than to gain from foreign residence. Yet, it is inescapably true that progressive women's emphasis on home, family, and children, their burgeoning belief in mutuality and collectively, and their rejection of the rhetoric of masculinity led many of them to oppose much U.S. foreign policy and especially World War I. Once the United States had entered the war and for years afterwards this belief in peace and internationalism would subject women peace advocates to continuing derision and to charges of subversion and even communism.

Addams' four stated objections to war—it is not progressive, it is not internationalistic, it is disastrous for women and children, and it destroys democracy—characterized an important gender distinction in progressivism that had run through all foreign policy development of the Progressive Era. This distinction would become more apparent as the United States was drawn ever nearer to becoming a co-belligerent. It would also contribute in great part to determining the fate of progressivism through the war years and after.

THE WOMEN'S PEACE PARTY

In the opening months of war in Europe Emmeline Pethwick-Lawrence from England and Rosika Schwimmer from Budapest toured the United States. Although they represented the opposing sides in the conflict, both women declared that war was the enemy of mankind. They urged American women to form a peace party that could help formulate reasonable peace terms to end the war and protest against the uselessness of war for settling international disputes. American women responded to this appeal: in January 1915, 3,000 women met to form the WPP. They named Jane Addams to chair the party and adopted an eleven-point platform detailing their ideas of the nature and purposes of foreign policy. The WPP dedicated itself to:

- An immediate convention of neutral nations in the interest of early peace
- Nationalization of armaments manufacture

2. For examples of work on American women and their foreign travel and impact, see Manako Ogawa, "'Hull-House' in Downtown Tokyo: The Transplantation of a Settlement House from the United States into Japan and the North American Missionary Women, 1919-1945," *The Journal of World History*, 15 (September 2004): 359-87; and Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984).

- Organized opposition to militarism
- Education of children in the ideals of peace
- Democratic control of foreign policies
- Women suffrage to further humanize governments
- A concert of nations rather than balance of power diplomacy
- Reorganization of the world to substitute law for war
- Use of economic pressure rather than armies and navies
- Removal of the economic causes of war
- Securing a government-appointed commission of men and women with an adequate appropriation to promote international peace

At the founding meeting Jane Addams bluntly stated why she believed that women were more concerned than men about peace: "I do not assert that women are better than men," she said, "but we would all admit that there are things concerning which women are more sensitive than men, and that one of these is the treasuring of life."³

Forty-seven American women accepted an invitation from English, Dutch, and Belgian women to participate in an International Women's peace conference at The Hague. Making this journey were Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch, Alice Hamilton, Mary Simkhovitch, and Leonora O'Reilly. Florence Kelley wished to attend, but the State Department denied her a passport. One thousand women representing twelve countries met from April 28 to May 1, 1915, and declared their two inseparable goals were to gain political equality and achieve international peace. They agreed at the conference to adhere to two principles: that henceforth all international disputes were to be resolved by "peaceable means"; and that the franchise for all women was indispensable for changing the means and method of foreign affairs. War, they declared, was a "horrible violation of women" and that what the world must have was a permanent peace "based on principles of justice." Jane Addams afterwards clarified that she did not believe that women were biologically or essentially against war, but that experience inclined them that way: "women, who have brought men into the world and nurtured them until they reach the age for fighting, must experience a peculiar revulsion when they see them destroyed, irrespective of the country in which these men may have been born."⁴

Other women believed that men actively stood in the way of peace. Speaking at a peace conference in July 1915 in San Francisco, Indiana suffrage activist May Wright Sewall declared to great applause that there was no disappointment that can compare with "the disappointment that the women of the world feel, that, at this stage of its development, the men of the world still continue to use armies as their instruments of rule; still continue

3. Jane Addams, *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, reprint edition, 2002), ch. 1, briefly outlines the events that led to forming the Woman's Peace Party and the planks of the WPP platform.

4. For the international congress, see Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch, and Alice Hamilton, *Women at the Hague*, Harriet Hyman Alonso, intro. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, reprint edition, 2003), xv, xviii, and 60-61. For the denial of a passport to Kelley, see Kathryn Kish Sklar, "'Some of Us Who Deal with the Social Fabric': Jane Addams Blends Peace and Social Justice," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 2 (January 2003): 94.

to believe that war is a proper method of adjusting their disagreements with other peoples." Addressing the same conference, WPP leader Harriet Thomas also spoke about the differences between men's and women's experiences that led to the formation of the women's party. "Because the women were free, because they were not bound by tradition and all these ancient ideas that men cling to in regard to this superstition of war, women were able to make this protest and this demand, and so the Women's Peace Party was organized."⁵

The Women's Peace Party preamble, which stated baldly that women were "the mother half of humanity," emphasized gender experiences over nationalism. Such sentiments caused the Wilson administration concern that women would continue to oppose war once the United States entered it, especially because the WPP had registered 40,000 members within a year of its organization. Wilson had additional cause for concern because of the popularity of a new song titled "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier." The chorus of the song emphasized women's potential opposition to war:

I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier,
I brought him up to be my pride and joy,
Who dares to put a musket on his shoulder,
To shoot some other mother's darling boy?
Let nations arbitrate their future troubles,
It's time to lay the sword and gun away,
There'd be no war today,
If mothers all would say,
I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier.

Theodore Roosevelt's manly retort to this song was that the proper place for women who opposed the war was "in China—or by preference in a harem—and not in the United States."

When the draft was enacted, the administration especially feared that women, as mothers, would obstruct it. The antipeace sentiment that was building well before mid-1917 specifically connected pacifism with feminine weakness. Theodore Roosevelt, of course, played his part in promoting such an idea. So did an ultraconservative male organization, the National Security League, composed largely of businessmen and financiers. When Jane Addams had returned from the Hague conference in 1915 she was surprised by the virulent antipacifism expressed in many newspapers. Even so, once the United States went to war, she admitted that she was unprepared for "the general unwillingness to admit any defect in the institution of war as such" and that it was even considered "unpatriotic . . . to discuss the very issues for which the war was being fought."⁶

5. For the San Francisco conference, see May Wright Sewall, "Women, World War and Permanent Peace," *Proceedings of International Conference of Women Workers to Promote Peace*, July 4–7, 1915 (San Francisco, 1915), 16 and 97.

6. Jane Addams, *Bread and Peace in Time of War*, 63. Song lyrics, and quote from Roosevelt, at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4942/>.

The cinema was used as a popular culture means to counteract women's professed pacifism and to bring all women, and not just peace activists, into line behind the war effort. The nascent film industry contributed to whipping up patriotism by producing several films in which "motherly love" was portrayed as women's domination of men; women's opposition to war was depicted as "hysterical, misplaced, and uncontrolled." Additional films then juxtaposed this image of the "bad mother" to that of the "good mother": she was the one who was now willing to sacrifice her son in service to his country.⁷ In fact, with the exception of anarchist Emma Goldman's "No Conscription" campaign, very few female peace workers tried to stop conscription once it was law. Jane Addams wrote of how painful it was that after having advised immigrant men to become citizens, she now had to watch them register for the draft. But she did so, even when one of them remonstrated against her for the consequences of having taken her advice. What Addams and the women's peace movement wanted was broader than opposing conscription and this war. And in the long run what they wanted was perhaps even more threatening. They wanted to de-glorify and de-legitimize war as the instrument for the settlement of international disputes. After the Hague conference, they formed the Women's International Committee for Permanent Peace to work for this goal. This committee spent the war seeking to convince the belligerents that the way to end hostilities was through international arbitration conducted by neutral nations, not by physically defeating the enemy. Because neutral nations had no nationalist interests at stake, the women believed that a conference of peoples from these nations could broker a peace that would satisfy both sides. But Addams and other women also believed that war could only be avoided for the future if all nations recognized their international interest in resolving hunger and exploitation around the world. Hence the title of her book on this subject, *Peace and Bread in Time of War*.

Such ideas directly contradicted the wartime ideas of Wilson. Wilson wanted to win the war so that he might impose a peace that would in turn impose democracy on the world. With democracy, he believed, international problems would be resolved. Addams wanted a peace that would bring "equality of social and economic conditions around the world"—an idea that can be understood as emanating directly from the ideals of social justice progressivism.⁸ The leaders of Wilson's administration and other men who vigorously supported going to war feared women's opposition and its potential influence in foreign affairs. On the one hand, this shows the progress women had made during the Progressive Era. Men now considered women a force to be reckoned with, even in foreign affairs. On the other hand, in their wartime propaganda and then in actions afterwards, men clearly tried to reassert their control over women.

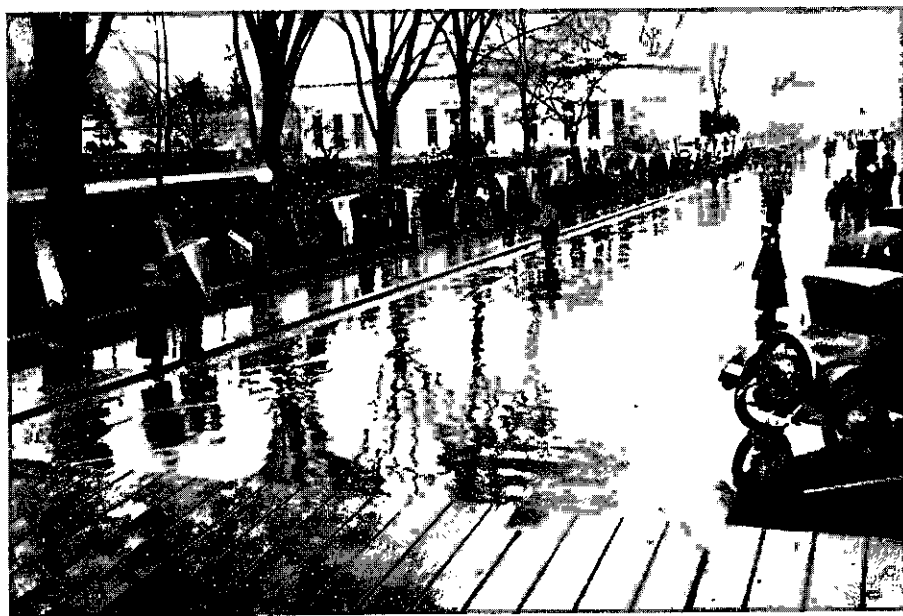
7. For the popular culture, including cinema, depiction of women, see Susan Zeiger, "She Didn't Raise Her Son to Be a Slacker: Motherhood, Conscription, and the Culture of the First World War," *Feminist Studies*, 22 (Spring 1996): 6–39. See also, Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

8. *Women at the Hague*, 64.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE

In the lead-up to the war, the woman suffrage amendment was languishing in Congress and Wilson refused to endorse it. The NAWSA, led by Carrie Chatman Catt, continued its campaign of persuasion, but suffragists who were unsatisfied with the slow progress being made by the NAWSA broke away in 1913 to form a new suffrage group they named the Congressional Union. In 1917, they changed the name to the National Woman's Party (NWP). With neither political party committing itself to the amendment in the 1916 presidential campaign, the NWP and its leader Alice Paul used Wilson's statements about democracy as a bludgeon to make him support woman suffrage. In early January 1917, NWP members and sympathizers, including NACW leader Mary Church Terrell and her daughter, began picketing the White House demanding passage of the suffrage amendment. The women displayed banners and signs accusing Wilson and the Democrats of fighting for democracy abroad while refusing to support it for American women. One of their banners asked "Mr. Wilson, how long must American women wait for liberty?" Other signs used Wilson's statements about entering the war for democratic reasons directly against him for not supporting the amendment.

After one particularly embarrassing episode for Wilson where a visiting delegation from Russia witnessed these pickets and signs, the women were ac-



Making Their Stand: Woman Suffrage Pickets Line the White House Fence (1917)
Source: *Women of Protest: Photographs from the Records of the National Woman's Party*, photograph by Harris & Ewing. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

cused of damaging international relations and police were ordered to begin arresting pickets. In response, Paul released a statement to the press declaring that:

it is those who deny justice, and not those who demand it, who embarrass the country in its international relations . . . the responsibility, therefore, is with the government and not with the women of America, if the lack of democracy at home weakens the government in its fight for democracy 3000 miles away.

In the atmosphere of 100 percent Americanism and loyalty, the behavior of the pickets soon became intolerable to the administration and to Wilson supporters. The right to peaceful assembly was attacked; pickets were arrested and physically thrown into jail; several were sentenced to jail on the charge of obstructing the sidewalk. Every time the women were arrested and then released the pickets returned to the White House despite police, public, and administration hostility. The finale of this "suffrage rioting," as it came to be called, was when several were arrested and jailed and Alice Paul was put into a psychiatric ward in solitary confinement. The jailed suffragists began a hunger strike and after several days prison authorities began to force-feed them. The reports of the women's treatment aroused so much public protest that the administration was forced to capitulate. In late 1917, Paul and the other women were released, and Wilson finally called for passage of the amendment.⁹

It is impossible to know how much longer women might have had to wait for the right to vote without World War I. It was clear in the state ratification campaign, however, that southern states remained adamantly opposed to passing suffrage in their individual states, so forcing the national amendment surely hastened all women receiving the right to vote. It is also clear that woman suffrage did not bring complete political and legal equality to women. Into the 1920s, the majority of states refused to allow women to serve on juries, or discriminated against them where allowed, as did one judge who excluded blondes from juries saying they were "fickle." Many states maintained discriminatory laws against married women's property rights and rights to children.¹⁰ To attack this continuing democratic inequality, the NWP would propose the Equal Rights Amendment, a move that would make it difficult to construct a solid woman's movement through the 1920s.

9. A good short description of the NWP picketing and the administration's response to it can be found in Sally (Sara) Hunter Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Woman Suffrage Movement," *Political Science Quarterly*, 98 (Winter 1983): 665-79. See also, Nancy Cott, "Feminist Politics in the 1920s: The National Woman's Party," *The Journal of American History*, 71 (June 1984): 43-68, esp. 43-47.

10. Morton Keller, *Regulating a New Society: Public Policy and Social Change in America, 1900-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 305-07. See also, Christine Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910-1928* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), for the NWP after suffrage and its promotion of the Equal Rights Amendment.

BACKLASH AGAINST SOCIAL JUSTICE

The majority of progressive activist women and women's organizations across the country supported the war effort, if not always the war itself. Those who went to Washington, or actively worked for the local defense councils, often viewed their war work as an opportunity to further their ideas of social justice domestically in hopes that these would carry over into peacetime and out into the world. Women kept up their pressure on the local level for reforms on infant and maternal health, pure food and milk, and clean air. At the Children's Bureau, Julia Lathrop declared that "the abolition of poverty is a necessity of the democratic State, and not an unattainable luxury." The Bureau and the Woman's Committee of the National Defense Council, pointing out the poor physical condition found among military recruits, lobbied for more attention to children's health care as part of the war effort. Wilson declared 1918 to be "Children's Year" and gave the Bureau \$150,000 from the wartime Defense Fund to implement children's programs, and women's organizations in many states responded enthusiastically and increased their child welfare work. New Mexico's women's clubs, for example, were finally able to establish a state Child Welfare Service. Wilson further cooperated with women's efforts by agreeing to hold a White House Conference on Children in the spring of 1919.¹¹

When the Women's Bureau became a permanent part of the Department of Labor in 1920 and the suffrage amendment passed, progressive women believed they had reason to be optimistic for the future. Yet a backlash against many progressive women's reform proposals had begun to take shape during the war. The pro-peace and pro-suffrage challenges of the WPP and the NWP were easy targets. The NAWSA had not helped when, after declaring total support for the war effort, it advocated censoring the NWP. Women quickly discovered that the backlash was not just for these stances but against women's ideas and their determination to insert them into public policy. Nevertheless, the integral role women had played in supporting the war effort made them believe that, having done their part, they were now entitled to participate in the peace process. Meeting a month after hostilities ceased, the NWTUL issued a document titled "Women and Reconstruction." The document declared that "the world-wide struggle for freedom and justice has not ended" and laid out the group's standards for attaining peace and justice in the world that it wanted to see created by the peace treaty. These women pointedly called it the "Treaty for Peace" to distinguish it from a treaty merely to end the war. Following in the footsteps of the WPP, the NWTUL believed that real peace could

11. Lathrop quoted in Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 98. See also, Kriste Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood": *The U.S. Children's Bureau and Child Welfare, 1912-46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 72-74; Jessica B. Peixotto, "The Children's Year and the Woman's Committee," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 79 (September 1918): 257-62; and Sandra Schackel, *Social Housekeepers: Women Shaping Public Policy in New Mexico, 1920-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 14. See also, Judith McArthur, *Creating the New Woman: The Rise of Southern Women's Progressive Culture in Texas, 1893-1918* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 124-27, for the work of Texas women.

not be gained unless the means to social justice were part of the postwar world. They called for a peace treaty that would resolve problems facing both belligerent and neutral nations. They wanted a treaty to enact new wage, hour, and health standards for labor; that would acknowledge the right of self-government of industry (meaning more worker control and unions); that would require universal woman suffrage; and that would enforce social protections for women and children, public ownership of natural resources, and demobilization plans that would not result in vicious competition for jobs. The NWTUL further called for an International Congress of Working Women to fight for and monitor the application of such standards.¹²

As the Versailles Peace Conference was meeting in 1919, the Women's International Committee for Peace met in Zurich hoping also to influence the negotiations. These women represented both the belligerent and neutral nations and were united in their concern for the postwar condition of women and children, especially the suffering caused by the widespread hunger that war had produced. So, while the men at Versailles argued over reparations and the ongoing blockade of German ports, the women at Zurich demanded an immediate end to the blockade and charged that the current conditions in Europe were a "disgrace to civilization." They

urged the Governments of all the Powers assembled at the Peace Conference immediately to develop the interallied organizations formed for purposes of war into an international organization for purposes of peace, so that the resources of the world—food, raw materials, finance, transport—shall be made available for the relief of the peoples of all countries from famine and pestilence.

When they learned the details of the proposed treaty, the women were dismayed at its pronounced nationalism and its failure to consider the human elements of hunger and disease. They warned that "by the financial and economic proposals [of the treaty] a hundred million people of this generation in the heart of Europe are condemned to poverty, disease and despair which must result in the spread of hatred and anarchy within each nation."¹³

Peace activist women's dismay at the treaty's neglect of human suffering deepened as they realized that the war's end would not bring international progressivism, yet they did not abandon their cause despite the refusal of the men at Versailles to listen to them. In 1919, they formed a permanent organization, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). In doing so, and by continuing to work for internationalism, these women became ready targets in the nationalist and anticommunist hysteria of the early 1920s. The NWTUL encountered suspicion and hostility when it attempted to form ties to an International Federation of Working Women. Hostility to women's internationalism was magnified because many Americans believed

12. "Women and Reconstruction: Being the Report of the Committee on Social and Industrial Reconstruction of the National Women's Trade Union League, Meeting in New York, December 9-12, 1918" (Chicago, 1919). A copy of this report can be found at the following: <http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/ww/outsidelink.html/http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:409249>.

13. For accounts of the Zurich conference and quotes, see Addams, *Bread and Peace in Time of War*, ch. 8.

that women were now meddling in affairs that were rightly none of their concern—that is, foreign policy. But disapprobation did not deter women such as Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch. They kept agitating to replace power politics with internationalism and social justice without which, they believed, there could be no lasting peace. Addams also condemned U.S. occupations in the Caribbean and Central America and warned that U.S. imperialism was increasing “militarism” in the world. Balch journeyed to Haiti with a delegation of African American women representing the International Council of Women of the Darker Races and reported that occupation of Haiti was also increasing imperialism and militarism.¹⁴

On the home front, much of women’s progressive agenda was thwarted, as national legislation to institutionalize social justice progressivism continued to elude them. In part this failure reflected divisions within women’s national organizations that had formed the Women’s Joint Congressional Committee in 1920. Women, for example, did not unanimously support a 1921 proposal to create a Department of Public Welfare to oversee education, public health, child welfare, and other social issues that President Warren G. Harding endorsed to bring expertise and efficiency to coordinate social issues. This emphasis on efficiency and expertise troubled women’s organizations, which worried that it would automatically place social issues into the hands of male bureaucrats and politicians. This was not paranoia on women’s part: since 1919, the male-dominated Public Health Service had been trying to take over the Children’s Bureau. They also feared that with so many problems to contend with, the proposed department would ignore one or more of them. The General Federation of Women’s Clubs, for instance, preferred either a Department of Health or a “distinct sub-division” of any Department of Welfare that would deal directly with children’s health issues.¹⁵

Women progressives continued to favor new legislation to implement social policy rather than leaving social issues to be decided upon by a government bureaucracy more concerned with efficiency than with social justice. When Congress passed the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infant Welfare bill in 1921, women celebrated a major step in that direction. Jeannette Rankin had first introduced the bill in 1918. Now it was reintroduced by congressmen who were scrambling to figure out the impact women voters might have in coming elections. Sheppard-Towner would provide federal funds for maternal and infant care to every state that passed enabling legislation to provide additional state funds. All but three states—Illinois, Massachusetts, and Connecticut—eventually complied, although in many states women had to fight hard for its accep-

14. Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 240–42, 299–301. See also, Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 191–92, 267.

15. Keller, *Regulating a New Society*, 180–81; Lucetta C. Chase, “The Social Program of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs: One Index of Fifty Years of Progress,” *Journal of Social Forces*, 1 (May 1923): 465–69. See also, “A National Department of Public Welfare: A Debate,” *Journal of Social Forces*, 2 (March 1924): 377–81. Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, 143–45 for Public Health Service maneuvers.

tance. The general arguments against it were the familiar ones that social justice progressives had long struggled against: opponents charged that it would raise taxes; that it was not a proper function of the federal government to involve itself in health care; and, according to the American Medical Association (AMA), that it intruded on their area of expertise. On the other hand, the Medical Woman’s National Association enthusiastically supported the measure. State legislatures, however, were still overwhelmingly male, as were entrenched professional organizations such as the AMA that wanted any available money to come their way. When New York’s Governor Nathan Miller spoke against the measure as a financial drain on the state, Florence Kelley warned him that as he had just appropriated \$125,000 of state funds for new hog barns at the state fairgrounds, at the next election women voters might not appreciate “that swine shelters appeal to him more strongly than dying mothers and babies.” When Miller was defeated for reelection the following year, the new governor, Al Smith, listened to his advisor Belle Moskowitz and immediately ratified it.¹⁶

Sheppard-Towner was only a partial victory for social justice progressives. The legislation was a “sunset” law. It would run for five years, after which Congress would consider whether to renew it. Women obviously hoped that the program would show such good results that renewal would be no problem. Women’s organizations throughout the country worked in their states to set up programs to administer the funds. They used the money to fund health conferences, set up prenatal care centers, distribute literature to pregnant women, and employ visiting nurses and female doctors. They initiated programs to train and license midwives to increase the safety of delivery among immigrant and rural white and black women where few physicians were available and among whom midwifery was a significant part of the culture. The \$17,430 they received from the first Sheppard-Towner funds enabled women in the geographically large and highly rural state of New Mexico to fund their first public health nurses to travel the state holding clinics for mothers and children. Thanks to Sheppard-Towner, between 1922 and 1929 infant mortality fell from 75 to 64 deaths per 1,000 live births, whereas maternal deaths fell from 67 to 62 per 1,000; the general death rate, by contrast, was actually rising.¹⁷

Further improvement was still possible: England’s maternal death rate was half that of the United States and New Zealand had an infant death rate of 36 per 1,000. Yet the program was barely renewed in 1927 and in 1929 it was allowed to die.¹⁸ One can find obvious suspects as reasons for dropping federal

16. Kelley quoted in Lindenmeyer, “A Right to Childhood,” 94. See also, J. Stanley Lemons, “The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s,” *The Journal of American History*, 55 (March 1969): 776–86; Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); and Muncy, *A Female Dominion*. For Smith and Belle Moskowitz, see Elisabeth Israels Perry, *Belle Moskowitz: Feminine Politics and the Exercise of Power in the Age of Alfred E. Smith* (New York: Routledge, 1987). Lathrop had made the case that what she had in mind for Sheppard-Towner was exactly the same kind of funding that the Smith-Lever had made available to states to subsidize rural county agent extension work.

17. Lindenmeyer, “A Right to Childhood,” 95–97, and Schackel, *Social Housekeepers*, 31–33.

18. See Lemons, “The Sheppard-Towner Act,” 786 and Lindenmeyer, 100 and 104–05 for statistics.

funding for infant and maternal health care. Distrust of big government, appeals to states' rights, and dislike of government intrusion into private life were all elements that helped to kill this program. But, to a great extent, the reasons are rooted in reaction against women, the lack of support that male progressives were willing to give to social justice programs, and to a backlash against any "un-American" ideas that had resulted from World War I. By the time of its renewal in 1927, President Coolidge did not support it, the AMA and the Public Health Service were adamantly opposed, and conservative women's groups argued that it was the work of "communist" women of the Children's Bureau.¹⁹

Although many "patriotic" and conservative organizations had attacked social reforms sponsored by women's organizations themselves, some of the most sustained and vicious attacks on women's progressivism after the war came from other groups of women. One particular group that had opposed woman suffrage kept up the attack through its newsletter called the *Woman Patriot*. Yet, these attacks could not have succeeded if men in power had been more sympathetic to a social justice agenda. In 1924, Henry Ford's publication, *The Dearborn Independent*, printed a chart prepared by the Department of War's Chemical Warfare Bureau that accused the Women's Joint Congressional Committee and its various member organizations of being enmeshed in the "spider's web" of Bolshevism. The headline to the chart read: "The Socialist-Pacifist Movement in America Is an Absolutely Fundamental and Integral Part of International Socialism." In effect, the chart accused all the major national and international women's organizations, and individuals such as Florence Kelley, Margaret Dreier Robins, and Belle LaFollette, among others, as belonging to this international conspiracy against democracy. The following week, the paper followed this up with a headline, "Are Women's Clubs Used by Bolsheviks?" Carrie Chapman Catt, who had advocated censoring the NWP in wartime, now repudiated these "attacks made upon individuals, any individuals, who have appealed to public opinion on behalf of world peace." She categorically rejected the charges being made that "the masses [sic] women within the many well-known organizations were being weakly played upon by a few women in 'key positions' who were linked to world communism and its aim to overturn all governments."²⁰

By 1929, the backlash against organized women sabotaged any chance of extending the Sheppard-Towner Act. The AMA remained in staunch, well-organized and well-funded opposition. *The Woman Patriot* sent out a thirty-six-page petition and letter on the "Bolshevist origins of the entire progressive program for children." It urged the end to Sheppard-Towner, charging that it, the Children's Bureau, child labor laws, and the child labor amendment were part of a "conspiracy to sovietize the United States." The petition described Florence Kelley as "the ablest legislative general Communism has produced" and went on to denounce Addams, Julia Lathrop, the Parent

19. Lindenmeyer, 101-02 and Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, 146-47.

20. *The Dearborn Independent*, March 15 and 22, 1924, and Carrie Chapman Catt, "Poison Propaganda," *The Women Citizen* (May 31, 1924): 32-33.

Teacher Association, the League of Women Voters, the Women's Bureau, the Children's Bureau, the WCTU, and all the member organizations of the Women's Joint Congressional Committee as part of this plot.²¹ Virtually the entire women's social justice network, with its millions of members, was thus denounced as communist and its social welfare objectives were pronounced a threat to democracy. The Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infant Welfare Program died as a national program. Some states continued to fund their own programs, but more federal funding for children's welfare had to wait until New Deal legislation.

WHY NO SOCIAL WELFARE STATE?

Why the United States did not adopt a national social welfare network before the New Deal, as happened across western Europe, remains a much debated question.²² Although Americans' suspicion of a centralized national state played a role in this outcome, many progressive reforms had already been enacted that vastly strengthened the federal government, including the income tax, the federal reserve, antitrust legislation, and the many economic regulations and their new federal bureaucracies. Yet, national health insurance, maternal and child medical care, an amendment against child labor, or a national housing policy to provide funds for cheap decent housing somehow remained unacceptable. The courts continued to obstruct welfare legislation, as when the Supreme Court ruled that the interstate powers of Congress could not be extended to limit child labor. And, unlike in European countries, there was no Labor Party to promote a social welfare program. Organized labor adamantly opposed national health insurance and male workers resisted any insurance program that would deduct contributions from their wages. Arguments that Sheppard-Towner was inappropriate because it invaded private life are disingenuous in that the country readily ratified the Prohibition Amendment that surely invaded private life and, as many charged, impinged upon the personal liberty that Americans so dearly cherished.²³

To a great extent the failure of progressive proposals to create a social welfare state can be attributed to prevailing ideas about gender.²⁴ Robyn Muncy's book, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, draws this conclusion. Women, especially through the Children's and Women's Bureaus, were not

21. Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 784-85.

22. The best transnational comparison can be found in Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). See also, Keller, *Regulating a New Society* and various essays in *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States*, Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1993).

23. For this, and other conclusions as to why so little social welfare, see, for example, Keller, *Regulating a New Society*, 178-80, 196, and 207. See also, Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 244, for worker resistance and Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, 132. See also, the essays in Michel and Koven, *Mothers of a New World* and Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

24. The issue of race and the welfare state in the early 1920s will be discussed in Chapter 13.

only the leading advocates of social welfare reforms, they wanted both a voice in creating new legislation and the power to implement it—they wanted their own dominion. Men in power refused to give way to women. The Sheppard-Towner Act had not given the male medical profession control over the funds, nor decisions on hiring and procedures. It had conferred much of it on the Children's Bureau and other women's organizations. The AMA referred to the women doctors working within Sheppard-Towner as social workers, not as doctors, to undercut public perception of them as medical authorities. Other opponents attacked the women of the "dominion" for stepping out of a woman's proper place. Sheppard-Towner opponent Senator James Reed railed against the "female celibates" in the Children's Bureau for daring to promote female professionalism. Furthermore, women's professionalism was seen as a threat because it was not predicated on business efficiency or on making money. Public service and cooperation were the driving forces behind the work of the Children's Bureau and the women working with Sheppard-Towner funds. Business values and the profit motive "were central to that of the AMA leadership," as they had been to most male organizations and businessmen throughout the Progressive Era. These conflicting sets of values had traveled along the paths of progressivism before the war but could not share a single road when national policy was at stake afterwards.²⁵

Female progressives had faced other difficult obstacles to promoting social welfare. Progressive women such as Kate Barnard had been able to make alliances with organized labor to enact child labor restrictions in Oklahoma. In Chicago, the WTUL had a good friend in John Fitzpatrick, the head of the Chicago Federation of Labor. Yet overall, organized labor had remained firmly against social welfare through government. Samuel Gompers declared compulsory health insurance as an alien concept that should be rejected because it originated in Germany, where the people's acceptance of authority and regulations was "far different from the spirit and the genius and the ideals of the American people. It is a difference of race psychology." Organized labor also resisted progressive pressure for old-age social insurance, objecting to any proposal that would deduct from workers' wages. Capitalism also thwarted compulsory health insurance. By wartime, there was a booming private insurance sector that was determined to stop any attempts to take insurance out of corporate hands. As was so often the case in the Progressive Era, the entire issue was clouded by conflicting social science statistics. For the insurance industry, Frederick Hoffman published *Facts and Fallacies of Compulsory Health Insurance*, purporting to prove that it would not work.²⁶

25. Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, 108, 125–35, and 139–50. See also, Skocpol, *Protecting Mothers and Soldiers*, 518, for list of women's organizations supporting continuation of Sheppard-Towner and Schackel, *Social Housekeepers*, 34–36 and 38–40. For the fate of national health insurance through the twentieth century, see Colin Gordon, *Dead on Arrival: The Politics of Health Care in Twentieth-Century America*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

26. Beatrix Hoffman, "Scientific Racism, Insurance, and Opposition to the Welfare State: Frederick L. Hoffman's Transatlantic Journey," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 2 (April 2003): 150–90, Gompers quoted 179, and Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 220–21, 242–44, 252–54, and 257–59.

Female progressives could see from early on that securing national health or old-age insurance would be a challenge. They also feared that, even if passed, such legislation would provide minimal benefits for women. Because so many working women moved in and out of the workforce for childbirth and other family reasons, they would never accumulate enough insurance to help them in old age. Women also doubted that any general insurance plans would ever cover pregnancy, childbirth, or child-care needs of women workers. For female progressives, mothers' pensions to help support poor women who were widows or deserted wives was a viable alternative. Historians have generally dismissed mothers' pensions programs because they reached small numbers of women, often involved means testing, did not pay enough to keep these women from having to work outside the home also, and were racially discriminatory when enacted.²⁷ On the other hand, within the context of progressive possibilities, mothers' pensions to protect some of the most vulnerable women was one of the few programs that they could hope to achieve. Moreover, in many places women were not even the original promoters of such laws and, once enacted, were not always happy with how they were carried out. In 1917, Sophonsiba Breckinridge complained that the idealism behind the concept of widows' pensions was compromised by means testing built into the system: "A pension granted only on proof of destitution after searching investigation and under continued supervision is not what most wage-earners wish for their wives and children." Daniel Rodgers' assessment that "the guiding tropes of the mothers' pension movement were sentiment and women's weakness" undoubtedly explains why some men supported this kind of welfare but not those that would have covered male workers. Such a blanket assessment does not necessarily hold for many female social justice reformers.²⁸

Social justice progressives labored under severe political limits also. The Children's Bureau may be faulted for rejecting a recommendation from the 1917 Conference on Infant and Maternal Welfare in Wartime that daycare facilities be provided for women working in war industries. The bureau believed that it was better for children if mothers not work, and argued that "local patriotic effort" should be used to avoid mothers having to work. Yet, there was absolutely no political likelihood of achieving state-funded child care in a society that would not even fund child health care nor abolish child labor.²⁹

27. For a variety of assessments of the idea of mothers' pensions, see Joanne L. Goodwin, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform: Mothers' Pensions in Chicago, 1911–1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Sonya Michel, *Children's Interests/Mothers' Rights: The Shaping of America's Child Care Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work*; Barbara J. Nelson, "The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State: Workmen's Compensation and Mothers' Aid," in *Women, the State, and Welfare*, Linda Gordon, ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Michael Willrich, "Home Slackers: Men, the State, and Welfare in Modern America," *The Journal of American History*, 87 (September 2000): 460–89; and Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 240–41. According to Katz, "Redefining 'the Political,'" 28, Los Angeles socialist women supported mothers' pensions.

28. Goodwin, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform*, and Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 241 for quote. Breckinridge quoted in Michel, *Children's Interests/Mothers' Rights*, 82. Original in Edith Abbott, "The Experimental Period of Widows' Pension Legislation," *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work* (1917): 163–64.

29. Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood," 72–73.

The Supreme Court's refusal to extend hours of labor protection to all workers had narrowed women's choices. The "entering wedge" strategy employed in the *Muller v. Oregon* case produced two divisive, and likely unintended, consequences for the future of progressive reform and for women's position in American society. Injecting a gendered notion of citizenship into economics made unavoidable an eventual split with those feminists who believed in total equal rights. The National Consumers' League, the NWTUL, and the NAWSA (and then the League of Women Voters) rejected the NWP and the Equal Rights Amendment, and the women's movement fractured. Progressive women's choice to focus on the rights and protections of women and children allowed progressive men thereafter to define women as being interested in social work while men were doing real politics. Chicago reformer George Sikes, for example, told the Illinois League of Women Voters that the men of the Chicago City Club could not support the "social issues" of the ILWV because the agenda of the City Club was "entirely political." His wife, Madeleine Wallin Sikes, was a leading figure in the ILWV. Another Chicago reformer, Charles Merriam, succinctly summed up the male view:

In my experience women have shown the keenest interest in the problems of schools, recreation, health, city waste, housing, the protection of women and children, the case of the immigrant, and in general all measures for the protection of the weak and helpless. Questions of finance, engineering, most public works, industrial controversies, and public utility problems, have been of less interest, although not without capable students.

In Seattle, men ridiculed the administration of Mayor Bertha Knight Landes as "petticoat rule" and when she stood for reelection her opponent refused to debate her on the issues.³⁰ When Mary (Molly) Dewson gathered the evidence for the 1,138-page brief arguing in favor of maintaining Washington, D.C.'s, minimum-wage law for women workers in 1923, she tried to change the debate. Women deserved a minimum wage, she argued, because they had been socially and economically disadvantaged in the past and they needed a minimum wage guaranteed so that they would not keep falling into poverty. The Supreme Court overturned the law, ruling that "now that women had the vote, they were no longer a dependent class, excluded from freedom of contract, but equal to men."

In the 1923 *Adkins* case, Dewson and progressive women's organizations tried to make a case for industrial equality that acknowledged that gender differences required different provisions for the workplace. Men, after all, did not get pregnant, go through childbirth, and have major child-care responsibilities. Social justice progressives did not think that women should be punished for

30. Interview with George Sikes, Illinois League of Women Voters Manuscript Collection, Box 6, folder 41, at Chicago Historical Society; Charles Merriam, *Chicago: A More Intimate View of Urban Politics* (New York: Arno, 1929), 156; and Sandra Haarsager, *Bertha Knight Landes of Seattle: Big-City Mayor* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 226-27. See also, Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing with Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002) and Kristi Andersen, *Women in Partisan and Electoral Politics Before the New Deal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

reproducing humanity. Not only did such arguments fail to impress the jurists, they continued to uphold more laws based on women's unequal nature. In 1924, the Court upheld a New York state law banning women's night work in restaurants in large cities. In *Radice v. New York* the Court cited the need for the state to protect "women's health and the public welfare." As historian Nancy Woloch has put it, with these two rulings working women were caught in a trap of men's making: "False paternalism (which deprived New York waitresses of high tips at night) and false equality (which denied Washington, D.C., workers a 'living wage') could coexist."³¹

Florence Kelley had understood that without labor legislation, women's equality would be linked to male standards within which women could never be equal.³² By the early 1920s, Kelley perceived that the entire political, social, and economic structure of the country was set to a male standard of what was natural and what was deviant. As long as that standard prevailed, women would always be judged as unequal even with their new political rights. What the social justice reformers of the women's dominion wanted was to change the rules on how society was organized. They wanted Americans and the law to acknowledge that gender difference did not mean inequality of democratic citizenship.³³

In the final analysis, the significance of gender for the meaning of democracy within progressivism came down to the following. Social justice progressives believed that social justice legislation and its enforcement would bring about real democracy. As Jane Addams had said, there could be no peace without bread. Florence Kelley believed there could be no democracy without social justice. Political and economic progressives such as Woodrow Wilson believed that a capitalist democracy, with safeguards against economic exploitation, would ultimately produce social justice. For these latter progressives, the forms of democracy were sufficient to produce democracy. To return to the two quotes that began this chapter, the idea of not admiring the "man of timid peace" as the way to organize society and the idea that both "bread and peace" must be guaranteed could not stand easily together.

31. For an assessment of the Washington, D.C., case, in the ruling *Adkins v. Children's Hospital*, see Nancy Woloch, *Muller v. Oregon: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996), 52-57.

32. Joan G. Zimmerman, "The Jurisprudence of Equality: The Women's Minimum Wage, the First Equal Rights Amendment, and *Adkins v. Children's Hospital*, 1905-1923," *The Journal of American History*, 78 (June 1991): 224-25 and 203 for Kelley.

33. For an excellent argument in this regard, see Wendy Sarvasy, "Beyond the Difference versus Equality Policy Debate: Postsuffrage Feminism, Citizenship, and the Quest for a Feminist Welfare State," *Signs* (Winter 1992): 329-62.