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During the summer and autumn of 1919, the Wilsonian peace was subjected to harsh criticism by American liberals and socialists on the Left and by the Lodge Republicans on the Right. The President's critics on the Left argued that the severe terms of the Treaty had laid the foundations for another world war, and as radicals they objected, therefore, to the involvement of American power, through the League of Nations, in what they saw essentially as an imperialistic and anti-revolutionary postwar extension of the Entente alliance. The President's critics on the Right approved of the Treaty's severity, but, seeking to maintain America's freedom of decision in foreign affairs inviolate, the Lodge Republicans opposed the League of Nations as a device for absorbing American power far too directly into the defense of the pro-Allied European settlement.

Thus, starting from entirely different premises, Wilson's critics on the Left and on the Right arrived at a similar condemnation of the League as a means for involving a pure America in the power politics of the Old World. In other words, despite their completely different attitudes toward the peace treaty with Germany, the President's radical and Republican critics both tended to denounce the League of Nations as an institution likely to absorb America into the wars of Europe and to make the United States, in effect, an instrument of the Allied powers. This isolationist fusion of radical and conservative anti-Wilsonianism was
perhaps best exemplified in the complex ideology of Senator William E. Borah, who joined Lodge in defending America's complete independence of action in foreign relations, and also joined the New Republic in attacking the League as a conservative alliance designed to check revolution and to guarantee Allied imperialism around the world.

The President thus faced considerable criticism, both from radicals and conservatives, directed at the Allies, the Versailles Treaty, and the League of Nations. Somehow Wilson had to convince the American people that the Allies were progressive and not imperialistic, and that the League was a device built to prevent wars and not to create them. Moreover, since, in their different ways, the President's critics on the Left and the Right both argued for the maintenance of America's isolation from European politics, Wilson had to establish that the Treaty and the League together represented an Americanization or a liberalization of world politics, rather than an absorption of a liberal-exceptionalist America into the complexities of the Old World's imperialistic diplomacy. Ultimately, the President would argue that only America's involvement in the League of Nations could make it possible to secure the continued triumph of liberalism over Germany's autocratic imperialism, to create an inclusive liberalized international order of peace and legitymacy transcending the traditional European balance of power system, and, finally, to defend the stability of such a projected liberal world order against the threat of revolutionary-socialism. In this broad sense, then, the ideological structure of Wilson's final speeches embodied a last passionate restatement of the President's vision of a new American-inspired liberal world order, safe both from traditional imperialism and from revolutionary-socialism, in which the moral and economic expansion of American liberalism could take place freely in an ordered open atmosphere of global harmony and legality.

At the heart of Wilson's defense of the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations Covenant lay his idea that the results of the Paris Peace Conference represented the fulfillment of America's liberal-exceptionalist mission to liberate oppressed peoples and to reform the traditional war-producing diplomacy of the European balance of power. In the President's view, it was fitting for an American nation-state, whose own national tradition was based on an original triumph of progressive liberal values over European reaction, to be the disinterested and trusted leader of mankind at the moment of liberal-internationalism's final victory over the atavistic restraints of traditional reaction. For Wilson, the United States had a moral duty to participate in the American-inspired League of Nations, not only to ensure fully the triumph of world democracy and Slavic self-determination over German imperialism, but, more broadly, to support a new "Lockeanized" world order, under international law, within which American liberal values would remain victorious over Europe's traditional balance of power diplomacy. For all these reasons, the President sought to commit America to give its liberal leadership to the League of Nations, thereby ensuring that the triumph of world liberalism over German and/or European imperialism would remain a permanent triumph.

Yet, while the main emphasis in Wilson's defense of the Versailles Treaty and the League Covenant was on America's responsibility to fulfill its liberal anti-imperialist mission through leadership in the League, the President did not ignore the related function of the progressive League program in containing revolutionary-socialist pressures. Time and again during our analysis of the theory and practice of Wilsonian diplomacy, we have had occasion to remark upon the manner in which the Administration's liberal anti-imperialism also served a related anti-Bolshevik function. Indeed, it is clear that the essential Wilsonian endeavor to reform international politics from within in a non-revolutionary manner was implicitly anti-Leninist in its values and assumptions. It is not surprising, then, that on several occasions, during his final speaking tour in early autumn 1919, Wilson chose to defend the Treaty and the League as liberal barriers to possible revolu-
tionary-socialist tendencies among the world's restless masses. In his speeches the President often argued that America had a duty to support a progressive liberalization of the old imperialistic world power structure, partly to show restive peoples everywhere that the evils of international politics could be reformed without socialist revolution.  

At Bismarck, North Dakota, on September 10, 1919, Wilson made quite explicit his sense of the relationship between America's missionary anti-imperialism and America's liberal anti-Bolshevism:

It is a noble prospect. It is a noble opportunity. My pulses quicken at the thought of it. I am glad to have lived in a day when America can redeem her pledges to the world, when America can prove that her leadership is the leadership that leads out of these age-long miseries into which the world will not sink back, but which, without our assistance, it may struggle out of only through a long period of bloody revolution. The peoples of Europe are in a revolutionary frame of mind. They do not believe in the things that have been practiced upon them in the past, and they mean to have new things practiced. In the meantime they are, some of them, like pitiful Russia, in danger of doing a most extraordinary thing, substituting one kind of autocracy for another. Russia repudiated the Czar, who was cruel at times, and set up her present masters, who are cruel all the time and pitiful nobody, who seize everybody's property and feed only the soldiers that are fighting for them; and now, according to the papers, they are likely to brand every one of those soldiers so that he may not easily, at any rate, escape their clutches and desert. Branding their servants and making slaves of a great and loveable people! There is no people in the world fuller of the naive sentiments of good will and of fellowship than the people of Russia, and they are in the grip of a cruel autocracy that dares not, though challenged by every friendly Government in Europe, assemble a constituency; they dare not appeal to the people. They know that their mastery would end the minute the people took charge of their own affairs. Do not let us expose any of the rest of the world to the necessity of going through any such terrible experience as that, my fellow countrymen. We are at present helpless to assist Russia, because there are no responsible channels through which we can assist her. Our heart goes out to her, but the world is disordered, and while it is disordered—we debate!  

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Obviously, the Wilsonian liberal struggle against imperialism and war was ideologically fused with the Wilsonian liberal struggle against Leninist revolutionary-socialism.

Finally, however, it must be re-emphasized that Wilson's anti-imperialist and anti-Bolshevik sense of America's liberal-exceptionalist missionary idealism was perfectly compatible with his sense of America's national self-interest. It is clear, for instance, that the President saw America's future commercial expansion as assured, providing that the United States chose to maintain its moral and financial world leadership by doing its part, through the League of Nations, to support an economically stable and non-revolutionary liberal-international order. On September 5, 1919, speaking in St. Louis, Wilson succinctly conveyed his sense of the inseparable relationship between, on the one hand, America's economic and political national interests and, on the other, America's missionary liberal duty to the rest of mankind:

I have sometimes heard gentlemen discussing the questions that are now before us with a distinction drawn between nationalism and internationalism in these matters. It is very difficult for me to follow their distinction. The greatest nationalist is the man who wants his nation to be the greatest nation, and the greatest nation is the nation which penetrates to the heart of its duty and mission among the nations of the world. With every flash of insight into the great politics of mankind, the nation that has that vision is elevated to a place of influence and power which it cannot get by arms, which it cannot get by commercial rivalry, which it can get by no other way than by that spiritual leadership which comes from a profound understanding of the problems of humanity.  

(In sum, then, the President envisioned America as the moral and the commercial leader of a new liberalized international order, safe both from traditional imperialism and from revolutionary-socialism, in which world trade and world politics would henceforth be conducted on America's liberal terms.)

It is important to note that there was something in the President's defense of the Treaty and the League for practically every
shade in the spectrum of postwar American public opinion. The more conservative pro-League elements, centered on William Howard Taft and The New York Times, could take heart from the more explicitly pro-Allied, anti-German, and anti-Bolshevik portions of Wilson's speeches. For their part, more business-oriented and liberal-internationalist elements, centered on men such as Herbert Hoover and Thomas Lamont, could support Wilson's fusion of America's expansive economic interests with the larger task of reintegrating Germany into an anti-Bolshevik European liberal-capitalist order. Finally, moderate-liberals, led by journals such as The Public and the Springfield Republican, could respond to Wilson's claims that while the Covenant might not have brought immediate utopia, it had nevertheless succeeded in establishing the machinery for American leadership in the future maintenance of international justice and peace. Indeed, many pro-League liberals insisted that it was necessary to abandon dangerous utopian visions and to seek instead to reform the world from within an ordered system of controls which discouraged both imperialist aggression and socialist revolution.

Wilsonian ideology was unable, however, to co-opt all American elements into the liberal internationalist consensus. Many Republican critics, gathering around Henry Cabot Lodge, approved the basically punitive nature of the Versailles Treaty, but they objected to Wilson's having allowed the Allies, through the Covenant, to absorb American power into what appeared to the Lodge group to be a permanent European alliance system. The Lodge Republicans had desired a harsh anti-German peace coupled with a strong militant posture against Bolshevism, but they had expected that the European Allies and the new Eastern European states would supply the necessary military and political power. After unleashing the Entente on Germany and Bolshevism, the United States, in the opinion of the Lodge group, should have remained only loosely associated with its wartime allies, while retaining both its Western Hemisphere sphere of influence and its ultimate freedom of decision in foreign relations.

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By the latter half of 1919, therefore, the Lodge Republicans had shifted from an earlier anti-Wilsonian and pro-Allied position to what was, in effect, an anti-Wilsonian and anti-Allied position. At the same time, many on the American Left were unwilling to give up utopian dreams and join in a pragmatic defense of the League of Nations. Their disillusionment with Wilson was all the greater since, in the spring and early summer of 1918, many American Left-liberals and socialists, who had begun by opposing Wilson's liberal war, had come to give de facto support to the struggle against Imperial Germany both as a quasi-revolutionary war and as a means of saving the Bolshevik Revolution from German imperialism. Such men (of whom even Eugene Debs was, for a time, one), hoped ultimately for some sort of fusion between Wilsonian and Leninist values which would legitimize their growing implicit support for the war against German imperialism.

Needless to say, however, all those Americans who hoped for any sort of Wilson-Lenin co-operation, either largely on Wilson's terms or on Lenin's were greatly disappointed by the Versailles Treaty. Left-liberals, gathering around the Nation and the New Republic, were angry that Wilson had made so many concessions to the French and that he had failed to unite with European democratic-socialists to build a new radical liberal world order which would fully embrace both a reformed Germany and a domesticated Lenin. American socialists, for their part, were opposed to the League of Nations in particular and to Wilsonian diplomacy in general, as barriers to revolution. Finally, in Washington, the anti-League Left received the strong support of such radical liberal senators as Borah, Johnson, La Follette, and Norris. The liberal isolationism of these men was born both of disillusioned hopes for a Wilsonian Americanization of world politics and of opposition to what they conceived to be the involvement of America through the League in a reactionary and anti-revolutionary alliance.

It is well known that, through a combination of personal and
political factors, Wilsonians were defeated in the Senate on the issue of the League of Nations. Moreover, ensuing Republican Administrations, while in no sense pursuing a strictly "isolationist" foreign policy, did, nonetheless, refuse to play exactly the type of role in international politics that Woodrow Wilson had envisioned for the United States. Yet looking back, what seems clear is that Wilsonianism, even while losing the battle over the League of Nations, eventually triumphed in the more long-term struggle over the ultimate definition of the nature of twentieth-century American foreign policy. Wilson established the main drift toward an American liberal globalism, hostile both to traditional imperialism and to revolutionary-socialism. Many who had been associated with Wilson, or who accepted the essentials of his world view, such as Herbert Hoover, Cordell Hull, Franklin Roosevelt, and John Foster Dulles, would continue in later periods to identify America's expansive national interest with the maintenance of a rational and peaceful international liberal order. Ultimately, in the post-World War II period, Wilsonian values would have their complete triumph in the bi-partisan Cold War consensus.

Abbreviations Used in the Notes for Woodrow Wilson and World Politics

D.S.N.A. Records of the Department of State, National Archives.
DLC The Library of Congress.
FR United States Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States.

NOTES

CHAPTER I: WAR AND REVOLUTION, I

1 Ray Stannard and William E. Dodd (eds.), The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson (6 vols., New York, 1925-27), II, p. 375 (hereafter cited as PPWW); see also PPWW, II, pp. 332, 359, 408; for Wilson's views on the international significance of American