

THE AMERICAN YAWP READER

A Documentary Companion to the
American Yawp

Volume II

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Table of Contents

Introduction	7
16. Capital and Labor.....	9
William Graham Sumner on Social Darwinism (ca.1880s)	10
Henry George, <i>Progress and Poverty</i> , Selections (1879).....	12
Andrew Carnegie’s Gospel of Wealth (June 1889)	14
Grover Cleveland’s Veto of the Texas Seed Bill (February 16, 1887).....	16
The “Omaha Platform” of the People’s Party (1892)	18
Dispatch from a Mississippi Colored Farmers’ Alliance (1889)	23
The Tournament of Today – A Set-To Between Labor and Monopoly	27
Lawrence Textile Strike (1912).....	28
17. The West	29
Chief Joseph on Indian Affairs (1877, 1879).....	30
William T. Hornady on the Extermination of the American Bison (1889)	32
Chester A. Arthur on American Indian Policy (1881)	35
Frederick Jackson Turner, “Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893)	37
Turning Hawk and American Horse on the Wounded Knee Massacre (1890/1891)	39
Laura C. Kellogg on Indian Education (1913).....	41
Helen Hunt Jackson on a Century of Dishonor (1881).....	43
Tom Torlino (1882, 1885)	45
Frances Densmore and Mountain Chief (1916)	46
18. Life in Industrial America	47
Andrew Carnegie on “The Triumph of America” (1885).....	48
Henry Grady on the New South (1886).....	50
Ida B. Wells-Barnett, “Lynch Law in America” (1900)	52
Henry Adams, <i>The Education of Henry Adams</i> (1918).....	54
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “Why I Wrote <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i> ” (1913).....	55
Jacob Riis, <i>How the Other Half Lives</i> (1890).....	57
Mulberry Street, New York City (ca. 1900)	61
Luna Park.....	62
19. American Empire.....	63
William McKinley on American Expansionism (1903)	64
Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden” (1899)	65

James D. Phelan, “Why the Chinese Should Be Excluded” (1901)	67
William James on “The Philippine Question” (1903)	69
Mark Twain, “The War Prayer” (ca.1904-5).....	70
Chinese Immigrants Confront Anti-Chinese Prejudice (1885, 1903)	72
African Americans Debate Enlistment (1898).....	75
“School Begins,” Puck, January 25, 1899.	76
“Declined With Thanks” (1900).....	77
20. The Progressive Era	78
Booker T. Washington & W.E.B. DuBois on Black Progress (1895, 1903)	79
Jane Addams, “The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements” (1892)	82
Eugene Debs, “How I Became a Socialist” (April, 1902).....	84
Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis (1907).....	86
Alice Stone Blackwell, Answering Objections to Women’s Suffrage (1917)	88
Woodrow Wilson on the New Freedom (1912)	91
Theodore Roosevelt on “The New Nationalism” (1910)	93
“Next!” (1904)	95
College Day on the Picket Line.....	96
21. World War I & Its Aftermath.....	97
Woodrow Wilson Requests War (April 2, 1917).....	98
Alan Seeger on World War I (1914; 1916)	101
The Sedition Act of 1918 (1918)	103
Emma Goldman on Patriotism (July 9, 1917)	105
W.E.B DuBois, “Returning Soldiers” (May, 1919)	106
Lutiant Van Wert describes the 1918 Flu Pandemic (1918).....	108
Manuel Quezon calls for Filipino Independence (1919)	110
Boy Scout Charge (1917)	112
Uncle Sam	113
22. The New Era	114
Warren G. Harding and the “Return to Normalcy” (1920)	115
Crystal Eastman, “Now We Can Begin” (1920)	117
Marcus Garvey, Explanation of the Objects of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (1921)	120
Hiram Evans on the “The Klan’s Fight for Americanism” (1926).....	122
Herbert Hoover, “Principles and Ideals of the United States Government” (1928)	124
Ellen Welles Page, “A Flapper’s Appeal to Parents” (1922)	128
Alain Locke on the “New Negro” (1925)	130
Advertisements (1924)	132

Klan Gathering (ca. 1920s)	133
23. The Great Depression	134
Herbert Hoover on the New Deal (1932)	135
Huey P. Long, “Every Man a King” and “Share our Wealth” (1934)	137
Franklin Roosevelt’s Re-Nomination Acceptance Speech (1936)	142
Second Inaugural Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt (1937).....	145
Lester Hunter, “I’d Rather Not Be on Relief” (1938)	147
Bertha McCall on America’s “Moving People” (1940).....	150
Dorothy West, “Amateur Night in Harlem” (1938).....	152
Family Walking on Highway 1936.....	154
“Bonus Army Routed” (1932)	155
24. World War II	156
Charles A. Lindbergh, “America First” (1941)	157
A Phillip Randolph and Franklin Roosevelt on Racial Discrimination in the Defense Industry (1941)	159
The Atlantic Charter (1941).....	161
FDR, Executive Order No. 9066 (1942).....	163
Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga on Japanese Internment (1942/1994)	165
Harry Truman Announcing the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima (1945)	168
Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1945)	171
Tuskegee Airmen (1941)	174
WWII Posters.....	175
25. The Cold War	176
The Truman Doctrine (1947)	177
NSC-68 (1950).....	179
Joseph McCarthy on Communism (1950).....	182
Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Atoms for Peace” (1953)	184
Senator Margaret Chase Smith’s “Declaration of Conscience” (1950)	187
Lillian Hellman Refuses to Name Names (1952).....	190
Paul Robeson’s Appearance Before the House Un-American Activities Committee (1956)	192
Atomic Energy Lab 1951-1952	195
Duck and Cover (1951)	196
26. The Affluent Society.....	197
Juanita Garcia on Migrant Labor (1952)	198

Hernandez v. Texas (1954)	200
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)	203
Richard Nixon on the American Standard of Living (1959)	205
John F. Kennedy on the Separation of Church and State (1960)	208
Congressman Arthur L. Miller Gives “the Putrid Facts” About Homosexuality” (1950)	210
Rosa Parks on Life in Montgomery, Alabama (1956-1958)	212
1959 Little Rock Rally	215
“In the Suburbs” (1957)	216
27. The Sixties	217
Barry Goldwater, Republican Nomination Acceptance Speech (1964)	218
Lyndon Johnson on Voting Rights and the American Promise (1965)	220
Lyndon Johnson, Howard University Commencement Address (1965).....	223
National Organization for Women, “Statement of Purpose” (1966)	225
George M. Garcia, Vietnam Veteran, Oral Interview (1969/2012).....	228
The Port Huron Statement (1962)	232
Fannie Lou Hamer: Testimony at the Democratic National Convention 1964.....	235
Civil Rights Images (1964, 1965).....	238
Women’s Liberation March (1970).....	240
28. The Unraveling	241
Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968)	242
Statement by John Kerry of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (1971).....	245
Nixon Announcement of China Visit (1971)	247
Barbara Jordan, 1976 Democratic National Convention Keynote Address (1976)	249
Jimmy Carter, “Crisis of Confidence” (1979)	251
Gloria Steinem on Equal Rights for Women (1970)	254
Native Americans Occupy Alcatraz (1969)	257
New York City Subway (1973).....	260
“Stop ERA” Protest (1977)	261
29. The Triumph of the Right.....	262
First Inaugural Address of Ronald Reagan (1981)	263
Jerry Falwell on the “Homosexual Revolution” (1981)	265
Statements of AIDS Patients (1983).....	267
Statements from The Parents Music Resource Center (1985)	270
Pat Buchanan on the Culture War (1992)	272
Phyllis Schlafly on Women’s Responsibility for Sexual Harassment (1981)	275
Jesse Jackson on the Rainbow Coalition (1984)	278

Satellites Imagined in Orbit (1981)	280
Ronald Reagan and the American Flag (1982)	281
30. The Recent Past	282
Bill Clinton on Free Trade and Financial Deregulation (1993-2000)	283
The 9/11 Commission Report, “Reflecting On A Generational Challenge” (2004)	286
George W. Bush on the Post-9/11 World (2002)	289
Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)	292
Pedro Lopez on His Mother’s Deportation (2008/2015)	295
Chelsea Manning Petitions for a Pardon (2013)	297
Emily Doe (Chanel Miller), Victim Impact Statement (2015)	299
Ground Zero (2001)	301
Barack Obama and a Young Boy (2009)	302

Introduction



Civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. 1965. Via [Library of Congress](#).

Primary sources are the raw materials of history: written accounts, physical objects, and visual material allow historians to build narratives and construct arguments. Letters, diaries, written publications, laws, artwork, buildings, skeletal remains, environmental data, and even oral histories can all provide the first-hand evidence that historians need to make convincing arguments about the past and to properly evaluate the historical arguments made by others. Historians work primary sources into secondary and even tertiary sources: the books and textbooks assigned to students. They all rely, one way or another, on primary sources.

Students of history must know how to analyze and critically evaluate primary sources, for primary sources can distort as much as they reveal. The voice of slaves, for instance, can be drowned out by the letters and journals of slaveholders. We can produce more honest histories by interrogating our sources, asking questions such as, Who created this source? Who was their audience? How might their beliefs and perspectives have influenced their understanding? In the case of slavery, for instance, a critical eye is often needed to read between the lines and uncover forgotten histories hidden within the materials available to us. Historians must make the most of the sources they have. But while some eras and some topics lack abundant primary sources, others have almost too many, often more than any single historian can read and analyze. Under such conditions it can be tempting to cherry pick sources and create a narrative of one's own choosing, but good historians must read widely and maintain an open but critical mind to discover patterns and produce historical insights.

Just as historians must approach their sources with a critical eye, so too must they be aware of their own preconceptions and biases—their own place in history. “The past is a foreign country,” novelist L.P. Hartley wrote, “they do things differently there.” We must be critical of ourselves. We cannot expect individuals in the past to know what we know or to behave as we behave. They had their own ideas and their own dreams. They viewed the world differently than we do. So if we are to understand the past, we must begin by recognizing the present. The more we study the past, the more we come to understand ourselves.

Learning to ask good questions is an important historical skill, yet we will often not know which questions to ask until we have steeped ourselves in primary sources. You may already

have questions in mind as you read and evaluate the sources in this reader, but you should also pay attention to any thoughts, emotions, and historical questions that they may provoke. History is a conversation between the past and present, and, by reading the following sources and thinking critically about them, we hope that you will bring bring your own curiosity and creativity to the conversation.

16. Capital and Labor

Introduction

Industrialization remade the United States. At the turn of the twentieth century, powerful capitalists, middle class managers, and industrial and agricultural labors confronted a new world of work and labor in the United States. While many benefited from the material gains of technological progress, others found themselves trapped in cycles of poverty and hopelessness and strikes, protests, and political warfare rocked American life as workers adjusted themselves to a new industrial order. The following sources explore the mindsets of American suddenly confronted with a new world of concentrated capital and industrial labor.

William Graham Sumner on Social Darwinism (ca.1880s)

William Graham Sumner, a sociologist at Yale University, penned several pieces associated with the philosophy of Social Darwinism. In the following, Sumner explains his vision of nature and liberty in a just society.

The struggle for existence is aimed against nature. It is from her niggardly hand that we have to wrest the satisfaction for our needs, but our fellow-men are our competitors for the meager supply. Competition, therefore, is a law of nature. Nature is entirely neutral; she submits to him who most energetically and resolutely assails her. She grants her rewards to the fittest, therefore, without regard to other considerations of any kind. If, then, there be liberty, men get from her just in proportion to their works, and their having and enjoying are just in proportion to their being and their doing. Such is the system of nature. If we do not like it, and if we try to amend it, there is only one way in which we can do it. We can take from the better and give to the worse. We can deflect the penalties of those who have done ill and throw them on those who have done better. We can take the rewards from those who have done better and give them to those who have done worse. We shall thus lessen the inequalities. We shall favor the survival of the unfittest, and we shall accomplish this by destroying liberty. Let it be understood that we cannot go outside of this alternative; liberty, inequality, survival of the fittest; not-liberty, equality, survival of the unfittest. The former carries society forward and favors all its best members; the latter carries society downwards and favors all its worst members.

For three hundred years now men have been trying to understand and realize liberty. ... What we mean by liberty is civil liberty, or liberty under law; and this means the guarantees of law that a man shall not be interfered with while using his own powers for his own welfare. It is, therefore, a civil and political status; and that nation has the freest institutions in which the guarantees of peace for the laborer and security for the capitalist are the highest. Liberty, therefore, does not by any means do away with the struggle for existence. We might as well try to do away with the need of eating, for that would, in effect, be the same thing. What civil liberty does is to turn the competition of man with man from violence and brute force into an industrial competition under which men vie with one another for the acquisition of material goods by industry, energy, skill, frugality, prudence, temperance, and other industrial virtues. Under this changed order of things the inequalities are not done away with. Nature still grants her rewards of having and enjoying, according to our being and doing, but it is now the man of the highest training and not the man of the heaviest fist who gains the highest reward. It is impossible that the man with capital and the man without capital should be equal. To affirm that they are equal would be to say that a man who has no tool can get as much food out of the ground as the man who has a spade or a plough; or that the man who has no weapon can defend himself as well against hostile beasts or hostile men as the man who has a weapon. If that were so, none of us would work any more. We work and deny ourselves to get capital just because, other things being equal, the man who has it is

superior, for attaining all the ends of life, to the man who has it not. Considering the eagerness with which we all seek capital and the estimate we put upon it, either in cherishing it if we have it, or envying others who have it while we have it not, it is very strange what platitudes pass current about it in our society so soon as we begin to generalize about it. If our young people really believed some of the teachings they hear, it would not be amiss to preach them a sermon once in a while to reassure them, setting forth that it is not wicked to be rich, nay even, that it is not wicked to be richer than your neighbor.

It follows from what we have observed that it is the utmost folly to denounce capital. To do so is to under- mine civilization, for capital is the first requisite of every social gain, educational, ecclesiastical, political, aesthetic, or other.

Source: William Graham Sumner, The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays, edited by Albert Galloway Keller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1914).

Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*, Selections (1879)

In 1879, the economist Henry George penned a massive bestseller exploring the contradictory rise of both rapid economic growth and crippling poverty.

This association of poverty with progress is the great enigma of our times. It is the central fact from which spring industrial, social, and political difficulties that perplex the world, and with which statesmanship and philanthropy and education grapple in vain. From it come the clouds that overhang the future of the most progressive and self-reliant nations. It is the riddle which the Sphinx of Fate puts to our civilization, and which not to answer is to be destroyed. So long as all the increased wealth which modern progress brings goes but to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury and make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and cannot be permanent. The reaction must come. The tower leans from its foundations, and every new story but hastens the final catastrophe. To educate men who must be condemned to poverty, is but to make them restive; to base on a state of most glaring social inequality political institutions under which men are theoretically equal, is to stand a pyramid on its apex.

...

... the evils arising from the unjust and unequal distribution of wealth, which are becoming more and more apparent as modern civilization goes on, are not incidents of progress, but tendencies which must bring progress to a halt; that they will not cure themselves, but, on the contrary, must, unless their cause is removed, grow greater and greater, until they sweep us back into barbarism by the road every previous civilization has trod. But it also shows that these evils are not imposed by natural laws; that they spring solely from social mal-adjustments which ignore natural laws, and that in removing their cause we shall be giving an enormous impetus to progress.

...

Equality of political rights will not compensate for the denial of the equal right to the bounty of nature. Political liberty, when the equal right to land is denied, becomes, as population increases and invention goes on, merely the liberty to compete for employment at starvation wages. This is the truth that we have ignored. And so there come beggars in our streets and tramps on our roads; and poverty enslaves men whom we boast are political sovereigns; and want breeds ignorance that our schools cannot enlighten; and citizens vote as their masters dictate; and the demagogue usurps the part of the statesman; and gold weighs in the scales of justice; and in high places sit those who do not pay to civic virtue even the compliment of hypocrisy; and the pillars of the republic that we thought so strong already bend under an increasing strain.

We honor Liberty in name and in form. We set up her statues and sound her praises. But we have not fully trusted her. And with our growth so grow her demands. She will have no half service!

Liberty! it is a word to conjure with, not to vex the ear in empty boastings. For Liberty means Justice, and Justice is the natural law—the law of health and symmetry and strength, of fraternity and co-operation.

They who look upon Liberty as having accomplished her mission when she has abolished hereditary privileges and given men the ballot, who think of her as having no further relations to the every-day affairs of life, have not seen her real grandeur—to them the poets who have sung of her must seem rhapsodists, and her martyrs fools! As the sun is the lord of life, as well as of light; as his beams not merely pierce the clouds, but support all growth, supply all motion, and call forth from what would otherwise be a cold and inert mass, all the infinite diversities of being and beauty, so is liberty to mankind. It is not for an abstraction that men have toiled and died; that in every age the witnesses of Liberty have stood forth, and the martyrs of Liberty have suffered.

...

The fiat has gone forth! With steam and electricity, and the new powers born of progress, forces have entered the world that will either compel us to a higher plane or overwhelm us, as nation after nation, as civilization after civilization, have been overwhelmed before. It is the delusion which precedes destruction that sees in the popular unrest with which the civilized world is feverishly pulsing only the passing effect of ephemeral causes. Between democratic ideas and the aristocratic adjustments of society there is an irreconcilable conflict. Here in the United States, as there in Europe, it may be seen arising. We cannot go on permitting men to vote and forcing them to tramp. We cannot go on educating boys and girls in our public schools and then refusing them the right to earn an honest living. We cannot go on prating of the inalienable rights of man and then denying the inalienable right to the bounty of the Creator. Even now, in old bottles the new wine begins to ferment, and elemental forces gather for the strife!

Source: Henry George, Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth: The Remedy (1879).

Andrew Carnegie's Gospel of Wealth (June 1889)

Andrew Carnegie, the American steel titan, explains his vision for the proper role of wealth in American society.

The problem of our age is the administration of wealth, so that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship. The conditions of human life have not only been changed, but revolutionized, within the past few hundred years. In former days there was little difference between the dwelling, dress, food, and environment of the chief and those of his retainers. . . . The contrast between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer with us today measures the change which has come with civilization.

This change, however, is not to be deplored, but welcomed as highly beneficial. It is well, nay, essential for the progress of the race, that the houses of some should be homes for all that is highest and best in literature and the arts, and for all the refinements of civilization, rather than that none should be so. Much better this great irregularity than universal squalor. Without wealth there can be no Maecenas. The "good old times" were not good old times. Neither master nor servant was as well situated then as to day. A relapse to old conditions would be disastrous to both-not the least so to him who serves-and would sweep away civilization with it. . . .

...

The price which society pays for the law of competition, like the price it pays for cheap comforts and luxuries, is also great; but the advantages of this law are also greater still, for it is to this law that we owe our wonderful material development, which brings improved conditions in its train. But, whether the law be benign or not, we must say of it, as we say of the change in the conditions of men to which we have referred: It is here; we cannot evade it; no substitutes for it have been found; and while the law may be sometimes hard for the individual, it is best for the race, because it insures the survival of the fittest in every department. We accept and welcome, therefore, as conditions to which we must accommodate ourselves, great inequality of environment, the concentration of business, industrial and commercial, in the hands of a few, and the law of competition between these, as being not only beneficial, but essential for the future progress of the race. . . .

...

This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of Wealth: . . . becoming the mere agent and trustee for his poorer brethren, bringing to their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves.

...

The laws of accumulation should be left free; the laws of distribution free. Individualism will continue. But the millionaire will be but a trustee for the poor; entrusted for a season with a part of the increased wealth of the community, but administering it for the community far better than it did, or would have done, of itself. The best in minds will thus have reached a stage in the development of the race in which it is clearly seen that there is no mode of disposing of surplus wealth creditable to thoughtful and earnest men into whose hands it flows save by using it year-by-year for the general good. This day already dawns.

Source: Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth," North American Review 148 (June, 1889), 653–665.

Grover Cleveland's Veto of the Texas Seed Bill (February 16, 1887)

Amid a crushing drought that devastated many Texas farmers, Grover Cleveland vetoed a bill designed to help farmers recover by supplying them with seed. In his veto message, Cleveland explained his vision of proper government.

...

It is represented that a long-continued and extensive drought has existed in certain portions of the State of Texas, resulting in a failure of crops and consequent distress and destitution.

Though there has been some difference in statements concerning the extent of the people's needs in the localities thus affected, there seems to be no doubt that there has existed a condition calling for relief; and I am willing to believe that, notwithstanding the aid already furnished, a donation of seed grain to the farmers located in this region, to enable them to put in new crops, would serve to avert a continuance or return of an unfortunate blight.

And yet I feel obliged to withhold my approval of the plan, as proposed by this bill, to indulge a benevolent and charitable sentiment through the appropriation of public funds for that purpose.

I can find no warrant for such an appropriation in the Constitution, and I do not believe that the power and duty of the General Government ought to be extended to the relief of individual suffering which is in no manner properly related to the public service or benefit. A prevalent tendency to disregard the limited mission of this power and duty should, I think, be steadfastly resisted, to the end that the lesson should be constantly enforced that though the people support the Government the Government should not support the people.

The friendliness and charity of our countrymen can always be relied upon to relieve their fellow-citizens in misfortune. This has been repeatedly and quite lately demonstrated. Federal aid in such cases encourages the expectation of paternal care on the part of the Government and weakens the sturdiness of our national character, while it prevents the indulgence among our people of that kindly sentiment and conduct which strengthens the bonds of a common brotherhood.

It is within my personal knowledge that individual aid has to some extent already been extended to the sufferers mentioned in this bill. The failure of the proposed appropriation of \$10,000 additional to meet their remaining wants will not necessarily result in continued distress if the emergency is fully made known to the people of the country.

It is here suggested that the Commissioner of Agriculture is annually directed to expend a large sum of money for the purchase, propagation, and distribution of seeds and other things of this description, two-thirds of which are, upon the request of Senators, Representatives, and Delegates in Congress, supplied to them for distribution among their constituents.

The appropriation of the current year for this purpose is \$100,000, and it will probably be no less in the appropriation for the ensuing year. I understand that a large quantity of grain is furnished for such distribution, and it is supposed that this free apportionment among their neighbors is a privilege which may be waived by our Senators and Representatives.

If sufficient of them should request the Commissioner of Agriculture to send their shares of the grain thus allowed them to the suffering farmers of Texas, they might be enabled to sow their crops, the constituents for whom in theory this grain is intended could well bear the temporary deprivation, and the donors would experience the satisfaction attending deeds of charity.

Source: Journal of the House of Representatives, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1886), 634-635.

[*The Miller Center*](#)

The “Omaha Platform” of the People’s Party (1892)

In 1892, the People’s, or Populist, Party crafted a platform that indicted the corruptions of the Gilded Age and promised government policies to aid “the people.”

PREAMBLE

The conditions which surround us best justify our co-operation; we meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the Legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized; most of the States have been compelled to isolate the voters at the polling places to prevent universal intimidation and bribery. The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled, public opinion silenced, business prostrated, homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of capitalists. The urban workmen are denied the right to organize for self-protection, imported pauperized labor beats down their wages, a hireling standing army, unrecognized by our laws, is established to shoot them down, and they are rapidly degenerating into European conditions. The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of those, in turn, despise the republic and endanger liberty. From the same prolific womb of governmental injustice we breed the two great classes—tramps and millionaires.

The national power to create money is appropriated to enrich bondholders; a vast public debt payable in legal tender currency has been funded into gold-bearing bonds, thereby adding millions to the burdens of the people.

Silver, which has been accepted as coin since the dawn of history, has been demonetized to add to the purchasing power of gold by decreasing the value of all forms of property as well as human labor, and the supply of currency is purposely abridged to fatten usurers, bankrupt enterprise, and enslave industry. A vast conspiracy against mankind has been organized on two continents, and it is rapidly taking possession of the world. If not met and overthrown at once it forebodes terrible social convulsions, the destruction of civilization, or the establishment of an absolute despotism.

We have witnessed for more than a quarter of a century the struggles of the two great political parties for power and plunder, while grievous wrongs have been inflicted upon the suffering people. We charge that the controlling influences dominating both these parties have permitted the existing dreadful conditions to develop without serious effort to prevent or restrain them. Neither do they now promise us any substantial reform. They have agreed together to ignore, in the coming campaign, every issue but one. They propose to drown the outcries of a plundered people with the uproar of a sham battle over the tariff, so that capitalists, corporations, national banks, rings, trusts, watered stock, the demonetization of silver and the oppressions of the usurers may all be lost sight of. They propose to sacrifice

our homes, lives, and children on the altar of mammon; to destroy the multitude in order to secure corruption funds from the millionaires.

Assembled on the anniversary of the birthday of the nation, and filled with the spirit of the grand general and chief who established our independence, we seek to restore the government of the Republic to the hands of “the plain people,” with which class it originated. We assert our purposes to be identical with the purposes of the National Constitution; to form a more perfect union and establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity.

We declare that this Republic can only endure as a free government while built upon the love of the whole people for each other and for the nation; that it cannot be pinned together by bayonets; that the civil war is over, and that every passion and resentment which grew out of it must die with it, and that we must be in fact, as we are in name, one united brotherhood of free men.

Our country finds itself confronted by conditions for which there is no precedent in the history of the world; our annual agricultural productions amount to billions of dollars in value, which must, within a few weeks or months, be exchanged for billions of dollars’ worth of commodities consumed in their production; the existing currency supply is wholly inadequate to make this exchange; the results are falling prices, the formation of combines and rings, the impoverishment of the producing class. We pledge ourselves that if given power we will labor to correct these evils by wise and reasonable legislation, in accordance with the terms of our platform.

We believe that the power of government—in other words, of the people—should be expanded (as in the case of the postal service) as rapidly and as far as the good sense of an intelligent people and the teachings of experience shall justify, to the end that oppression, injustice, and poverty shall eventually cease in the land.

While our sympathies as a party of reform are naturally upon the side of every proposition which will tend to make men intelligent, virtuous, and temperate, we nevertheless regard these questions, important as they are, as secondary to the great issues now pressing for solution, and upon which not only our individual prosperity but the very existence of free institutions depend; and we ask all men to first help us to determine whether we are to have a republic to administer before we differ as to the conditions upon which it is to be administered, believing that the forces of reform this day organized will never cease to move forward until every wrong is remedied and equal rights and equal privileges securely established for all the men and women of this country.

PLATFORM

We declare, therefore—

First.—That the union of the labor forces of the United States this day consummated shall be permanent and perpetual; may its spirit enter into all hearts for the salvation of the Republic and the uplifting of mankind.

Second.—Wealth belongs to him who creates it, and every dollar taken from industry without an equivalent is robbery. “If any will not work, neither shall he eat.” The interests of rural and civic labor are the same; their enemies are identical.

Third.—We believe that the time has come when the railroad corporations will either own the people or the people must own the railroads, and should the government enter upon the work of owning and managing all railroads, we should favor an amendment to the Constitution by which all persons engaged in the government service shall be placed under a civil-service regulation of the most rigid character, so as to prevent the increase of the power of the national administration by the use of such additional government employes.

FINANCE.—We demand a national currency, safe, sound, and flexible, issued by the general government only, a full legal tender for all debts, public and private, and that without the use of banking corporations, a just, equitable, and efficient means of distribution direct to the people, at a tax not to exceed 2 per cent. per annum, to be provided as set forth in the sub-treasury plan of the Farmers’ Alliance, or a better system; also by payments in discharge of its obligations for public improvements.

1. We demand free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1.
2. We demand that the amount of circulating medium be speedily increased to not less than \$50 per capita.
3. We demand a graduated income tax.
4. We believe that the money of the country should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the people, and hence we demand that all State and national revenues shall be limited to the necessary expenses of the government, economically and honestly administered.
5. We demand that postal savings banks be established by the government for the safe deposit of the earnings of the people and to facilitate exchange.

TRANSPORTATION—Transportation being a means of exchange and a public necessity, the government should own and operate the railroads in the interest of the people. The telegraph, telephone, like the post-office system, being a necessity for the transmission of news, should be owned and operated by the government in the interest of the people.

LAND.—The land, including all the natural sources of wealth, is the heritage of the people, and should not be monopolized for speculative purposes, and alien ownership of land should be prohibited. All land now held by railroads and other corporations in excess of

their actual needs, and all lands now owned by aliens should be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only.

EXPRESSION OF SENTIMENTS

Your Committee on Platform and Resolutions beg leave unanimously to report the following:

Whereas, Other questions have been presented for our consideration, we hereby submit the following, not as a part of the Platform of the People's Party, but as resolutions expressive of the sentiment of this Convention.

1. RESOLVED, That we demand a free ballot and a fair count in all elections and pledge ourselves to secure it to every legal voter without Federal Intervention, through the adoption by the States of the unperverted Australian or secret ballot system.
2. RESOLVED, That the revenue derived from a graduated income tax should be applied to the reduction of the burden of taxation now levied upon the domestic industries of this country.
3. RESOLVED, That we pledge our support to fair and liberal pensions to ex-Union soldiers and sailors.
4. RESOLVED, That we condemn the fallacy of protecting American labor under the present system, which opens our ports to the pauper and criminal classes of the world and crowds out our wage-earners; and we denounce the present ineffective laws against contract labor, and demand the further restriction of undesirable emigration.
5. RESOLVED, That we cordially sympathize with the efforts of organized workingmen to shorten the hours of labor, and demand a rigid enforcement of the existing eight-hour law on Government work, and ask that a penalty clause be added to the said law.
6. RESOLVED, That we regard the maintenance of a large standing army of mercenaries, known as the Pinkerton system, as a menace to our liberties, and we demand its abolition. . . .
7. RESOLVED, That we commend to the favorable consideration of the people and the reform press the legislative system known as the initiative and referendum.
8. RESOLVED, That we favor a constitutional provision limiting the office of President and Vice-President to one term, and providing for the election of Senators of the United States by a direct vote of the people.
9. RESOLVED, That we oppose any subsidy or national aid to any private corporation for any purpose.

10. RESOLVED, That this convention sympathizes with the Knights of Labor and their righteous contest with the tyrannical combine of clothing manufacturers of Rochester, and declare it to be a duty of all who hate tyranny and oppression to refuse to purchase the goods made by the said manufacturers, or to patronize any merchants who sell such goods.

Source: Edward McPherson, A Handbook of Politics for 1892 (Washington D.C.: James J. Chapman, 1892), 269-271.

Via [Google Books](#)

Dispatch from a Mississippi Colored Farmers' Alliance (1889)

The Colored Farmers' Alliance, an African American alternative to the whites-only Southern Farmers' Alliance, organized as many as a million Black southerners against the injustices of the predominately cotton-based, southern agricultural economy. Black Populists, however, were always more vulnerable to the violence of white southern conservatives than their white counterparts. Here, the publication The Forum publishes an account of violence against Black Populists in Mississippi.

Some Knights of Labor in Louisiana ventured to ask their employers for a larger share of the plantation crops; they were called rioters, and shot down in cold blood. Such occurrences have taken place in various sections. Take, for instance, the case of the suppression of the Farmers' Alliances at Minter City, Mississippi. Minter City is in the rich, cotton-growing region of Tallahatchie County. White lecturers of the Farmers' Alliances went there and organized Alliance stores. Colored people joined the organizations. The Alliance at Durant, on the Illinois Central Railroad, advanced supplies. The farmers began to patronize these stores, instead of the local traders, who had charged them enormous profits, swallowing up their little earnings. These local traders determined that the Alliances should be broken up. The annexed extracts from the St. Louis "Globe-Democrat," in a dispatch dated December 2, 1889, tell how it was done.

"Of all the 'Nigger killings' charged up to Mississippi, the recent campaign in the Tallahatchie country was the worst. The smallest estimate of the number shot is 20. The largest return of casualties is 200 dead. Probably 40 Negroes were murdered before the work ceased. The sole offense which called for such a terrible lesson was the organization of a Colored Farmers' Alliance, and the attempt to put in practice the plan of patronizing an Alliance store. Against the right of the Negro to enjoy the benefits of the Farmers' Alliance organization, the white store-keepers and planters of the Tallahatchie country banded themselves together. They began by exiling Cromwell, the agent of the commercial company. The usual reports now went out that the Negroes were organizing and arming for a race conflict. Then the killing began. ... There was no battle. There was no resistance by the Negroes. The white store-keepers and planters, armed with Winchesters, rode through the country picking out their victims. ... The condemned man was made to stand facing a tree, and a volley was fired at his back. Then the white store-keepers and planters rode on to the next place. It is known that at least 20 Negroes were killed in this way. ... The outline of facts comes from white men and Democrats. ... When the white store-keepers and planters had concluded their work they met and adopted the following resolutions:

"Whereas, it is the sense of this meeting that the organization known here as the Colored Farmers' Alliance is being diverted from its original or supposed purpose,

"Resolved, that we, the planters and citizens of Tallahatchie River, hereby request the Durant Commercial Company to desist from selling goods or loaning money to said organization ... and we hereby serve notice that goods or other things shipped to the

secretaries or managers of said Alliance shall not be delivered. ... We do not intend to, and we will not submit to, a combination subversive of our fortunes, our lives, and our property.

“Resolved, that the secretary of this meeting be required to notify the editor of the Colored Farmers’ ‘Alliance Advocate,’ published at Valden, Miss., that the issuance of copies of his paper to subscribers at the Shell Mound, McNutt, Sunnyside, Minter City, Graball, and Sharkey post offices shall be stopped, and to notify him further that a disregard of this notice will be treated as it should deserve by a united and outraged community.

“Resolved, that the members of this meeting pledge themselves individually and collectively to carry out these resolutions in letter and spirit.

“Resolved, that the Secretary forward a copy of the proceedings of this meeting to said Durant Commercial Company and the editor of the Colored Farmers’ ‘Alliance Advocate,’ by mail.”

The local Tallahatchie county paper says:

“These resolutions look harsh and arbitrary, but when the fearful ignorance and prejudice of the Negroes are taken into account, it is indisputable that a combination of any kind among them is dangerous and needs more or less surveillance. They frequently prostitute their churches and benevolent orders to wrongful purposes.”

In view of the incidents and purposes of the foregoing brutal and bloody Minter City tragedy, well does the “Globe-Democrat” ask: “What will the National Farmers’ Alliance do about this?” On the other hand, what, may we ask, will not the southern Democrats do when the southern Farmers’ Alliances not only organize co-operative stores, but also undertake to elect members of the Farmers’ Alliances as State officers and congressmen?

We give the answer: they will not be allowed a free canvass or an honest count. They will be trampled under foot by reckless southern Democrats. Free politics does not exist at the South. Freedom is there a mockery to the black man; suffrage is a sham to all Republicans. All that a national law can accomplish toward fair elections at the South, both for the Republican and Farmers’ Alliance candidates, should be done. But more than that is needed. When southern Democrats like Senator Pugh openly proclaim that national laws, constitutionally enacted, are to be resisted at the South unto bloodshed, there should be aroused everywhere at the North a sentiment of indignation; and this, growing stronger each day, should at last resemble that northern uprising of former days, which, overcoming commercial cowardice and dough-faced subserviency, first thrust slavery back to its gloomy lair, and next, on due provocation, invaded its precincts and destroyed the monster forever.’

Source: *The Forum*, vol. 9 (New York: Forum Publishing Company, 1889), 716-717. Available online via Google Books (<https://books.google.com/books?id=S3cXAQAIAAJ>).

Lucy Parsons on Women and Revolutionary Socialism (1905)

Lucy Parsons was born into slavery in Texas, married a white radical, Albert Parsons, and moved to Chicago where they both worked on behalf of radical causes. After Albert Parsons was executed for conspiracy in the aftermath of the Haymarket bombing, Lucy Parsons emerged as a major American radical and vocal advocate of anarchism. In 1905, she spoke before the founding convention of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

I wish to state to you that I have taken the floor because no other woman has responded, and I feel that it would not be out of place for me to say in my poor way a few words about this movement. We, the women of this country, have no ballot even if we wished to use it, and the only way that we can be represented is to take a man to represent us. You men have made such a mess of it in representing us that we have not much confidence in asking you; and I for one feel very backward in asking the men to represent me. We have no ballot, but we have our labor. I think it is August Bebel, in his *Woman in the Past, Present and Future*—a book that should be read by every woman that works for wages—Bebel says that men have been slaves throughout all the ages, but that woman's condition has been worse, for she has been the slave of a slave.

There was never a greater truth uttered. We are the slaves of the slaves. We are exploited more ruthlessly than men. Wherever wages are to be reduced the capitalist class use women to reduce them ...

... It is a bread and butter question, an economic issue, upon which the fight must be made. Now, what do we mean when we say revolutionary Socialist? We mean that the land shall belong to the landless, the tools to the toiler, and the products to the producers. Now, let us analyze that for just a moment, before you applaud me. First, the land belongs to the landless. Is there a single land owner in this country who owns his land by the constitutional rights given by the constitution of the United States who will allow you to vote it away from him? I am not such a fool as to believe it. We say, "The tools belong to the toiler." They are owned by the capitalist class. Do you believe they will allow you to go into the halls of the legislature and simply say, "Be it enacted that on and after a certain day the capitalist shall no longer own the tools and the factories and the places of industry, the ships that plow the ocean and our lakes?"

Do you believe that they will submit? I do not. We say, "The product belongs to the producers." It belongs to the capitalist class as their legal property. Do you think that they will allow you to vote them away from them by passing a law and saying, "Be it enacted that on and after a certain day Mr. Capitalist shall be dispossessed?" You may, but I do not believe it. Hence, when you roll under your tongue the expression that you are revolutionists, remember what that word means. It means a revolution that shall turn all these things over where they belong—to the wealth producers.

Now, how shall the wealth-producers come into possession of them? I believe that if every man and every woman who works, or who toils in the mines, the mills, the workshops, the fields, the factories and the farms in our broad America should decide in their minds that

they shall have that which of right belongs to them, and that no idler shall live upon their toil, and when your new organization, your economic organization, shall declare as man to man and woman to woman, as brothers and sisters, that you are determined that you will possess these things, then there is no army that is large enough to overcome you, for you yourselves constitute the army. Now, when you have decided that you will take possession of these things, there will not need to be one gun fired or one scaffold erected.

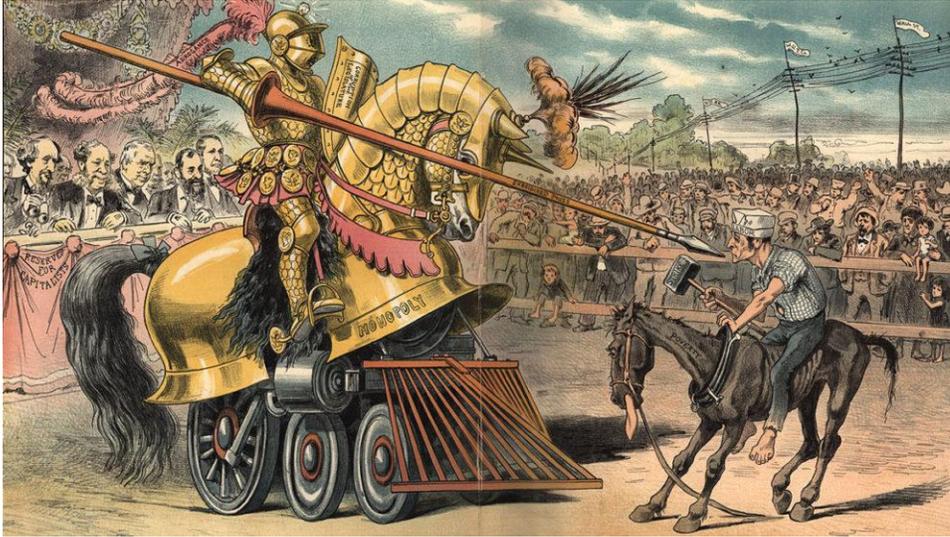
You will simply come into your own, by your own independence and your own manhood, and by asserting your own individuality, and not sending any man to any legislature in any State of the American Union to enact a law that you shall have what is your own; yours by nature and by your manhood and by your very presence upon this Earth. Nature has been lavish to her children. She has placed in this Earth all the material of wealth that is necessary to make men and women happy. She has given us brains to go into her storehouse and bring from its recesses all that is necessary. She has given us these two hands and these brains to manufacture them on a parallel with all other civilizations.

... Now, I thank you for the time that I have taken up of yours. I hope that we will meet again some time, you and I, in some hall where we can meet and organize the wage workers of America, the men and women, so that the children may not go into the factories, nor the women into the factories, unless they go under proper conditions.

I hope even now to live to see the day when the first dawn of the new era will have arisen, when capitalism will be a thing of the past, and the new industrial republic, the commonwealth of labor, shall be in operation. I thank you.

Source:International Workers of the World, *Proceedings of The First Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World* (New York: New York Labor News Company, 1905), 167-172. Available online via Google Books (<https://books.google.com/books?id=ifRQAQAAMAAJ>).

The Tournament of Today – A Set-To Between Labor and Monopoly



• Friedrich Graetz, "The Tournament of Today – A Set-To Between Labor and Monopoly." August 1, 1883. Print shows a jousting tournament between an oversized knight riding horse-shaped armor labeled "Monopoly" over a locomotive, with a long plume labeled "Arrogance", and carrying a shield labeled "Corruption of the Legislature" and a lance labeled "Subsidized Press", and a barefoot man labeled "Labor" riding an emaciated horse labeled "Poverty", and carrying a sledgehammer labeled "Strike". On the left is seating "Reserved for Capitalists" where Cyrus W. Field, William H. Vanderbilt, John Roach, Jay Gould, and Russell Sage are sitting. On the right, behind the labor section, are telegraph lines flying monopoly banners that are labeled "Wall St., W.U.T. Co., [and] N.Y.C. RR.". Via Library of Congress (LC-DIG-ppmsca-28412).

Lawrence Textile Strike (1912)



Lawrence Textile Strike, 1912. Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-23725.

17. The West

Introduction

Native Americans long dominated the vastness of the American West. Indigenous Americans had lived in North America for over ten millennia and, into the late-nineteenth century, perhaps as many as 250,000 natives still inhabited the American West. But then unending waves of American settlers, the American military, and the unstoppable onrush of American capital conquered all. The United States removed native groups to ever-shrinking reservations, incorporated the West first as territories and then as states, and, for the first time in its history, controlled the enormity of land between the two oceans. The history of the late-nineteenth-century West is many-sided. Tragedy for some, triumph for others, the many intertwined histories of the American West marked a pivotal transformation in the history of the United States. The following sources explore the long American “conquest” of the West.

Chief Joseph on Indian Affairs (1877, 1879)

A branch of the Nez Perce tribe, from the Pacific Northwest, refused to be moved to a reservation and attempted to flee to Canada but were pursued by the U.S. Cavalry, attacked, and forced to return. The following is a transcript of Chief Joseph's surrender, as recorded by Lieutenant Wood, Twenty-first Infantry, acting aide-de-camp and acting adjutant-general to General Oliver O. Howard, in 1877.

I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. Too-hul-hul-sote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led on the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs. I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.

In 1879, Chief Joseph was invited to Washington D.C. He made the following report.

I am glad I came [to Washington D.C.]. I have shaken hands with a good many friends, but there are some things I want to know which no one seems able to explain. I cannot understand how the Government sends a man out to fight us, as it did General Miles, and then breaks his word. Such a government has something wrong about it. I cannot understand why so many chiefs are allowed to talk so many different ways, and promise so many different things. I have seen the Great Father Chief [President Hayes]; the Next Great Chief [Secretary of the Interior]; the Commissioner Chief [Commissioner of Indian Affairs]; the Law Chief [General Butler]; and many other law chiefs [Congressmen] and they all say they are my friends, and that I shall have justice, but while all their mouths talk right I do not understand why nothing is done for my people. I have heard talk and talk but nothing is done. Good words do not last long unless they amount to something. Words do not pay for my dead people. They do not pay for my country now overrun by white men. They do not protect my father's grave. They do not pay for my horses and cattle. Good words do not give me back my children. Good words will not make good the promise of your war chief, General Miles. Good words will not give my people a home where they can live in peace and take care of themselves. I am tired of talk that comes to nothing. It makes my heart sick when I remember all the good words and all the broken promises. There has been too much talking by men who had no right to talk. Too many misinterpretations have been made; too many misunderstandings have come up between the white men and the Indians. If the white man wants to live in peace with the Indian he can live in peace. There need be no trouble. Treat all men alike. Give them the same laws. Give them all an even chance to live and grow. All men were made by the same Great Spirit Chief. They are all brothers. The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it. You might as well expect all rivers to run backward as that any man who was born a free man should be contented penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases. If you tie a horse to a stake, do you expect he will grow fat? If you pen an Indian up on a small spot of earth and compel him to stay there, he will not be contented nor will he grow and prosper. I have asked some

of the Great White Chiefs where they get their authority to say to the Indian that he shall stay in one place, while he sees white men going where they please. They cannot tell me.

...

When I think of our condition, my heart is heavy. I see men of my own race treated as outlaws and driven from country to country, or shot down like animals.

I know that my race must change. We cannot hold our own with the white men as we are. We only ask an even chance to live as other men live. We ask to be recognized as men. We ask that the same law shall work alike on all men. If an Indian breaks the law, punish him by the law. If a white man breaks the law, punish him also.

Let me be a free man, free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade where I choose, free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to talk, think and act for myself — and I will obey every law or submit to the penalty.

Whenever the white man treats the Indian as they treat each other then we shall have no more wars. We shall be all alike — brothers of one father and mother, with one sky above us and one country around us and one government for all. Then the Great Spirit Chief who rules above will smile upon this land and send rain to wash out the bloody spots made by brothers' hands upon the face of the earth. For this time the Indian race is waiting and praying. I hope no more groans of wounded men and women will ever go to the ear of the Great Spirit Chief above, and that all people may be one people.

In-mut-too-yah-lat-lat has spoken for his people.

Sources: Report of the Secretary Of War, Being Part Of The Message And Documents Communicated To The Two Houses Of Congress, Beginning Of The Second Session Of The Forty-Fifth Congress. Volume I (Washington: Government Printing Office 1877), 630; Joseph, "An Indian's View of Indian Affairs," The North American Review.

William T. Hornady on the Extermination of the American Bison (1889)

William T. Hornady, Superintendent of the National Zoological Park, wrote a detailed account of the near-extinction of the American bison in the late-nineteenth century.

Of all the quadrupeds that have lived upon the earth, probably no other species has ever marshaled such innumerable hosts as those of the American bison. It would have been as easy to count or to estimate the number of leaves in a forest as to calculate the number of buffaloes living at any given time during the history of the species previous to 1870. Even in South Central Africa, which has always been exceedingly prolific in great herds of game, it is probable that all its quadrupeds taken together on an equal area would never have more than equaled the total number of buffalo in this country forty years ago.

...

Between the Rocky Mountains and the States lying along the Mississippi River on the west, from Minnesota to Louisiana, the whole country was one vast buffalo range, inhabited by millions of buffaloes. One could fill a volume with the records of plainsmen and pioneers who penetrated or crossed that vast region between 1800 and 1870, and were in turn surprised, astounded, and frequently dismayed by the tens of thousands of buffaloes they observed, avoided, or escaped from. They lived and moved as no other quadrupeds ever have, in great multitudes, like grand armies in review, covering scores of square miles at once. They were so numerous they frequently stopped boats in the rivers, threatened to overwhelm travelers on the plains, and in later years derailed locomotives and cars, until railway engineers learned by experience the wisdom of stopping their trains whenever there were buffaloes crossing the track. ...

...

No wonder that the men of the West of those days, both white and red, thought it would be impossible to exterminate such a mighty multitude. The Indians of some tribes believed that the buffaloes issued from the earth continually, and that the supply was necessarily inexhaustible. And yet, in four short years the southern herd was almost totally annihilated.

...

It will be doubly deplorable if the remorseless slaughter we have witnessed during the last twenty years carries with it no lessons for the future. A continuation of the record we have lately made as wholesome game butchers will justify posterity in dating us back with the mound-builders and cave-dwellers, when man's only known function was to slay and eat.

The primary cause of the buffalo's extermination, and the one which embraced all others, was the descent of civilization, with all its elements of destructiveness, upon the whole of the country inhabited by that animal. From the Great Slave Lake to the Rio Grande the home of the buffalo was everywhere overrun by the man with a gun; and, as has ever

been the case, the wild creatures were gradually swept away, the largest and most conspicuous forms being the first to go.

The secondary causes of the extermination of the buffalo may be catalogued as follows:

- (1) Man's reckless greed, his wanton destructiveness, and improvidence in not husbanding such resources as come to him from the hand of nature ready made.
- (2) The total and utterly inexcusable absence of protective measures and agencies on the part of the National Government and of the Western States and Territories.
- (3) The fatal preference on the part of hunters generally, both white and red, for the robe and flesh of the cow over that furnished by the bull.
- (4) The phenomenal stupidity of the animals themselves, and their indifference to man.
- (5) The perfection of modern breech-loading rifles and other sporting fire-arms in general.

Each of these causes acted against the buffalo with its full force, to offset which there was *not even one* restraining or preserving influence, and it is not to be wondered at that the species went down before them. Had any one of these conditions been eliminated the result would have been reached far less quickly. Had the buffalo, for example, possessed one-half the fighting qualities of the grizzly bear he would have fared very differently, but his inoffensiveness and lack of courage almost leads one to doubt the wisdom of the economy of nature so far as it relates to him.

...

The buffalo supplied the Indian with food, clothing, shelter, bedding, saddles, ropes, shields, and innumerable smaller articles of use and ornament. In the United States a paternal government takes the place of the buffalo in supplying all these wants of the red man, and it costs several millions of dollars annually to accomplish the task.

...

The Indians of what was once the buffalo country are not starving and freezing, for the reason that the United States Government supplies them regularly with beef and blankets in lieu of buffalo. Does any one imagine that the Government could not have regulated the killing of buffaloes, and thus maintained the supply, for far less money than it now costs to feed and clothe those 54,758 Indians?

...

There is reason to fear that unless the United States Government takes the matter in hand and makes a special effort to prevent it, the pure-blood bison will be lost irretrievably....

Source: Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1889).

Chester A. Arthur on American Indian Policy (1881)

The following is extracted from President Chester A. Arthur's First Annual Message to Congress, delivered December 6, 1881.

Prominent among the matters which challenge the attention of Congress at its present session is the management of our Indian affairs. While this question has been a cause of trouble and embarrassment from the infancy of the Government, it is but recently that any effort has been made for its solution at once serious, determined, consistent, and promising success.

It has been easier to resort to convenient makeshifts for tiding over temporary difficulties than to grapple with the great permanent problem, and accordingly the easier course has almost invariably been pursued.

It was natural, at a time when the national territory seemed almost illimitable and contained many millions of acres far outside the bounds of civilized settlements, that a policy should have been initiated which more than aught else has been the fruitful source of our Indian complications.

I refer, of course, to the policy of dealing with the various Indian tribes as separate nationalities, of relegating them by treaty stipulations to the occupancy of immense reservations in the West, and of encouraging them to live a savage life, undisturbed by any earnest and well-directed efforts to bring them under the influences of civilization.

The unsatisfactory results which have sprung from this policy are becoming apparent to all.

As the white settlements have crowded the borders of the reservations, the Indians, sometimes contentedly and sometimes against their will, have been transferred to other hunting grounds, from which they have again been dislodged whenever their new-found homes have been desired by the adventurous settlers.

These removals and the frontier collisions by which they have often been preceded have led to frequent and disastrous conflicts between the races.

It is profitless to discuss here which of them has been chiefly responsible for the disturbances whose recital occupies so large a space upon the pages of our history.

We have to deal with the appalling fact that though thousands of lives have been sacrificed and hundreds of millions of dollars expended in the attempt to solve the Indian problem, it has until within the past few years seemed scarcely nearer a solution than it was half a century ago. But the Government has of late been cautiously but steadily feeling its way to the adoption of a policy which has already produced gratifying results, and which, in my judgment, is likely, if Congress and the Executive accord in its support, to relieve us ere long from the difficulties which have hitherto beset us.

For the success of the efforts now making to introduce among the Indians the customs and pursuits of civilized life and gradually to absorb them into the mass of our citizens, sharing their rights and holden to their responsibilities, there is imperative need for legislative action.

My suggestions in that regard will be chiefly such as have been already called to the attention of Congress and have received to some extent its consideration.

First. I recommend the passage of an act making the laws of the various States and Territories applicable to the Indian reservations within their borders and extending the laws of the State of Arkansas to the portion of the Indian Territory not occupied by the Five Civilized Tribes.

The Indian should receive the protection of the law. He should be allowed to maintain in court his rights of person and property. He has repeatedly begged for this privilege. Its exercise would be very valuable to him in his progress toward civilization.

Second. Of even greater importance is a measure which has been frequently recommended by my predecessors in office, and in furtherance of which several bills have been from time to time introduced in both Houses of Congress. The enactment of a general law permitting the allotment in severalty, to such Indians, at least, as desire it, of a reasonable quantity of land secured to them by patent, and for their own protection made inalienable for twenty or twenty-five years, is demanded for their present welfare and their permanent advancement.

In return for such considerate action on the part of the Government, there is reason to believe that the Indians in large numbers would be persuaded to sever their tribal relations and to engage at once in agricultural pursuits. Many of them realize the fact that their hunting days are over and that it is now for their best interests to conform their manner of life to the new order of things. By no greater inducement than the assurance of permanent title to the soil can they be led to engage in the occupation of tilling it.

The well-attested reports of their increasing interest in husbandry justify the hope and belief that the enactment of such a statute as I recommend would be at once attended with gratifying results. A resort to the allotment system would have a direct and powerful influence in dissolving the tribal bond, which is so prominent a feature of savage life, and which tends so strongly to perpetuate it.

Third. I advise a liberal appropriation for the support of Indian schools, because of my confident belief that such a course is consistent with the wisest economy. . . . They are doubtless much more potent for good than the day schools upon the reservation, as the pupils are altogether separated from the surroundings of savage life, and brought into constant contact with civilization.

Source: Benjamin Perley Poore, editor, Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1881).

Frederick Jackson Turner, “Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893)

Perhaps the most influential essay by an American historian, Frederick Jackson Turner’s address to the American Historical Association on “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” defined for many Americans the relationship between the frontier and American culture and contemplated what might follow “the closing of the frontier.”

In a recent bulletin of the Superintendent of the Census for 1890 appear these significant words: “Up to and including 1880 the country had a frontier of settlement, but at present the unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line. In the discussion of its extent, its westward movement, etc., it can not, therefore, any longer have a place in the census reports.” This brief official statement marks the closing of a great historic movement. Up to our own day American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West. The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.

Behind institutions, behind constitutional forms and modifications, lie the vital forces that call these organs into life and shape them to meet changing conditions. The peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people—to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life. Said Calhoun in 1817, “We are great, and rapidly—I was about to say fearfully—growing!” So saying, he touched the distinguishing feature of American life. All peoples show development; the germ theory of politics has been sufficiently emphasized. In the case of most nations, however, the development has occurred in a limited area; and if the nation has expanded, it has met other growing peoples whom it has conquered. But in the case of the United States we have a different phenomenon. Limiting our attention to the Atlantic coast, we have the familiar phenomenon of the evolution of institutions in a limited area, such as the rise of representative government; the differentiation of simple colonial governments into complex organs; the progress from primitive industrial society, without division of labor, up to manufacturing civilization. But we have in addition to this a recurrence of the process of evolution in each western area reached in the process of expansion. Thus American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area. American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character. The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic coast, it is the Great West. ...

In this advance, the frontier is the outer edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization. Much has been written about the frontier from the point of view of border warfare and the chase, but as a field for the serious study of the economist and the historian it has been neglected.

...

From the conditions of frontier life came intellectual traits of profound importance. The works of travelers along each frontier from colonial days onward describe certain common traits, and these traits have, while softening down, still persisted as survivals in the place of their origin, even when a higher social organization succeeded. The result is that to the frontier the American intellect owes its striking characteristics. That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom—these are traits of the frontier, or traits called out elsewhere because of the existence of the frontier. Since the days when the fleet of Columbus sailed into the waters of the New World, America has been another name for opportunity, and the people of the United States have taken their tone from the incessant expansion which has not only been open but has even been forced upon them. He would be a rash prophet who should assert that the expansive character of American life has now entirely ceased. Movement has been its dominant fact, and, unless this training has no effect upon a people, the American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise. But never again will such gifts of free land offer themselves. For a moment, at the frontier, the bonds of custom are broken and unrestraint is triumphant. There is not *tabula rasa*. The stubborn American environment is there with its imperious summons to accept its conditions; the inherited ways of doing things are also there; and yet, in spite of environment, and in spite of custom, each frontier did indeed furnish a new field of opportunity, a gate of escape from the bondage of the past; and freshness, and confidence, and scorn of older society, impatience of its restraints and its ideas, and indifference to its lessons, have accompanied the frontier. What the Mediterranean Sea was to the Greeks, breaking the bond of custom, offering new experiences, calling out new institutions and activities, that, and more, the ever retreating frontier has been to the United States directly, and to the nations of Europe more remotely. And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history.

Source: Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History, 1919.

Turning Hawk and American Horse on the Wounded Knee Massacre (1890/1891)

On February 11, 1891, a Sioux delegation met with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington D.C. and gave their account of the Wounded Knee Massacre six weeks prior.

Turning Hawk: ... These people were coming toward Pine Ridge agency, and when they were almost on the agency they were met by the soldiers and surrounded and finally taken to the Wounded Knee creek, and there at a given time their guns were demanded. When they had delivered them up, the men were separated from their families, from their tipis, and taken to a certain spot. When the guns were thus taken and the men thus separated, there was a crazy man, a young man of very bad influence and in fact a nobody, among that bunch of Indians fired his gun, and of course the firing of a gun must have been the breaking of a military rule of some sort, because immediately the soldiers returned fire and indiscriminate killing followed.

...All the men who were in a bunch were killed right there, and those who escaped that first fire got into the ravine, and as they went along up the ravine for a long distance they were pursued on both sides by the soldiers and shot down, as the dead bodies showed afterwards. The women were standing off at a different place from where the men were stationed, and when the firing began, those of the men who escaped the first onslaught went in one direction up the ravine, and then the women, who were bunched together at another place, went entirely in a different direction through an open field, and the women fared the same fate as the men who went up the deep ravine.

American Horse: The men were separated, as has already been said, from the women, and they were surrounded by the soldiers. Then came next the village of the Indians and that was entirely surrounded by the soldiers also. When the firing began, of course the people who were standing immediately around the young man who fired the first shot were killed right together, and then they turned their guns, Hotchkiss guns, etc., upon the women who were in the lodges standing there under a flag of truce, and of course as soon as they were fired upon they fled, the men fleeing in one direction and the women running in two different directions. So that there were three general directions in which they took flight.

There was a woman with an infant in her arms who was killed as she almost touched the flag of truce, and the women and children of course were strewn all along the circular village until they were dispatched. Right near the flag of truce a mother was shot down with her infant; the child not knowing that its mother was dead was still nursing, and that especially was a very sad sight. The women as they were fleeing with their babes were killed together, shot right through, and the women who were very heavy with child were also killed. All the Indians fled in these three directions, and after most all of them had been killed a cry was made that all those who were not killed or wounded should come forth and they would be safe. Little boys who were not wounded came out of their places of refuge, and as soon as they came in sight a number of soldiers surrounded them and butchered them there.

Of course we all feel very sad about this affair. I stood very loyal to the government all through those troublesome days, and believing so much in the government and being so loyal to it, my disappointment was very strong, and I have come to Washington with a very great blame on my heart. Of course it would have been all right if only the men were killed; we would feel almost grateful for it. But the fact of the killing of the women, and more especially the killing of the young boys and girls who are to go to make up the future strength of the Indian people, is the saddest part of the whole affair and we feel it very sorely.

I was not there at the time before the burial of the bodies, but I did go there with some of the police and the Indian doctor and a great many of the people, men from the agency, and we went through the battlefield and saw where the bodies were from the track of the blood.

Turning Hawk: I had just reached the point where I said that the women were killed. We heard, besides the killing of the men, of the onslaught also made upon the women and children, and they were treated as roughly and indiscriminately as the men and boys were.

Of course this affair brought a great deal of distress upon all the people, but especially upon the minds of those who stood loyal to the government and who did all that they were able to do in the matter of bringing about peace. They especially have suffered much distress and are very much hurt at heart. ...

Source: "Account Given by Indians of the Fight at Wounded Knee Creek," in United States Department of the Interior. *Annual Report of the Department of the Interior*, Vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1892), 179-181. Available online via Google Books (<https://books.google.com/books?id=S2EvAQAAAMAJ>).

Laura C. Kellogg on Indian Education (1913)

The United States used education to culturally assimilate Native Americans. Laura Cornelius Kellogg, an Oneida author, performer, and activist who helped found the Society of American Indians (SAI) in 1913, criticized the cultural chauvinism of American policy. Speaking to the SAI, she challenged her Indian audience to embrace modern American democracy while maintaining their own identity.

The word education has several meanings to our race, and at the start I wish to clear up in our minds a common misunderstanding of the term. To some of our Indians at home, going away to a government school means an education from which we may expect anything and everything. To some others, anything the Caucasian does is “educated” and anything “Indian” is not. To those who have gone the whole way of enlightenment, education has another meaning. With them, there is a proper appreciation of the real values of truth wherever they may be found, whether in an Indian or Paleface.

...

There are old Indians who have never seen the inside of a class room whom I consider far more educated than the young Indian with his knowledge of Latin and Algebra. There is something behind the superb dignity and composure of the old bringing up; there is something in the discipline of the Red Man which has given him a place in the literature and art of this country, there to remain separate and distinct in his proud active bearing against all time, all change.

...

We want education, yes, we want to know all the educated Caucasian knows but we want our self-respect while we are getting his knowledge. In short, let us discriminate between the goods and bads of civilization and the goods and bads of his own heritage; weed out as many of the bads as we can and send him along the way a finer type of citizen than if we turned him into a very average ‘White man’ just to have him “white” in culture. This is what I mean by recognizing the real values of truth whether they are to be found in paleface or the Indian.

...

There are altogether 357 government schools; 70 of these reservation boarding schools, 35 non-reservation boarding schools, and 223 day schools. The enrollment in these schools totals 24,500 children. Besides these there are 4,300 children in the mission schools and 11,000 in the public. Of the 11,000, the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma have 6,900. The number of children of the race in school in the country then is 39,800. The last report shows an increase of nearly 2,000 [in] attendance over the year before. Yet, there are still 9,000 children without school facilities!

...

Another objectionable feature of the boarding school is this matter of health. Where there are several hundred [students] together and a large percentage of them are afflicted with trachoma and tuberculosis the means for their segregation is not sufficient, the well children are open to these dangers. Think of the danger of trachoma. No immigrant can land in New York who has trachoma, but here we are exposing the youth of the race to an incurable disease. If this were done by one individual to another, it would be a penitentiary offense. I hear someone defending the Bureau. Go to the Indian schools and say to the nurses and the doctors that they shall not lose their positions if they will tell you the truth about the conditions of the schools and we would soon enough find that the hospital equipment in the Indian service is nowhere near adequate to the demand.

...

The white child comes from a well-established economic environment. That is, he has a home where the one idea in the community is to overcome deficits of material well-being. This child is continually asking of his parents to find a better means of support and accumulation. It calls for a continual effort toward improvement. The community life is organized; it produces and has markets, and money is in circulation in it as a natural result. . . .

The Indian child's environment is the reservation, a world of deficits. The group has really custodian care. There is no real personal liberty in wardship; there is no incentive in the community for any special effort; there is no reward for doing the right thing; the social life is not organized. . . . There are no markets of their own making and their own responsibility. There is no money continually in circulation. As Marvin Jack, in his paper last year said, when money enters the reservation, it loses its elasticity. When rations and annuities come, they come like spasms. There is nothing being learned by the adult population from necessity. What they do, they do through their own sense of natural acumen or decency. The great wonder is not that at they accomplish so little, but that they are not all outlaws.

...

Our future is in the hands of the educational system of today. Those of us who have come thus far know how our youth have longed reach the summit of the mountain. Let us not forget our own yearnings and the prayers of our ambitious young for opportunity. Let us climb the highest mountain, without looking back till we have reached the top.

Source: Laura Cornelius Kellogg, "Some Facts and Figures on Indian Education," *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians* (April 1913), 36-46. Available online via Hathi Trust (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015013515617&view=2up&seq=46>).

Helen Hunt Jackson on a Century of Dishonor (1881)

*In 1881, Helen Hunt Jackson published *A Century of Dishonor*, a history of the injustices visited upon Native Americans. Exposing the many wrongs perpetrated by her country, she hoped "to redeem the name of the United States from the stain of a century of dishonor."*

There are within the limits of the United States between two hundred and fifty and three hundred thousand Indians, exclusive of those in Alaska. The names of the different tribes and bands, as entered in the statistical tables of the Indian Office Reports, number nearly three hundred. ...

There is not among these three hundred bands of Indians one which has not suffered cruelly at the hands either of the Government or of white settlers. The poorer, the more insignificant, the more helpless the band, the more certain the cruelty and outrage to which they have been subjected. This is especially true of the bands on the Pacific slope. These Indians found themselves of a sudden surrounded by and caught up in the great influx of gold-seeking settlers, as helpless creatures on a shore are caught up in a tidal wave. There was not time for the Government to make treaties; not even time for communities to make laws. The tale of the wrongs, the oppressions, the murders of the Pacific-slope Indians in the last thirty years would be a volume by itself, and is too monstrous to be believed.

It makes little difference, however, where one opens the record of the history of the Indians; every page and every year has its dark stain. The story of one tribe is the story of all, varied only by differences of time and place; but neither time nor place makes any difference in the main facts. Colorado is as greedy and unjust in 1880 as was Georgia in 1830, and Ohio in 1795; and the United States Government breaks promises now as deftly as then, and with an added ingenuity from long practice.

One of its strongest supports in so doing is the wide-spread sentiment among the people of dislike to the Indian, of impatience with his presence as a "barrier to civilization," and distrust of it as a possible danger. The old tales of the frontier life, with its horrors of Indian warfare, have gradually, by two or three generations' telling, produced in the average mind something like an hereditary instinct of unquestioning and unreasoning aversion which it is almost impossible to dislodge or soften.

There are hundreds of pages of unimpeachable testimony on the side of the Indian; but it goes for nothing, is set down as sentimentalism or partisanship, tossed aside and forgotten.

President after president has appointed commission after commission to inquire into and report upon Indian affairs, and to make suggestions as to the best methods of managing them. The reports are filled with eloquent statements of wrongs done to the Indians, of perfidies on the part of the Government; they counsel, as earnestly as words can, a trial of the simple and unperplexing expedients of telling truth, keeping promises, making fair bargains, dealing justly in all ways and all things. These reports are bound up with the

Government's Annual Reports, and that is the end of them. It would probably be no exaggeration to say that not one American citizen out of ten thousand ever sees them or knows that they exist, and yet any one of them, circulated throughout the country, read by the right-thinking, right-feeling men and women of this land, would be of itself a "campaign document" that would initiate a revolution which would not subside until the Indians' wrongs were, so far as is now left possible, righted.

...

To assume that it would be easy, or by any one sudden stroke of legislative policy possible, to undo the mischief and hurt of the long past, set the Indian policy of the country right for the future, and make the Indians at once safe and happy, is the blunder of a hasty and uninformed judgment. The notion which seems to be growing more prevalent, that simply to make all Indians at once citizens of the United States would be a sovereign and instantaneous panacea for all their ills and all the Government's perplexities, is a very inconsiderate one. To administer complete citizenship of a sudden, all round, to all Indians, barbarous and civilized alike, would be as grotesque a blunder as to dose them all round with any one medicine, irrespective of the symptoms and needs of their diseases. It would kill more than it would cure

...

However great perplexity and difficulty there may be in the details of any and every plan possible for doing at this late day anything like justice to the Indian, however hard it may be for good statesmen and good men to agree upon the things that ought to be done, there certainly is, or ought to be, no perplexity whatever, no difficulty whatever, in agreeing upon certain things that ought not to be done, and which must cease to be done before the first steps can be taken toward righting the wrongs, curing the ills, and wiping out the disgrace to us of the present condition of our Indians.

Cheating, robbing, breaking promises—these three are clearly things which must cease to be done. One more thing, also, and that is the refusal of the protection of the law to the Indian's rights of property, "of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

When these four things have ceased to be done, time, statesmanship, philanthropy, and Christianity can slowly and surely do the rest. Till these four things have ceased to be done, statesmanship and philanthropy alike must work in vain, and even Christianity can reap but small harvest.

Source: Helen Hunt Jackson, *A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government's Dealings with Some of the Indian Tribes* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881), 336-342.

Available online via Internet Archive

(<https://archive.org/details/centuryofdishono00jackrich>).

Tom Torlino (1882, 1885)



Source: [Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center](#).

Tom Torlino, a member of the Navajo Nation, entered the Carlisle Indian School, a Native American boarding school founded by the United States government in 1879, on October 21, 1882 and departed on August 28, 1886. Torlino's student file contained photographs from 1882 and 1885.

Frances Densmore and Mountain Chief (1916)



Source: Library of Congress.

American anthropologist and ethnographer Frances Densmore records the Blackfoot chief Mountain Chief in 1916 for the Bureau of American Ethnology.

18. Life in Industrial America

Introduction

The turn of the twentieth century witnessed the triumph of American industrialization and the rise of “big business,” large corporations, run by trained bureaucrats and salaried managers, doing national and international business. Sweeping changes washed over the country as new industrial modes of production revolutionized American life. The rise of cities, the evolution of American immigration, the transformation of American labor, the further making of a mass culture, the creation of great concentrated wealth, the growth of vast city slums, the conquest of the West, the emergence of a middle class, the problem of poverty, the triumph of big business, widening inequalities, battles between capital and labor, the final destruction of independent farming, breakthrough technologies, environmental destruction: industrialization created a new America. The following documents depict some of that radical change.

Andrew Carnegie on “The Triumph of America” (1885)

Steel magnate Andrew Carnegie celebrated and explored American economic progress in this 1885 article, later reprinted in his 1886 book, Triumphant Democracy.

The old nations of the earth creep on at a snail’s pace; the Republic thunders past with the rush of the express. The United States, the growth of a single century, has already reached the foremost rank among nations, and is destined soon to out-distance all others in the race. In population, in wealth, in annual savings, and in public credit; in freedom from debt, in agriculture, and in manufactures, America already leads the civilized world.

...

Into the distant future of this giant nation we need not seek to peer; but if we cast a glance forward, as we have done backward, for only fifty years, and assume that in that short interval no serious change will occur, the astounding fact startles us that in 1935, fifty years from now, when many in manhood will still be living, one hundred and eighty millions of English-speaking republicans will exist under one flag and possess more than two hundred and fifty thousand millions of dollars, or fifty thousand millions sterling of national wealth. Eighty years ago the whole of America and Europe did not contain so many people; and, if Europe and America continue their normal growth, it will be little more than another eighty years ere the mighty Republic may boast as many loyal citizens as all the rulers of Europe combined, for before the year 1980 Europe and America will each have a population of about six hundred millions.

The causes which have led to the rapid growth and aggrandizement of this latest addition to the family of nations constitute one of the most interesting problems in the social history of mankind. What has brought about such stupendous results — so unparalleled a development of a nation within so ethnic character of the people, the topographical and climatic conditions under which they developed, and the influence of political institutions founded upon the equality of the citizen.

Certain writers in the past have maintained that the ethnic type of a people has less influence upon its growth as a nation than the conditions of life under which it is developing. The modern ethnologist knows better. We have only to imagine what America would be today if she had fallen, in the beginning, into the hands of any other people than the colonizing British, to see how vitally important is this question of race. ...

The second, and perhaps equally important factor in the problem of the rapid advancement of this branch of the British race, is the superiority of the conditions under which it has developed. The home which has fallen to its lot, a domain more magnificent than has cradled any other race in the history of the world ...

The unity of the American people is further powerfully promoted by the foundation upon which the political structure rests, the equality of the citizen. There is not one shred of privilege to be met with anywhere in all the laws. One man's right is every man's right. The flag is the guarantor and symbol of equality. The people are not emasculated by being made to feel that their own country decrees their inferiority, and holds them unworthy of privileges accorded to others. No ranks, no titles, no hereditary dignities, and therefore no classes. Suffrage is universal, and votes are of equal weight. Representatives are paid, and political life and usefulness thereby thrown open to all. Thus there is brought about a community of interests and aims which a Briton, accustomed to monarchical and aristocratic institutions, dividing the people into classes with separate interests, aims, thoughts, and feelings, can only with difficulty understand.

The free common school system of the land is probably, after all, the greatest single power in the unifying process which is producing the new American race. Through the crucible of a good common English education, furnished free by the State, pass the various racial elements — children of Irishmen, Germans, Italians, Spaniards, and Swedes, side by side with the native American, all to be fused into one, in language, in thought, in feeling, and in patriotism. The Irish boy loses his brogue, and the German child learns English. The sympathies suited to the feudal systems of Europe, which they inherit from their fathers, pass off as dross, leaving behind the pure gold of the only noble political creed: "All men are created free and equal." Taught now to live and work for the common weal, and not for the maintenance of a royal family or an overbearing aristocracy, not for the continuance of a social system which ranks them beneath an arrogant class of drones, children of Russian and German serfs, of Irish evicted tenants, Scotch crofters, and other victims of feudal tyranny, are translated into republican Americans, and are made in one love for a country which provides equal rights and privileges for all her children. There is no class so intensely patriotic, so wildly devoted to the Republic as the naturalized citizen and his child, for little does the native-born citizen know of the value of rights which have never been denied. Only the man born abroad, like myself, under institutions which insult him at his birth, can know the full meaning of Republicanism.

...

It is these causes which render possible the growth of a great homogeneous nation, alike in race, language, literature, interest, patriotism — an empire of such overwhelming power and proportions as to require neither army nor navy to ensure its safety, and a people so educated and advanced as to value the victories of peace.

Source: Andrew Carnegie, Triumphant Democracy: Or, Fifty Years' March of the Republic (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886), 1-22.

Henry Grady on the New South (1886)

Atlanta newspaperman and apostle of the "New South," Henry Grady, won national recognition for his December 21, 1886 speech to the New England Society in New York City.

"There was a South of slavery and secession — that South is dead. There is a South of union and freedom — that South, thank God, is living, breathing, growing every hour." These words, delivered from the immortal lips of Benjamin H. Hill, at Tammany Hall, in 1866, true then and truer now, I shall make my text to-night.

...

The old South rested everything on slavery and agriculture, unconscious that these could neither give nor maintain healthy growth. The new South presents a perfect democracy, the oligarchs leading in the popular movement; a social system compact and closely knitted, less splendid on the surface, but stronger at the core; a hundred farms for every plantation, fifty homes for every palace; and a diversified industry that meets the complex needs of this complex age.

The new South is enamored of her new work. Her soul is stirred with the breath of a new life. The light of a grander day is falling fair on her face. She is thrilling with the consciousness of growing power and prosperity. As she stands upright, full-statured and equal among the people of the earth, breathing the keen air and looking out upon the expanded horizon, she understands that her emancipation came because, through the inscrutable wisdom of God, her honest purpose was crossed and her brave armies were beaten.

This is said in no spirit of time-serving or apology. The South has nothing for which to apologize. She believes that the late struggle between the States was war and not rebellion, revolution and not conspiracy, and that her convictions were as honest as yours. I should be unjust to the dauntless spirit of the South and to my own convictions if I did not make this plain in this presence. The South has nothing to take back.

In my native town of Athens is a monument that crowns its central hill — a plain, white shaft. Deep cut into its shining side is a name dear to me above the names of men — that of a brave and simple man who died in brave and simple faith. Not for all the glories of New England, from Plymouth Rock all the way, would I exchange the heritage he left me in his soldier's death. To the foot of that shaft I shall send my children's children to reverence him who ennobled their name with his heroic blood. But, sir, speaking from the shadow of that memory which I honor as I do nothing else on earth, I say that the cause in which he suffered and for which he gave his life was adjudged by a higher and fuller wisdom than his or mine, and I am glad that the omniscient God held the balance of battle in His Almighty hand, and that human slavery was swept forever from American soil — that the American Union was saved from the wreck of war.

This message, Mr. President, comes to you from consecrated ground. Every foot of soil about the city in which I live is sacred as a battle ground of the Republic. Every hill that invests it is hallowed to you by the blood of your brothers who died for your victory, and doubly hallowed to us by the blood of those who died hopeless, but undaunted, in defeat — sacred soil to all of us, rich with memories that make us purer and stronger and better, silent but staunch witnesses in its red desolation of the matchless valor of American hearts and the deathless glory of American arms, speaking an eloquent witness in its white peace and prosperity to the indissoluble union of American States and the imperishable brotherhood of the American people.

Source: Life and Labors of Henry W. Grady, His Speeches, Writings, Etc. (Atlanta: J. C. Hudgins & Co., 1890), 99-116.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett, “Lynch Law in America” (1900)

Ida B. Wells-Barnett, born enslaved in Mississippi, was a pioneering activist and journalist. She did much to expose the epidemic of lynching in the United States and her writing and research exploded many of the justifications—particularly the rape of white women by black men—commonly offered to justify the practice.

Our country’s national crime is *lynching*. It is not the creature of an hour, the sudden outburst of uncontrolled fury, or the unspeakable brutality of an insane mob. It represents the cool, calculating deliberation of intelligent people who openly avow that there is an “unwritten law” that justifies them in putting human beings to death without complaint under oath, without trial by jury, without opportunity to make defense, and without right of appeal. ...

... During the last ten years a new statute has been added to the “unwritten law.” This statute proclaims that for certain crimes or alleged crimes no negro shall be allowed a trial; that no white woman shall be compelled to charge an assault under oath or to submit any such charge to the investigation of a court of law. The result is that many men have been put to death whose innocence was afterward established; and to-day, under this reign of the “unwritten law,” no colored man, no matter what his reputation, is safe from lynching if a white woman, no matter what her standing or motive, cares to charge him with insult or assault.

It is considered a sufficient excuse and reasonable justification to put a prisoner to death under this “unwritten law” for the frequently repeated charge that these lynching horrors are necessary to prevent crimes against women. The sentiment of the country has been appealed to, in describing the isolated condition of white families in thickly populated negro districts; and the charge is made that these homes are in as great danger as if they were surrounded by wild beasts. And the world has accepted this theory without let or hindrance. ... No matter that our laws presume every man innocent until he is proved guilty; no matter that it leaves a certain class of individuals completely at the mercy of another class; ... no matter that mobs make a farce of the law and a mockery of justice; no matter that hundreds of boys are being hardened in crime and schooled in vice by the repetition of such scenes before their eyes—if a white woman declares herself insulted or assaulted, some life must pay the penalty, with all the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition and all the barbarism of the Middle Ages. The world looks on and says it is well.

Not only are two hundred men and women put to death annually, on the average, in this country by mobs, but these lives are taken with the greatest publicity. In many instances the leading citizens aid and abet by their presence when they do not participate, and the leading journals inflame the public mind to the lynching point with scare-head articles and offers of rewards. Whenever a burning is advertised to take place, the railroads run excursions, photographs are taken, and the same jubilee is indulged in that characterized the public hangings of one hundred years ago. There is, however, this difference: in those old days the multitude that stood by was permitted only to gey or jeer. The nineteenth century lynching

mob cuts off ears, toes, and fingers, strips off flesh, and distributes portions of the body as souvenirs among the crowd. If the leaders of the mob are so minded, coal-oil is poured over the body and the victim is then roasted to death. This has been done in Texarkana and Paris, Tex., in Bardswell, Ky., and in Newman, Ga. In Paris the officers of the law delivered the prisoner to the mob. The mayor gave the school children a holiday and the railroads ran excursion trains so that the people might see a human being burned to death. In Texarkana, the year before, men and boys amused themselves by cutting off strips of flesh and thrusting knives into their helpless victim. At Newman, Ga., of the present year, the mob tried every conceivable torture to compel the victim to cry out and confess, before they set fire to the faggots that burned him. But their trouble was all in vain—he never uttered a cry, and they could not make him confess.

This condition of affairs were brutal enough and horrible enough if it were true that lynchings occurred only because of the commission of crimes against women—as is constantly declared by ministers, editors, lawyers, teachers, statesmen, and even by women themselves. ... [T]hey publish at every possible opportunity this excuse for lynching, hoping thereby not only to palliate their own crime but at the same time to prove the negro a moral monster and unworthy of the respect and sympathy of the civilized world. But this alleged reason adds to the deliberate injustice of the mob's work. Instead of lynchings being caused by assaults upon women, the statistics show that not one-third of the victims of lynchings are even charged with such crimes. ... Quite a number of the one-third alleged cases of assault that have been personally investigated by the writer have shown that there was no foundation in fact for the charges; yet the claim is not made that there were no real culprits among them. The negro has been too long associated with the white man not to have copied his vices as well as his virtues. But the negro resents and utterly repudiates the effort to blacken his good name by asserting that assaults upon women are peculiar to his race. The negro has suffered far more from the commission of this crime against the women of his race by white men than the white race has ever suffered through his crimes. Very scant notice is taken of the matter when this is the condition of affairs. What becomes a crime deserving capital punishment when the tables are turned is a matter of small moment when the negro woman is the accusing party. ...

Source: Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "Lynch Law in America," *The Arena* 23 (January 1900), 15-24.

[Google Books](#).

Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918)

Henry Adams, the great grandson of President John Adams, the grandson of President John Quincy Adams, the son of a major American diplomat, and an accomplished Harvard historian, writing in the third person, describes his experience at the Great Exposition in Paris in 1900 and writes of his encounter with "forces totally new."

Until the Great Exposition closed its doors in November, Adams haunted it, aching to absorb knowledge, and helpless to find it. He would have liked to know how much of it could have been grasped by the best-informed man in the world. While he was thus meditating chaos, Langley came by, and showed it to him. ... He led his pupil directly to the forces. His chief interest was in new motors to make his airship feasible, and he taught Adams the astonishing complexities of the new Daimler motor, and of the automobile, which, since 1893, had become a night-mare at a hundred kilometres an hour, almost as destructive as the electric tram which was only ten years older; and threatening to become as terrible as the locomotive steam-engine itself, which was almost exactly Adams's own age.

Then he showed his scholar the great hall of dynamos, and explained how little he knew about electricity or force of any kind, even of his own special sun, which spouted heat in inconceivable volume ... As he grew accustomed to the great gallery of machines, he began to feel the forty-foot dynamos as a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross. The planet itself seemed less impressive, in its old-fashioned, deliberate, annual or daily revolution, than this huge wheel, revolving within arm's-length at some vertiginous speed, and barely murmuring.... Before the end, one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before silent and infinite force. ...

...

Historians undertake to arrange sequences,—called stories, or histories,—assuming in silence a relation of cause and effect. These assumptions, hidden in the depths of dusty libraries, have been astounding, but commonly unconscious and childlike; so much so, that if any captious critic were to drag them to light, historians would probably reply, with one voice, that they had never supposed themselves required to know what they were talking about. ... He found himself lying in the Gallery of Machines at the Great Exposition of 1900, his historical neck broken by the sudden irruption of forces totally new.

Source: Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1918).

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “Why I Wrote *The Yellow Wallpaper*” (1913)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman won much attention in 1892 for publishing “The Yellow Wallpaper,” a semi-autobiographical short story dealing with mental health and contemporary social expectations for women. In the following piece, Gilman reflected on writing and publishing the piece.

Many and many a reader has asked that. When the story first came out, in the *New England Magazine* about 1891, a Boston physician made protest in *The Transcript*. Such a story ought not to be written, he said; it was enough to drive anyone mad to read it.

Another physician, in Kansas I think, wrote to say that it was the best description of incipient insanity he had ever seen, and—begging my pardon—had I been there?

Now the story of the story is this:

For many years I suffered from a severe and continuous nervous breakdown tending to melancholia—and beyond. During about the third year of this trouble I went, in devout faith and some faint stir of hope, to a noted specialist in nervous diseases, the best known in the country. This wise man put me to bed and applied the rest cure, to which a still-good physique responded so promptly that he concluded there was nothing much the matter with me, and sent me home with solemn advice to “live as domestic a life as far as possible,” to “have but two hours’ intellectual life a day,” and “never to touch pen, brush, or pencil again” as long as I lived. This was in 1887.

I went home and obeyed those directions for some three months, and came so near the borderline of utter mental ruin that I could see over.

Then, using the remnants of intelligence that remained, and helped by a wise friend, I cast the noted specialist’s advice to the winds and went to work again—work, the normal life of every human being; work, in which is joy and growth and service, without which one is a pauper and a parasite—ultimately recovering some measure of power.

Being naturally moved to rejoicing by this narrow escape, I wrote *The Yellow Wallpaper*, with its embellishments and additions, to carry out the ideal (I never had hallucinations or objections to my mural decorations) and sent a copy to the physician who so nearly drove me mad. He never acknowledged it.

The little book is valued by alienists and as a good specimen of one kind of literature. It has, to my knowledge, saved one woman from a similar fate—so terrifying her family that they let her out into normal activity and she recovered.

But the best result is this. Many years later I was told that the great specialist had admitted to friends of his that he had altered his treatment of neurasthenia since reading *The Yellow Wallpaper*.

It was not intended to drive people crazy, but to save people from being driven crazy, and it worked.

Source: *The Forerunner* (October, 1913).

Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890)

Jacob Riis, a Danish immigrant, combined photography and journalism into a powerful indictment of poverty in America. His 1890, How the Other Half Lives shocked Americans with its raw depictions of urban slums. Here, he describes poverty in New York.

Long ago it was said that “one half of the world does not know how the other half lives.” That was true then. It did not know because it did not care. The half that was on top cared little for the struggles, and less for the fate of those who were underneath, so long as it was able to hold them there and keep its own seat. There came a time when the discomfort and crowding below were so great, and the consequent upheavals so violent, that it was no longer an easy thing to do, and then the upper half fell to inquiring what was the matter. Information on the subject has been accumulating rapidly since, and the whole world has had its hands full answering for its old ignorance.

In New York ... the boundary line of the Other Half lies through the tenements. ... To-day three-fourths of its people live in the tenements, and the nineteenth century drift of the population to the cities is sending ever-increasing multitudes to crowd them. The fifteen thousand tenant houses that were the despair of the sanitarian in the past generation have swelled into thirty-seven thousand, and more than twelve hundred thousand persons call them home. The one way out he saw—rapid transit to the suburbs—has brought no relief. We know now that there is no way out; that the “system” that was the evil offspring of public neglect and private greed has come to stay, a storm-centre forever of our civilization. Nothing is left but to make the best of a bad bargain.

What the tenements are and how they grow to what they are, we shall see hereafter. The story is dark enough, drawn from the plain public records, to send a chill to any heart. If it shall appear that the sufferings and the sins of the “other half,” and the evil they breed, are but as a just punishment upon the community that gave it no other choice, it will be because that is the truth. The boundary line lies there because, while the forces for good on one side vastly outweigh the bad—it were not well otherwise—in the tenements all the influences make for evil; because they are the hot-beds of the epidemics that carry death to rich and poor alike; the nurseries of pauperism and crime that fill our jails and police courts; that throw off a scum of forty thousand human wrecks to the island asylums and workhouses year by year; that turned out in the last eight years a round half million beggars to prey upon our charities; that maintain a standing army of ten thousand tramps with all that that implies; because, above all, they touch the family life with deadly moral contagion. This is their worst crime, inseparable from the system. That we have to own it the child of our own wrong does not excuse it, even though it gives it claim upon our utmost patience and tenderest charity.

What are you going to do about it? is the question of to-day. It was asked once of our city in taunting defiance by a band of political cutthroats, the legitimate outgrowth of life on the tenement-house level. Law and order found the answer then and prevailed. With our enormously swelling population held in this galling bondage, will that answer always be given? It will depend on how fully the situation that prompted the challenge is

grasped. Forty per cent of the distress among the poor, said a recent official report, is due to drunkenness. But the first legislative committee ever appointed to probe this sore went deeper down and uncovered its roots. The “conclusion forced itself upon it that certain conditions and associations of human life and habitation are the prolific parents of corresponding habits and morals,” and it recommended “the prevention of drunkenness by providing for every man a clean and comfortable home. Years after, a sanitary inquiry brought to light the fact that “more than one-half of the tenements with two-thirds of their population were held by owners veto trade the keeping of them a business, generally a speculation. The owner was seeking a certain percentage on his outlay, and that percentage very rarely fell below fifteen per cent., and frequently exceeded thirty. . . . The complaint was universal among the tenants that they were entirely smeared for, and that the only answer to their requests to have the place put in order by repairs and necessary improvements was that they must pay their rent or leave. The agent’s instructions were simple but emphatic: ‘Collect the rent in advance, or, failing, eject the occupants.’” Upon such a stock grew this upas-tree. Small wonder the fruit is bitter. The remedy that shall be an effective answer to the coming appeal for justice must proceed from the public conscience. Neither legislation nor charity can cover the ground. The greed of capital that wrought the evil must itself undo it, as far as it can now be undone. Homes must be built for the working masses by those who employ their labor; but tenements must cease to be “good property” in the old, heartless sense. “Philanthropy and five per cent.” is the penance exacted.

If this is true from a purely economic point of view, what then of the outlook from the Christian standpoint? Not long ago a great meeting was held in this city, of all denominations of religious faith, to discuss the question how to lay hold of these teeming masses in the tenements with Christian influences, to which they are now too often strangers. Might not the conference have found in the warning of one Brooklyn builder, who has invested his capital on this plan and made it pay more than a money interest, a hint worth heeding: “How shall the love of God be understood by those who have been nurtured in sight only of the greed of man?”

[Source: Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1890).]

Rose Cohen was born in Russia in 1880 as Rabel Golub. She immigrated to the United States in 1892 and lived in a Russian Jewish neighborhood in New York's Lower East Side. Her, she writes about her encounter with the world outside of her ethnic neighborhood.

Although almost five years had passed since I had started for America, it was only now that I caught a glimpse of it. For though I was in America I had lived in practically the same environment which we brought from home. Of course there was a difference in our joys, in our sorrows, in our hardships, for after all this was a different country; but on the whole we were still in our village in Russia. A child that came to this country and began to go to school had taken the first step into the New World. But the child that was put into the shop remained in the old environment with the old people, held back by the old traditions, held back by illiteracy. Often it was years before he could stir away from it, sometimes it would take a lifetime. Sometimes, too, it happened as in fairy tales, that a hand was held out to you and you were helped out.

In my own case it was through the illness which had seemed such a misfortune that I had stirred out of Cherry Street. But now that I had had a glimpse of the New World, a revolution took place in my whole being. I was filled with a desire to get away from the whole old order of things. And I went groping about blindly, stumbling, suffering and making others suffer. And then through the experience, intelligence and understanding of other beings a little light came to me and I was able to see that the Old World was not all dull and the new not all glittering. And then I was able to stand between the two, with a hand in each.

The first thing that I can recall after I came from the hospital, is a feeling of despondency. The rooms seemed smaller and dingier than they had been. In the evening the lamp burned more dimly. And there was a general look of hopelessness over everything. It was in every face, it was in every corner of our dull home as well as in all the other homes that I saw. It was in every sound that came in from the street, in every sigh that I heard in the house. I saw the years stretching ahead of me, always the same, and I wept bitterly. I had never been so aware of it all.

In the shop where I found work now it was as at home. As I looked at the men I could not help comparing them with those other men. To the little insinuating jokes and stories I listened now, not with resignation as before but with anger. "Why should this be? Why should they talk like that?" And I was filled with a blinding dislike for the whole class of tailors.

But I did not give my entire thought to what I saw about me. As the days passed I became aware that I was waiting for something, for what I could scarcely say. Away in the back of my head there was this thought, "Surely this would not end here. Would this be all I would see of that other world outside of Cherry Street?" And I waited from day to day.

In the meantime I filled up the days at work with dreaming of that other life I had seen. I thought a good deal about that fine old man the minister. His words and his voice had remained fresh in my mind. Of course I must not breathe a word at home about him, about

the New Testament. This necessity for secrecy soon led to other little secret thoughts and actions. It soon occurred to me, "Why should I not read the New Testament if I want to? Why should I not do anything I like? If four months ago father thought me old enough to get married, then I am certainly old enough now to decide things for myself." So I stopped consulting mother and began to do little things independently. It was not hard to do this for during the three months I had grown away from home a good deal and now with the thought of my experience in which they had no part, every day I was slipping away little by little.

Mother noticed and her eyes looked troubled but I did not understand their meaning. Father had tightened the reins of authority and I only tried the harder to writhe myself free. My only thought now was of myself and the world outside of home and Cherry Street. But underneath all this perversity and selfishness I can see now, as I look back, a deep longing to see, to know, to understand.

Source: Rose Cohen, *Out of the Shadow* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), 246-248. Available online via Google Books (<https://books.google.com/books?id=rGZmAAAAAMAAJ>).

Mulberry Street, New York City (ca. 1900)



"Mulberry Street, New York City," ca. 1900, Library of Congress

Luna Park



Visitors to Coney Island's Luna Park, ca.1910-1915. Via Library of Congress (LC-B2- 2240-13).

19. American Empire

Introduction

In the decades after the American Civil War, the United States exerted itself in the service of American interests around the world. In the Pacific, Latin America, and the Middle East, and most explicitly in the Spanish-American War and under the foreign policy of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, the United States expanded upon a long history of exploration, trade, and cultural exchange to practice something that looked remarkably like empire. Meanwhile, as the United States asserted itself abroad, it received ever more numbers of foreign peoples at home. European and Asian immigrants poured into the United States. In a sense, imperialism and immigration raised similar questions about American identity: who was an “American,” and who wasn’t? What were the nation’s obligations to foreign powers and foreign peoples? And how accessible—and how fluid—should American identity be for newcomers? Such questions confronted late-nineteenth-century Americans with unprecedented urgency, and the following sources attempt to shed light on how they were approached by contemporary Americans.

William McKinley on American Expansionism (1903)

After the surrender of the Spanish in the Spanish-American War, the United States assumed control of the Philippines but struggled to contain an anti-American insurgency.

... I would like to say just a word about the Philippine business. I have been criticized a good deal about the Philippines, but don't deserve it. The truth is I didn't want the Philippines, and when they came to us, as a gift from the gods, I did not know what to do with them. When the Spanish War broke out Dewey was at Hongkong, and I ordered him to go to Manila and to capture or destroy the Spanish fleet, and he had to; because, if defeated, he had no place to refit on that side of the globe, and if the Dons were victorious they would likely cross the Pacific and ravage our Oregon and California coasts. And so he had to destroy the Spanish fleet, and did it! But that was as far as I thought then.

When I next realized that the Philippines had dropped into our laps I confess I did not know what to do with them. I sought counsel from all sides—Democrats as well as Republicans—but got little help. I thought first we would take only Manila; then Luzon; then other islands perhaps also. I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight; and I am not ashamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night. And one night late it came to me this way—I don't know how it was, but it came: (1) That we could not give them back to Spain—that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) that we could not turn them over to France and Germany—our commercial rivals in the Orient—that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves—they were unfit for self-government—and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and (4) that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died. And then I went to bed, and went to sleep, and slept soundly, and the next morning I sent for the chief engineer of the War Department (our map-maker), and I told him to put the Philippines on the map of the United States (pointing to a large map on the wall of his office), and there they are, and there they will stay while I am President!

Source: General James Rusling, "Interview with President William McKinley," *The Christian Advocate* 22 January 1903, 17. Reprinted in Charles Sumner Olcott, *The Life of William McKinley, Volume 2* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1916), 109-111.

Via [Google Books](#).

Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden” (1899)

As the United States waged war against Filipino insurgents, the British writer and poet Rudyard Kipling urged the Americans to take up “the white man’s burden.”

Take up the White Man’s burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go send your sons to exile
To serve your captives’ need
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child
Take up the White Man’s burden
In patience to abide
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple
An hundred times made plain
To seek another’s profit
And work another’s gain
Take up the White Man’s burden—
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah slowly) to the light:
“Why brought ye us from bondage,
“Our loved Egyptian night?”
Take up the White Man’s burden-
Have done with childish days-
The lightly proffered laurel,
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years,
Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!

Source: Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden,” *Literature* (February 4, 1890), 115.

Via [Google Books](#).

James D. Phelan, “Why the Chinese Should Be Excluded” (1901)

James D. Phelan, the mayor of San Francisco, penned the following article to drum up support for the extension of laws prohibiting Chinese immigration.

[The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1882, and again in 1892.] The Exclusion Acts then passed were limited to ten years' duration. In May next the latest act will expire by limitation, and Congress will be asked to renew it, because, until now, Chinese exclusion has been regarded in diplomatic circles and elsewhere as the settled policy of the country. Has there been any change in the nature of the evil, or in the sentiments of the people? Certainly not on the Pacific Coast, where the lapse of time has made still more evident the non-assimilative character of the Chinese and their undesirability as citizens.

The Exclusion Act has been reasonably effective, although the Chinese, with more or less success, have employed their well-known cunning in evading its provisions by surreptitiously and fraudulently entering the United States. The law, however, has opposed a barrier to the great volume of immigration which threatened this country for many years prior to 1880....

The influx having been checked, the danger to California has been averted, and, consequently, during the last decade industrial conditions indicate comparative prosperity; whereas it is well known that prior to the Exclusion Laws the State of California suffered acutely from labor troubles and business derangement. Unemployed men, hungry from want of work, marched the streets of the cities, inaugurated political parties, disturbed the peace of communities by riotous outbreaks which threatened at times the foundations of law and order; and these facts gave to James Bryce a fruitful theme for speculation on democracy in his excellent work, “The American Commonwealth.” He devoted two chapters to the anti-Chinese crusade in California and looked upon it as a race, labor and political question, which sooner or later, unless solved, would menace American institutions. Accusations were made at that time, which Ho Yow repeats, that the opposition to the Chinese came from demagogues alone. To show the unanimity of the people, I may point out that the Legislature submitted by referendum the question of Chinese immigration to a popular vote. For Chinese immigration 883 votes were polled, and against Chinese immigration 154,638 votes. In the City of San Francisco, representing the wealth and intelligence and containing the skilled-labor organizations of the State, only 224 votes were cast in favor of the immigration and 41,258 votes against it. This result demonstrated clearly that the resident population of California, taking the broad ground of self-preservation, refused to suffer themselves to be dispossessed of their inheritance by Chinese coolies. That is what the verdict meant.

A select committee of Congress, after investigating the question and taking testimony in California, reported in favor of Chinese exclusion, and that policy has been regarded ever since as a peaceful preventive of serious disorders affecting the body politic which would

have inevitably ensued had the National Legislature failed to protect the white population of the country. ...

...

The Chinese, by putting a vastly inferior civilization in competition with our own, tend to destroy the population, on whom the perpetuity of free government depends. Without homes and families; patronizing neither school, library, church nor theatre; lawbreakers, addicted to vicious habits; indifferent to sanitary regulations and breeding disease; taking no holidays, respecting no traditional anniversaries, but laboring incessantly, and subsisting on practically nothing for food and clothes, a condition to which they have been inured for centuries, they enter the lists against men who have been brought up by our civilization to family life and civic duty. Our civilization having been itself rescued from barbarism by the patriots, martyrs and benefactors of mankind, the question now is: Shall it be imperilled? Is not Chinese immigration a harm?

...

If the Chinese are admitted, whence are the ranks of the free population to be recruited? Who shall preserve our civilization and who shall fight our battles? The Chinese may be good laborers, but they are not good citizens. They may in small numbers benefit individual employers, but they breed the germs of a national disease, which spreads as they spread, and grows as they grow.

[Source: James D. Phelan, "Why The Chinese Should Be Excluded," *The North American Review* 173 (November, 1901).]

William James on “The Philippine Question” (1903)

Many Americans opposed imperialist actions. Here, the philosopher William James explains his opposition in the light of history.

We used to believe then that we were of a different clay from other nations, that there was something deep in the American heart that answered to our happy birth, free from that hereditary burden which the nations of Europe bear, and which obliges them to grow by preying on their neighbors. Idle dream! pure Fourth of July fancy, scattered in five minutes by the first temptation. In every national soul there lie potentialities of the most barefaced piracy, and our own American soul is no exception to the rule. Angelic impulses and predatory lusts divide our heart exactly as they divide the hearts of other countries. It is good to rid ourselves of cant and humbug, and to know the truth about ourselves. Political virtue does not follow geographical divisions. It follows the eternal division inside of each country between the more animal and the more intellectual kind of men, between the tory and the liberal tendencies, the jingoism and animal instinct that would run things by main force and brute possession, and the critical conscience that believes in educational methods and in rational rules of right.

...

The country has once for all regurgitated the Declaration of Independence and the Farewell Address, and it won't swallow again immediately what it is so happy to have vomited up. It has come to a hiatus. It has deliberately pushed itself into the circle of international hatreds, and joined the common pack of wolves. It relishes the attitude. We have thrown off our swaddling clothes, it thinks, and attained our majority. We are objects of fear to other lands.

Source: *Report of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the New England Anti-Imperialist League, November 28, 1903 and Its Adjournment Nov. 30* (Boston, Mass.: New England Anti-Imperialist League, 1903), 21-26.

Via [Archive.org](https://www.archive.org)

Mark Twain, “The War Prayer” (ca.1904-5)

The American writer Mark Twain wrote the following satire in the glow of America’s imperial interventions.

It was a time of great and exalting excitement. The country was up in arms, the war was on, in every breast burned the holy fire of patriotism ... on every hand and far down the receding and fading spread of roofs and balconies a fluttering wilderness of flags flashed in the sun ... nightly the packed mass meetings listened, panting, to patriot oratory which stirred the deepest deeps of their hearts, and which they interrupted at briefest intervals with cyclones of applause, the tears running down their cheeks the while; in the churches the pastors preached devotion to flag and country, and invoked the God of Battles beseeching His aid in our good cause in outpourings of fervid eloquence which moved every listener. ...

Sunday morning came — next day the battalions would leave for the front; the church was filled; the volunteers were there, their young faces alight with martial dreams — visions of the stern advance, the gathering momentum, the rushing charge, the flashing sabers, the flight of the foe, the tumult, the enveloping smoke, the fierce pursuit, the surrender! Then home from the war, bronzed heroes, welcomed, adored, submerged in golden seas of glory! ... The service proceeded; a war chapter from the Old Testament was read; the first prayer was said ...

...

Then came the “long” prayer. None could remember the like of it for passionate pleading and moving and beautiful language. The burden of its supplication was, that an ever-merciful and benignant Father of us all would watch over our noble young soldiers, and aid, comfort, and encourage them in their patriotic work....

An aged stranger entered and moved with slow and noiseless step up the main aisle, his eyes fixed upon the minister, his long body clothed in a robe that reached to his feet, his head bare, his white hair descending in a frothy cataract to his shoulders, his seamy face unnaturally pale, pale even to ghastliness. ... he ascended to the preacher’s side and stood there waiting. ...

The stranger touched his arm, motioned him to step aside — which the startled minister did — and took his place. During some moments he surveyed the spellbound audience with solemn eyes, in which burned an uncanny light; then in a deep voice he said:

“I come from the Throne — bearing a message from Almighty God!” ...

“God’s servant and yours has prayed his prayer. Has he paused and taken thought? Is it one prayer? No, it is two — one uttered, the other not. Both have reached the ear of Him Who heareth all supplications, the spoken and the unspoken. Ponder this — keep it in mind. If you would beseech a blessing upon yourself, beware! lest without intent you invoke a curse upon a neighbor at the same time. If you pray for the blessing of rain upon your crop which

needs it, by that act you are possibly praying for a curse upon some neighbor's crop which may not need rain and can be injured by it.

“You have heard your servant's prayer — the uttered part of it. I am commissioned of God to put into words the other part of it — that part which the pastor — and also you in your hearts — fervently prayed silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly? God grant that it was so! You heard these words: ‘Grant us the victory, O Lord our God!’ ... When you have prayed for victory you have prayed for many unmentioned results which follow victory—*must* follow it, cannot help but follow it. Upon the listening spirit of God fell also the unspoken part of the prayer. He commandeth me to put it into words. Listen!

“O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle — be Thou near them! With them — in spirit — we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it — for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.

(After a pause.) “Ye have prayed it; if ye still desire it, speak! The messenger of the Most High waits!”

It was believed afterward that the man was a lunatic, because there was no sense in what he said.

Source: Mark Twain, “The War Prayer.”

Chinese Immigrants Confront Anti-Chinese Prejudice (1885, 1903)

Mary Tape Protests Chinese Segregation (1885)

Mary Tape, a Chinese immigrant mother, fought for her daughter, Mamie Tape, to integrate public schools in California. The case, Tape v. Hurley (1885), reached the California Supreme Court in 1885 and, despite a favorable ruling for Tape, the San Francisco Board of Education built a segregated Chinese school which Mamie Tape was forced to attend. In the following letter, Mary Tape protested the denial of her daughter's entry to Spring Valley School

To the Board of Education—Dear Sirs:

I see that you are going to make all sorts of excuses to keep my child out of the Public schools. Dear sirs, Will you please to tell me! Is it a disgrace to be Born a Chinese? Didn't God make us all!!! What right have you to bar my children out of the school because she is a chinese Decend. They is no other worldly reason that you could keep her out, except that. I suppose, you all goes to churches on Sundays! Do you call that a Christian act to compell my little children to go so far to a school that is made in purpose for them. My children don't dress like the other Chinese. They look just as phunny amongst them as the Chinese dress in Chinese look amongst you Caucasians. Besides, if I had any wish to send them to a chinese school I could have sent them two years ago without going to all this trouble. You have expended a lot of the Public money foolishly, all because of a one poor little Child. Her playmates is all Caucasians ever since she could toddle around. If she is good enough to play with them! Then is she not good enough to be in the same room and studie with them? You had better come and see for yourselves. See if the Tape's is not same as other Caucasians, except in features. It seems no matter how a Chinese may live and dress so long as you know they Chinese. Then they are hated as one. There is not any right or justice for them.

You have seen my husband and child. You told him it wasn't Mamie Tape you object to. If it were not Mamie Tape you object to, then why didn't you let her attend the school nearest her home! Instead of first making one pretense Then another pretense of some kind to keep her out? It seems to me Mr. Moulder has a grudge against this Eight-year-old Mamie Tape. I know they is no other child I mean Chinese child! care to go to your public Chinese school. May you Mr. Moulder, never be persecuted like the way you have persecuted little Mamie Tape. Mamie Tape will never attend any of the Chinese schools of your making! Never!!! I will let the world see sir What justice there is When it is govern by the Race prejudice men! Just because she is of the Chinese decend, not because she don't dress like you because she does. Just because she is decended of Chinese parents I guess she is more of a American then a good many of you that is going to prevent her being Educated.

Mrs. M. Tape.

Source: "Chinese Mother's Letter," *Daily Alta California*, April 16, 1885, 1. Available online via California Digital Newspaper Collection (<https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18850416.2.3>).

Lee Chew, "The Biography of a Chinaman" (1903)

Lee Chew immigrated from China at the age of 16. He worked as a domestic servant for an American family in San Francisco, started a laundry business, and later ran an importing business in New York City. In the following passage, he attacked anti-Chinese prejudice in the United States.

I heard about the American foreign devils, that they were false, having made a treaty by which it was agreed that they could freely come to China, and the Chinese as freely go to their country. After this treaty was made China opened its doors to them and then they broke the treaty that they had asked for by shutting the Chinese out of their country.

...When I first opened a laundry it was in company with a partner, who had been in the business for some years. ... We had to put up with many insults and some frauds, as men would come in and claim parcels that did not belong to them, saying they had lost their tickets, and would fight if they did not get what they asked for. Sometimes we were taken before Magistrates and fined for losing shirts that we had never seen. On the other hand, we were making money, and even after sending home \$3 a week I was able to save about \$15. When the railroad construction gang moved on we went with them. The men were rough and prejudiced against us, but not more so than in the big Eastern cities. It is only lately in New York that the Chinese have been able to discontinue putting wire screens in front of their windows, and at the present time the street boys are still breaking the windows of Chinese laundries all over the city, while the police seem to think it a joke.

...During his holidays the Chinaman gets a good deal of fun out of life. There's a good deal of gambling and some opium smoking, but not so much as Americans imagine. Only a few of New York's Chinamen smoke opium. The habit is very general among rich men and officials in China, but not so much among poor men. I don't think it does as much harm as the liquor that the Americans drink. There's nothing so bad as a drunken man. Opium doesn't make people crazy.

... Some fault is found with us for sticking to our old customs here, especially in the matter of clothes, but the reason is that we find American clothes much inferior, so far as comfort and warmth go. The Chinaman's coat for the winter is very durable, very light and very warm. It is easy and not in the way. If he wants to work he slips out of it in a moment and can put it on again as quickly. Our shoes and hats also are better, we think, for our purposes, than the American clothes. Most of us have tried the American clothes, and they make us feel as if we were in the stocks.

... Americans are not all bad, nor are they wicked wizards. Still, they have their faults, and their treatment of us is outrageous.

The reason why so many Chinese go into the laundry business in this country is because it requires little capital and is one of the few opportunities that are open. Men of other

nationalities who are jealous of the Chinese, because he is a more faithful worker than one of their people, have raised such a great outcry about Chinese cheap labor that they have shut him out of working on farms or in factories or building railroads or making streets or digging sewers. He cannot practice any trade, and his opportunities to do business are limited to his own countrymen. So he opens a laundry when he quits domestic service.

The treatment of the Chinese in this country is all wrong and mean. It is persisted in merely because China is not a fighting nation. The Americans would not dare to treat Germans, English, Italians or even Japanese as they treat the Chinese, because if they did there would be a war.

There is no reason for the prejudice against the Chinese. The cheap labor cry was always a falsehood. Their labor was never cheap, and is not cheap now. It has always commanded the highest market price. But the trouble is that the Chinese are such excellent and faithful workers that bosses will have no others when they can get them.

...It was the jealousy of laboring men of other nationalities — especially the Irish—that raised all the outcry against the Chinese. No one would hire an Irishman, German, Englishman or Italian when he could get a Chinese, because our countrymen are so much more honest, industrious, steady, sober and painstaking. Chinese were persecuted, not for their vices, but for their virtues. There never was any honesty in the pretended fear of leprosy or in the cheap labor scare, and the persecution continues still, because Americans make a mere practice of loving justice. They are all for money making, and they want to be on the strongest side always. They treat you as a friend while you are prosperous, but if you have a misfortune they don't know you. There is nothing substantial in their friendship.

...More than half the Chinese in this country would become citizens if allowed to do so, and would be patriotic Americans. But how can they make this country their home as matters now are! They are not allowed to bring wives here from China, and if they marry American women there is a great outcry.

All Congressmen acknowledge the injustice of the treatment of my people, yet they continue it. They have no backbone.

Under the circumstances, how can I call this my home, and how can any one blame me if I take my money and go back to my village in China?

Source: Lee Chew, "The Biography of a Chinaman," *The Independent*, 15 (19 February 1903), 417–423

Link to original source: <https://books.google.com/books?id=GMVZAAAAYAA>Source:
Lee Chew, "The Biography of a Chinaman," *The Independent*, 15 (19 February 1903), 417–423.
Available online via Google Books
(<https://books.google.com/books?id=GMVZAAAAYAAJ>).

African Americans Debate Enlistment (1898)

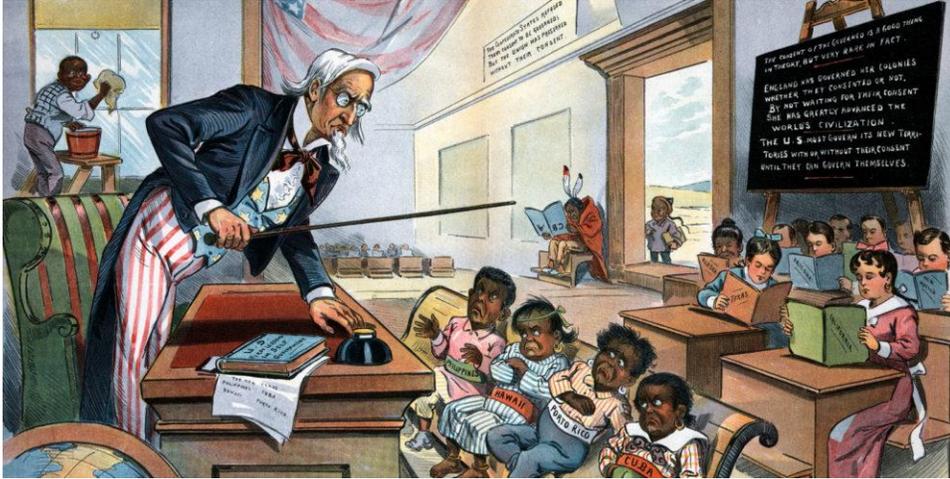
Thousands of African-American troops served in in the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars. Confronted with racial violence and discrimination at home, they did so with a mix of hope, skepticism, satisfaction, and disappointment. Here, the Indianapolis Freeman reports on recruiting efforts in Hartford, Connecticut.

The U.S. recruiting officer is expected in Hartford this week to receive names of men for the prospective Spanish-American war. Great excitement prevails here among all classes, and some of our colored men seem enthusiastic over the idea of enlisting in defense of the government, while some are more reserved and common-sensed, asserting that no colored man should never again offer his services to protect a government that does not protect him. The government of the United States will allow some of her most loyal and true citizens to be burned and shot to pieces, like dogs, without protection, and go right on ignoring their rights and claims as if all were peace and happiness in the family; and yet, when a foreign war is threatened, these same ill-treated citizens are wont to be rushed to the front in the name of protecting the nation's honor. Such injustice is not tolerated by any other civilized nation; not even is Spain guilty of such discrimination among her own citizens. As a race what means have we for checking such unjust discrimination? Colored men of Hartford, let us think before acting. If the government wants our support and services, let us demand and get a guarantee for our safety and protection at home. We want to put a stop to lynch law, the butchering of our people like hogs, burning our houses, shooting our wives and children and raping our daughters and mothers. In short, as a race, we want indemnity for the loss of ten thousand Negroes who have been lynched and butchered and slaughtered since the civil war. When we are guaranteed freedom and equality before the law, as other American citizens, then we will have a right, as such, to take up arms in defense of our country.

Source: "They Are Ready to Enlist" *Indianapolis Freeman*, March 19, 1898, 1. Available online via Google News

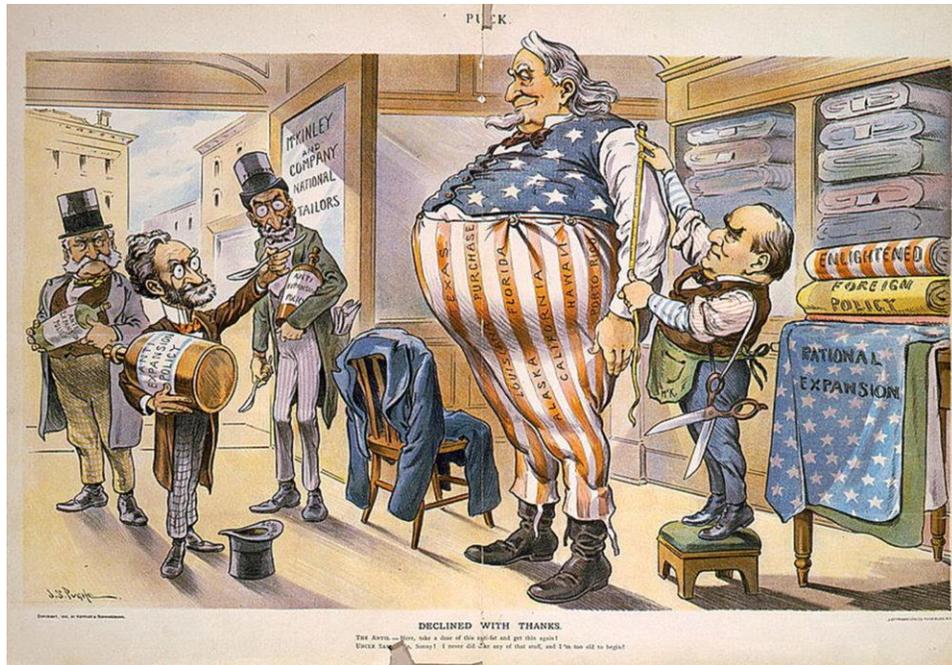
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“School Begins,” Puck, January 25, 1899.



“School Begins,” Puck, January 25, 1899.

“Declined With Thanks” (1900)



John S. Pugbe, “Declined With Thanks,” *Puck* (September 5, 1900). Wikimedia.

20. The Progressive Era

Introduction

The many problems associated with the Gilded Age—the rise of unprecedented fortunes and unprecedented poverty, controversies over imperialism, urban squalor, a near-war between capital and labor, loosening social mores, unsanitary food production, the onrush of foreign immigration, environmental destruction, and the outbreak of political radicalism—confronted Americans with fierce urgency. Terrible forces seemed out of control and the nation seemed imperiled. Farmers and workers had been waging political war against capitalists and political conservatives for decades, but then, slowly, toward the end of the nineteenth century a new generation of middle class Americans interjected themselves into public life and advocated new reforms to tame the runaway world of the Gilded Age.

Widespread dissatisfaction with new trends in American society spurred the Progressive Era, named for the various “progressive” movements that attracted various constituencies around various reforms. Whatever their goals, “reform” became the word of the age. These sources attempt to shed light upon the many aspects of American life in the Progressive Era.

Booker T. Washington & W.E.B. DuBois on Black Progress (1895, 1903)

Booker T. Washington, born enslaved in Virginia in 1856, founded the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1881 and became a leading advocate of African American progress. Introduced as “a representative of Negro enterprise and Negro civilization,” Washington delivered the following remarks, sometimes called the “Atlanta Compromise” speech, at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta in 1895.

...

A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, “Water, water; we die of thirst!” The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” A second time the signal, “Water, water; send us water!” ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” And a third and fourth signal for water was answered, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River. To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is their next-door neighbour, I would say: “Cast down your bucket where you are” — cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded.

Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions. And in this connection it is well to bear in mind that whatever other sins the South may be called to bear, when it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man’s chance in the commercial world, and in nothing is this Exposition more eloquent than in emphasizing this chance. Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental gewgaws [sic] of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities.

To those of the white race who look to the incoming of those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits of the prosperity of the South, were I permitted I would repeat what I say to my own race: “Cast down your bucket where you are.” Cast it down among the eight millions of Negroes whose habits you know, whose fidelity and love you have tested in days when to have proved treacherous meant the ruin of your firesides. Cast down your bucket among these people who have, without strikes and labour wars, tilled your fields, cleared your forests, builded [sic] your railroads and cities, and brought forth treasures from the

bowels of the earth, and helped make possible this magnificent representation of the progress of the South. Casting down your bucket among my people, helping and encouraging them as you are doing on these grounds, and to education of head, hand, and heart, you will find that they will buy your surplus land, make blossom the waste places in your fields, and run your factories. While doing this, you can be sure in the future, as in the past, that you and your families will be surrounded by the most patient, faithful, law-abiding, and unresentful people that the world has seen. As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past, nursing your children, watching by the sick-bed of your mothers and fathers, and often following them with tear-dimmed eyes to their graves, so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach, ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in defence of yours, interlacing our industrial, commercial, civil, and religious life with yours in a way that shall make the interests of both races one. In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.

...

The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized [sic]. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercises of these privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house.

...

W.E.B. DuBois, a leading black intellectual and co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), agitated against discrimination and authored several noteworthy pieces on the black experience in the United States. The following, from his seminal, The Souls of Black Folk, argues against Booker T. Washington's calls for compromise.

Easily the most striking thing in history of the American Negro since 1876 is the ascendancy of Mr. Booker T. Washington. ... Mr. Washington represents in Negro thought the old attitude of adjustment and submission; but adjustment at such a peculiar time as to make his programme unique. This is an age of unusual economic development, and Mr. Washington's programme naturally takes an economic cast, becoming a gospel of Work and Money to such an extent as apparently almost completely to overshadow the higher aims of life. Moreover, this is an age when the more advanced races are coming in closer contact with the less developed races, and the race-feeling is therefore intensified; and Mr. Washington's programme practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races. Again, in our own land, the reaction from the sentiment of war time has given impetus to race-prejudice against Negroes, and Mr. Washington withdraws many of the high

demands of Negroes as men and American citizens. In other periods of intensified prejudice all the Negro's tendency to self-assertion has been called forth; at this period a policy of submission is advocated. In the history of nearly all other races and peoples the doctrine preached at such crises has been that manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses, and that a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing.

In answer to this, it has been claimed that the Negro can survive only through submission. Mr. Washington distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things, —

First, political power,

Second, insistence on civil rights,

Third, higher education of Negro youth,—

and concentrate all of their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South. This policy has been courageously and insistently advocated for over fifteen years, and has been triumphant for perhaps ten years. As a result of this tender of the palm-beach, what has been the return? In these years there have occurred:

1. The disfranchisement of the Negro
2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro.
3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.

These movements are not, to be sure, direct results of Mr. Washington's teachings; but his propaganda has, without a shadow of doubt, helped their speedier accomplishment. The question then comes: Is it possible, and probable, that nine millions of men can make effective progress in economic lines if they are deprived of political rights, made a servile caste, and allowed only the most meagre chance for developing their exceptional men? If history and reason give any distinct answer to these questions, it is an emphatic *No*.

[Sources: Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*, Chapter XIV; W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*.]

Jane Addams, “The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements” (1892)

Hull House, Chicago’s famed “settlement house,” was designed to uplift urban populations. Here, Addams explains why she believes reformers must “add the social function to democracy.” As Addams explained, Hull House “was opened on the theory that the dependence of classes on each other is reciprocal.”

It is not difficult to see that although America is pledged to the democratic ideal, the view of democracy has been partial, and that its best achievement thus far has been pushed along the line of the franchise. Democracy has made little attempt to assert itself in social affairs. We have refused to move beyond the position of its eighteenth-century leaders, who believed that political equality alone would secure all good to all men. We conscientiously followed the gift of the ballot hard upon the gift of freedom to the negro, but we are quite unmoved by the fact that he lives among us in a practical social ostracism. We hasten to give the franchise to the immigrant from a sense of justice, from a tradition that he ought to have it, while we dub him with epithets deriding his past life or present occupation

... Our consciences are becoming tender in regard to the lack of democracy in social affairs. We are perhaps entering upon the second phase of democracy The social organism has broken down through large districts of our great cities. Many of the people living there are very poor, the majority of them without leisure or energy for anything but the gain of subsistence. ... Practically nothing is done to remedy this. ... Their ideas and resources are cramped. The desire for higher social pleasure is extinct. They have no share in the traditions and social energy which make for progress. Too often their only place of meeting is a saloon, their only host a bartender; a local demagogue forms their public opinion. Men of ability and refinement, of social power and university cultivation, stay away from them. Personally, I believe the men who lose most are those who thus stay away. But the paradox is here: when cultivated people do stay away from a certain portion of the population, when all social advantages are persistently withheld, it may be for years, the result itself is pointed at as a reason, is used as an argument, for the continued withholding.

...

It is inevitable that those who feel most keenly this insincerity and partial living should be our young people, our so-called educated young people who accomplish little toward the solution of this social problem, and who bear the brunt of being cultivated into unnourished, oversensitive lives. They have been shut off from the common labor by which they live and which is a great source of moral and physical health. They feel a fatal want of harmony between their theory and their lives, a lack of co-ordination between thought and action. I think it is hard for us to realize how seriously many of them are taking to the notion of human brotherhood, how eagerly they long to give tangible expression to the democratic ideal. These young men and women, longing to socialize their democracy, are animated by certain hopes.

These hopes may be loosely formulated thus: that if in a democratic country nothing can be permanently achieved save through the masses of the people, it will be impossible to establish a higher political life than the people themselves crave; that it is difficult to see how the notion of a higher civic life can be fostered save through common intercourse; that the blessings which we associate with a life of refinement and cultivation can be made universal and must be made universal if they are to be permanent; that the good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain, is floating in mid-air, until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.

...

... I have seen young girls suffer and grow sensibly lowered in vitality in the first years after they leave school. In our attempt then to give a girl pleasure and freedom from care we succeed, for the most part, in making her pitifully miserable. She finds "life" so different from what she expected it to be. She is besotted with innocent little ambitions, and does not understand this apparent waste of herself, this elaborate preparation, if no work is provided for her. There is a heritage of noble obligation which young people accept and long to perpetuate. The desire for action, the wish to right wrong and alleviate suffering, haunts them daily. ...

We have in America a fast-growing number of cultivated young people who have no recognized outlet for their active faculties. They bear constantly of the great social maladjustment, but no way is provided for them to change it, and their uselessness bangs about them heavily. ... We are fast feeling the pressure of the need and meeting the necessity for Settlements in America. Our young people feel nervously the need of putting theory into action, and respond quickly to the Settlement form of activity. ...

The Settlement then, is an experimental effort to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems which are engendered by the modern conditions of life in a great city. ...

[Source: Jane Addams, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," in *Twenty Years at Hull House*.]

Eugene Debs, “How I Became a Socialist” (April, 1902)

A native of Terre Haute, Indiana, Eugene V. Debs began working as a locomotive fireman (tending the fires of a train's steam engine) as a youth in the 1870s. His experience in the American labor movement later led him to socialism. In the early-twentieth century, as the Socialist Party of America's candidate, he ran for the presidency five times and twice earned nearly one-million votes. He was America's most prominent socialist. In 1902, a New York paper asked Debs how he became a socialist. This is his answer.

I rode on the engines over mountain and plain, slept in the cabooses and bunks, and was fed from their pails by the swarthy stokers who still nestle close to my heart, and will until it is cold and still.

Through all these years I was nourished at Fountain Proletaire. I drank deeply of its waters and every particle of my tissue became saturated with the spirit of the working class. I had fired an engine and been stung by the exposure and hardship of the rail. I was with the boys in their weary watches, at the broken engine's side and often helped to bear their bruised and bleeding bodies back to wife and child again. How could I but feel the burden of their wrongs? How the seed of agitation fail to take deep root in my heart?

...

In 1894 the American Railway Union was organized and a braver body of men never fought the battle of the working class.

Up to this time I had heard but little of Socialism, knew practically nothing about the movement, and what little I did know was not calculated to impress me in its favor. I was bent on thorough and complete organization of the railroad men and ultimately the whole working class, and all my time and energy were given to that end. My supreme conviction was that if they were only organized in every branch of the service and all acted together in concert they could redress their wrongs and regulate the conditions of their employment. The stockholders of the corporation acted as one, why not the men? It was such a plain proposition—simply to follow the example set before their eyes by their masters—surely they could not fail to see it, act as one, and solve the problem.

It is useless to say that I had yet to learn the workings of the capitalist system, the resources of its masters and the weakness of its slaves. Indeed, no shadow of a “system” fell athwart my pathway; no thought of ending wage-misery marred my plans. I was too deeply absorbed in perfecting wage-servitude and making it a “thing of beauty and a joy forever.”

It all seems very strange to me now, taking a backward look, that my vision was so focalized on a single objective point that I utterly failed to see what now appears as clear as the noonday sun—so clear that I marvel that any workingman, however dull, uncomprehending, can resist it.

But perhaps it was better so. I was to be baptized in Socialism in the roar of conflict and I thank the gods for reserving to this fitful occasion the fiat, "Let there be light!"—the light that streams in steady radiance upon the roadway to the Socialist republic.

The skirmish lines of the A. R. U. were well advanced. A series of small battles were fought and won without the loss of a man. A number of concessions were made by the corporations rather than risk an encounter. Then came the fight on the Great Northern, short sharp, and decisive. The victory was complete—the only railroad strike of magnitude ever won by an organization in America.

Next followed the final shock—the Pullman strike—and the American Railway Union again won, clear and complete. The combined corporations were paralyzed and helpless. At this juncture there were delivered, from wholly unexpected quarters, a swift succession of blows that blinded me for an instant and then opened wide my eyes—and in the gleam of every bayonet and the flash of every rifle *the class struggle was revealed*. This was my first practical lesson in Socialism, though wholly unaware that it was called by that name.

An army of detectives, thugs and murderers were equipped with badge and beer and bludgeon and turned loose; old hulks of cars were fired; the alarm bells tolled; the people were terrified; the most startling rumors were set afloat; the press volleyed and thundered, and over all the wires sped the news that Chicago's white throat was in the clutch of a red rod; injunctions flew thick and fast, arrests followed, and our office and headquarters, the heart of the strike, was sacked, torn out and nailed up by the "lawful" authorities of the federal government; and when in company with my loyal comrades I found myself in Cook county jail at Chicago with the whole press screaming conspiracy, treason and murder....

...

The Chicago jail sentences were followed by six months at Woodstock and it was here that Socialism gradually laid hold of me in its own irresistible fashion. Books and pamphlets and letters from socialists came by every mail and I began to read and think and dissect the anatomy of the system in which workingmen, however organized, could be shattered and battered and splintered at a single stroke. The writings of Bellamy and Blanchford early appealed to me. The "Cooperative Commonwealth" of Gronlund also impressed me, but the writings of Kautsky were so clear and conclusive that I readily grasped, not merely his argument, but also caught the spirit of his socialist utterance—and I thank him and all who helped me out of darkness into light.

[Source: Eugene V. Debs, "How I Became a Socialist." *The Comrade*, April 1902.]

Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis (1907)

Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist minister and theologian, advocated for a "social gospel." Here, he explains why he believes Christianity must address social questions.

Western civilization is passing through a social revolution unparalleled in history for scope and power. Its coming was inevitable. The religious, political, and intellectual revolutions of the past five centuries, which together created the modern world, necessarily had to culminate in an economic and social revolution such as is now upon us.

By universal consent, this social crisis is the overshadowing problem of our generation. The industrial and commercial life of the advanced nations are in the throes of it. In politics all issues and methods are undergoing upheaval and re-alignment as the social movement advances. In the world of thought all the young and serious minds are absorbed in the solution of the social problems. Even literature and art point like compass-needles to this magnetic pole of all our thought.

... The vastness and the free sweep of our concentrated wealth on the one side, the independence, intelligence, moral vigor, and political power of the common people on the other side, promise a long-drawn grapple of contesting forces which may well make the heart of every American patriot sink within him.

It is realized by friend and foe that religion can play, and must play, a momentous part in this irrepressible conflict.

The Church, the organized expression of the religious life of the past, is one of the most potent institutions and forces in Western civilization. Its favor and moral influence are wooed by all parties. It cannot help throwing its immense weight on one side or the other. If it tries not to act, it thereby acts; and in any case its choice will be decisive for its own future.

Apart from the organized Church, the religious spirit is a factor of incalculable power in the making of history. ... Under the warm breath of religious faith, all social institutions become plastic. ... It follows that the relation between Christianity and the social crisis is one of the most pressing questions for all intelligent men who realize the power of religion, and most of all for the religious leaders of the people who give direction to the forces of religion.

...

The question has, in fact, been discussed frequently and earnestly, but it is plain to any thoughtful observer that the common mind of the Christian Church in America has not begun to arrive at any solid convictions or any permanent basis of action. The conscience of Christendom is halting and groping, perplexed by contradicting voices, still poorly informed on essential questions, justly reluctant to part with the treasured maxims of the past, and yet conscious of the imperious call of the future.

...

The essential purpose of Christianity was to transform human society into the kingdom of God by regenerating all human relations and reconstituting them in accordance with the will of God.

...

... No man shares his life with God whose religion does not flow out, naturally and without effort, into all relations of his life and reconstructs everything that it touches. Whoever uncouples the religious and the social life has not understood Jesus. Whoever sets any bounds for the reconstructive power of the religious life over the social relations and institutions of men, to that extent denies the faith of the Master.

...

The fundamental purpose of Jesus was the establishment of the kingdom of God, which involved a thorough regeneration and reconstitution of social life. Primitive Christianity cherished an ardent hope of a radically new era, and within its limits sought to realize a social life on a new moral basis.

Thus Christianity as an historical movement was launched with all the purpose and hope, all the impetus and power, of a great revolutionary movement, pledged to change the world-as-it-is into the world-as-it-ought-to-be.

...

In general, the Church has often rendered valuable aid by joining the advanced public conscience of any period in its protest against some single intolerable evil, but it has accepted as inevitable the general social system under which the world was living at the time, and has not undertaken any thoroughgoing social reconstruction in accordance with Christian principles.

[Source: Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907)]

Alice Stone Blackwell, Answering Objections to Women's Suffrage (1917)

Alice Stone Blackwell was a feminist activist and writer. In an edited volume published in 1917, Blackwell responded to popular anti-women's-suffrage arguments.

Why Should Women Vote?

The reasons why women should vote are the same as the reasons why men should vote are the same as the reasons for having a republic rather than a monarchy. It is fair and right that the people who must obey the laws should have a voice in choosing the law-makers, and that those who must pay the taxes should have a voice as to the amount of the tax, and the way in which the money shall be spent.

Roughly stated, the fundamental principle of a republic is this: In deciding what is to be done, we take everybody's opinion, and then go according to the wish of the majority. As we cannot suit everybody, we do what will suit the greatest number. That seems to be, on the whole, the fairest way. A vote is simply a written expression of opinion.

In thus taking a vote to get at the wish of the majority, certain classes of persons are passed over, whose opinions for one reason or another are thought not to be worth counting. In most of our states, these classes are children, aliens, idiots, lunatics, criminals and women. There are good and obvious reasons for making all these exceptions but the last. Of course no account ought to be taken of the opinions of children, insane persons, or criminals. Is there any equally good reason why no account should be taken of the opinions of women? Let us consider the reasons commonly given, and see if they are sound.

...

The Question of Chivalry

It will destroy chivalry.

Justice would be worth more to women than chivalry, if they could not have both. A working girl put the case in a nutshell when she said: "I would gladly stand for twenty minutes in the street car going home if by doing so I could get the same pay that a man would have had for doing my day's work." But women do not have to stand in the street cars half as often in Denver as in Boston or in New York. Justice and chivalry are not in the least incompatible. Women have more freedom and equality in America than in Europe, yet American men are the most chivalrous in the world.

...

Too Emotional

Women are too emotional and sentimental to be trusted with the ballot.

Mrs. E. T. Brown, at a meeting of the Georgia State Federation of Women's Clubs, read a paper, in which she said:

"You tell us that women are not fitted for dealing with the problems of government, being too visionary and too much controlled by sentiment.

"Now it is very true of women that they are largely controlled by sentiment, and, as a matter of fact, men are largely controlled by sentiment also, in spite of their protesting blushes. Was it logic that swept like a wave over this country and sent our army to protect the Cubans when their suffering grew too intense to be endured even in the hearing? Is it shrewd business calculation that sends thousands of dollars out of this country to feed a starving people during the ever-recurring famines in unhappy India? Was it hard common sense that sent thousands of American soldiers into what looked like the death-trap of China in the almost baseless hope of rescuing a few hundred American citizens? Do not men like Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson and Lee live in the hearts of American men, not alone for what they did, but still more for what they dreamed of? The man who is not controlled by sentiment betrays his friends, sells his vote, is a traitor to his country, or wrecks himself, body and soul, with immoralities; for nothing but sentiment prevents any of these things. The sense of honor is pure sentiment. The sentiment of loyalty is the only thing that makes truth and honesty desirable, or a vote a non-salable commodity.

"Government would be a poor affair without sentiment, and is not likely to be damaged by a slightly increased supply."

...

Would Unsex Women

It will turn women into men.

The differences between men and women are natural; they are not the result of disfranchisement. The fact that all men have equal rights before the law does not wipe out natural differences of character and temperament between man and man. Why should it wipe out the natural differences between men and women? The women of England, Scotland, Canada, Yucatan, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, the Scandinavian countries and our own equal suffrage States are not perceptibly different in looks or manners from women elsewhere, although they have been voting for years.

...

Suffrage and Feminism

Suffrage is a branch of Feminism and Feminism includes free love.

Feminism merely means the general movement for woman's rights. The word is used in this sense in England and Europe, and is coming into use in America. There is no more authority

for saying that Feminism means free love than that the woman's rights movement means free love—an accusation often made against it without warrant. Mrs. Beatrice Forbes Robertson Hale (a strong opponent of free love) says in her book, "What Women Want":'

"Feminism is that part of the progress of democratic freedom which applies to women. It is a century-old struggle conducted by large groups of people in different parts of the world to bring about the removal of all artificial barriers to the physical, mental, moral and economic development of the female half of the race."

In this sense the woman suffrage movement, of course, is a part of it.

Suffrage and Marriage

Suffragists and Feminists are the enemies of marriage and the home.

The National American Woman Suffrage Association at its annual convention in Washington in December, 1915, passed the following resolution by a unanimous vote:

"That we believe the home is the foundation of the State; we believe in the sanctity of the marriage relation; and, furthermore, we believe that woman's ballot will strengthen the power of the home, and sustain the dignity and sacredness of marriage; and we denounce as a gross slander the charges made by opponents of equal suffrage that its advocates as a class entertain opinions to the contrary."

Source: Alice Stone Blackwell, "Answering Objections," in "*The Blue Book*": *Woman Suffrage, History, Arguments and Results*, edited by Frances Maule and Annie Gertrude Porritt (New York: National Woman Suffrage Publishing Company, 1917), 144-145, 168-170, 185-186, 188.

[Google Books](#).

Woodrow Wilson on the New Freedom (1912)

Woodrow Wilson campaigned for the presidency in 1912 as a progressive democrat. Wilson argued that changing economic conditions demanded new and aggressive government policies—he called his political program “the New Freedom”—to preserve traditional American liberties.

I have long had an image in my mind of what constitutes liberty. Suppose that I were building a great piece of powerful machinery, and suppose that I should so awkwardly and unskillfully assemble the parts of it that every time one part tried to move it would be interfered with by the others, and the whole thing would buckle up and be checked. Liberty for the several parts would consist in the best possible assembling and adjustment of them all, would it not? If you want the great piston of the engine to run with absolute freedom, give it absolutely perfect alignment and adjustment with the other parts of the machine, so that it is free, not because it is let alone or isolated, but because it has been associated most skillfully and carefully with the other parts of the great structure.

What is liberty? You say of the locomotive that it runs free. What do you mean? You mean that its parts are so assembled and adjusted that friction is reduced to a minimum, and that it has perfect adjustment. We say of a boat skimming the water with light foot, “How free she runs,” when we mean, how perfectly she is adjusted to the force of the wind, how perfectly she obeys the great breath out of the heavens that fills her sails. Throw her head up into the wind and see how she will halt and stagger, how every sheet will shiver and her whole frame be shaken, how instantly she is “in irons,” in the expressive phrase of the sea. She is free only when you have let her fall off again and have recovered once more her nice adjustment to the forces she must obey and cannot defy.

Human freedom consists in perfect adjustments of human interests and human activities and human energies.

Now, the adjustments necessary between individuals, between individuals and the complex institutions amidst which they live, and between those institutions and the government, are infinitely more intricate to-day than ever before. No doubt this is a tiresome and roundabout way of saying the thing, yet perhaps it is worthwhile to get somewhat clearly in our mind what makes all the trouble to-day. Life has become complex; there are many more elements, more parts, to it than ever before. And, therefore, it is harder to keep everything adjusted,—and harder to find out where the trouble lies when the machine gets out of order.

You know that one of the interesting things that Mr. Jefferson said in those early days of simplicity which marked the beginnings of our government was that the best government consisted in as little governing as possible. And there is still a sense in which that is true. It is still intolerable for the government to interfere with our individual activities except where it is necessary to interfere with them in order to free them. But I feel confident that if Jefferson were living in our day he would see what we see: that the individual is caught in a great confused nexus of all sorts of complicated circumstances, and that to let him alone is to leave him helpless as against the obstacles with which he has to contend; and that,

therefore, law in our day must come to the assistance of the individual. It must come to his assistance to see that he gets fair play; that is all, but that is much. Without the watchful interference, the resolute interference, of the government, there can be no fair play between individuals and such powerful institutions as the trusts. Freedom to-day is something more than being let alone. The program of a government of freedom must in these days be positive, not negative merely.

[Source: Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom* (New York, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1913).]

[Project Gutenberg Link.](#)

Theodore Roosevelt on “The New Nationalism” (1910)

In 1910, a newly invigorated Theodore Roosevelt delivered his outline for a bold new progressive agenda, which he would advance in 1912 during a failed presidential run under the new Progressive, or “Bull Moose,” Party.

... In every wise struggle for human betterment one of the main objects, and often the only object, has been to achieve in large measure equality of opportunity. In the struggle for this great end, nations rise from barbarism to civilization, and through it people press forward from one stage of enlightenment to the next. One of the chief factors in progress is the destruction of special privilege. The essence of any struggle for healthy liberty has always been, and must always be, to take from some one man or class of men the right to enjoy power, or wealth, or position, or immunity, which has not been earned by service to his or their fellows. That is what you fought for in the Civil War, and that is what we strive for now.

At many stages in the advance of humanity, this conflict between the men who possess more than they have earned and the men who have earned more than they possess is the central condition of progress. In our day it appears as the struggle of freemen to gain and hold the right of self-government as against the special interests, who twist the methods of free government into machinery for defeating the popular will. At every stage, and under all circumstances, the essence of the struggle is to equalize opportunity, destroy privilege, and give to the life and citizenship of every individual the highest possible value both to himself and to the commonwealth. ...

I stand for the square deal. But when I say that I am for the square deal, I mean not merely that I stand for fair play under the present rules of the games, but that I stand for having those rules changed so as to work for a more substantial equality of opportunity and of reward for equally good service. ...

Now, this means that our government, national and State, must be freed from the sinister influence or control of special interests. Exactly as the special interests of cotton and slavery threatened our political integrity before the Civil War, so now the great special business interests too often control and corrupt the men and methods of government for their own profit. We must drive the special interests out of politics. ... The Constitution guarantees protections to property, and we must make that promise good. But it does not give the right of suffrage to any corporation. The true friend of property, the true conservative, is he who insists that property shall be the servant and not the master of the commonwealth; who insists that the creature of man's making shall be the servant and not the master of the man who made it. The citizens of the United States must effectively control the mighty commercial forces which they have themselves called into being.

There can be no effective control of corporations while their political activity remains. To put an end to it will be neither a short nor an easy task, but it can be done. ... It is necessary that laws should be passed to prohibit the use of corporate funds directly or indirectly for political purposes; it is still more necessary that such laws should be thoroughly enforced. Corporate expenditures for political purposes, and especially such expenditures by public-service corporations, have supplied one of the principal sources of corruption in our political affairs. ...

No man should receive a dollar unless that dollar has been fairly earned. Every dollar received should represent a dollar's worth of service rendered – not gambling in stocks, but service rendered. The really big fortune, the swollen fortune, by the mere fact of its size acquires qualities which differentiate it in kind as well as in degree from what is possessed by men of relatively small means. Therefore, I believe in a graduated income tax on big fortunes, and in another tax which is far more easily collected and far more effective – a graduated inheritance tax on big fortunes, properly safeguarded against evasion and increasing rapidly in amount with the size of the estate. ...

The American people are right in demanding that New Nationalism, without which we cannot hope to deal with new problems. The New Nationalism puts the national need before sectional or personal advantage. ... This New Nationalism regards the executive power as the steward of the public welfare. It demands of the judiciary that it shall be interested primarily in human welfare rather than in property, just as it demands that the representative body shall represent all the people rather than any one class or section of the people. ...

The object of government is the welfare of the people. The material progress and prosperity of a nation are desirable chiefly so far as they lead to the moral and material welfare of all good citizens. Just in proportion as the average man and woman are honest, capable of sound judgment and high ideals, active in public affairs – but, first of all, sound in their home life, and the father and mother of healthy children whom they bring up well – just so far, and no farther, we may count our civilization a success. We must have – I believe we have already – a genuine and permanent moral awakening, without which no wisdom of legislation or administration really means anything; and, on the other hand, we must try to secure the social and economic legislation without which any improvement due to purely moral agitation is necessarily evanescent. ...

Source: Theodore Roosevelt, "The New Nationalism," in *The New Nationalism* (New York: The Outlook Company, 1910), 3-34. Available online via Google Books: <https://books.google.com/books?id=GIVHAQAAMAAJ>.

“Next!” (1904)



Udo Keppler, “Next!” (1904)

Summary: Illustration shows a “Standard Oil” storage tank as an octopus with many tentacles wrapped around the steel, copper, and shipping industries, as well as a state house, the U.S. Capitol, and one tentacle reaching for the White House. The only building not yet within reach of the octopus is the White House—President Teddy Roosevelt had won a reputation as a “trust buster.” Via Library of Congress (LC-USZCN4-122).

College Day on the Picket Line



Women protested silently in front of the White House for over two years before the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Here, women represent their colleges as they picket the White House in support of women's suffrage. 1917. Via Library of Congress (LC-USZ62-31799).

21. World War I & Its Aftermath

Introduction

World War I (“The Great War”) toppled empires, created new nations, and sparked tensions that would explode across future years. On the battlefield, its gruesome modern weaponry wrecked an entire generation of young men. The United States entered the conflict in 1917 and was never the same. The war heralded to the world the United States’ potential as a global military power, and, domestically, it advanced but then beat back American progressivism by unleashing vicious waves of repression. The war simultaneously stoked national pride and fueled disenchantments that burst Progressive Era hopes for the modern world. And it laid the groundwork for a global depression, a second world war, and an entire history of national, religious, and cultural conflict around the globe. These sources reveal some of that tumultuous history.

Woodrow Wilson Requests War (April 2, 1917)

In this speech before Congress, President Woodrow Wilson made the case for America's entry into World War I.

1I have called the Congress into extraordinary session because there are serious, very serious, choices of policy to be made, and made immediately ...

...

2The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind. It is a war against all nations. American ships have been sunk, American lives taken in ways which it has stirred us very deeply to learn of; but the ships and people of other neutral and friendly nations have been sunk and overwhelmed in the waters in the same way. There has been no discrimination. The challenge is to all mankind.

3Each nation must decide for itself how it will meet it. The choice we make for ourselves must be made with a moderation of counsel and a temperateness of judgment befitting our character and our motives as a nation. We must put excited feeling away. Our motive will not be revenge or the victorious assertion of the physical might of the nation, but only the vindication of right, of human right, of which we are only a single champion.

...

4With a profound sense of the solemn and even tragical character of the step I am taking and of the grave responsibilities which it involves, but in unhesitating obedience to what I deem my constitutional duty, I advise that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial German government to be in fact nothing less than war against the government and people of the United States; that it formally accept the status of belligerent which has thus been thrust upon it; and that it take immediate steps, not only to put the country in a more thorough state of defense but also to exert all its power and employ all its resources to bring the government of the German Empire to terms and end the war.

...

5While we do these things, these deeply momentous things, let us be very clear, and make very clear to all the world, what our motives and our objects are. ...

6Our object now, as then, is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power and to set up among the really free and self-governed peoples of the world such a concert of purpose and of action as will henceforth ensure the observance of those principles. Neutrality is no longer feasible or desirable where the peace of the world is involved and the freedom of its peoples, and the menace to that peace and freedom lies in the existence of autocratic governments backed by organized force which is controlled wholly by their will, not by the will of their people. We have seen the last of neutrality in such circumstances. We are at the beginning of an age in which it will be insisted that the same standards of conduct and of responsibility for wrong done shall be

observed among nations and their governments that are observed among the individual citizens of civilized states.

...

7... We are glad, now that we see the facts with no veil of false pretense about them, to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included: for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience.

8The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them.

9Just because we fight without rancor and without selfish object, seeking nothing for ourselves but what we shall wish to share with all free peoples, we shall, I feel confident, conduct our operations as belligerents without passion and ourselves observe with proud punctilio the principles of right and of fair play we profess to be fighting for.

...

10It will be all the easier for us to conduct ourselves as belligerents in a high spirit of right and fairness because we act without animus, not in enmity toward a people or with the desire to bring any injury or disadvantage upon them, but only in armed opposition to an irresponsible government which has thrown aside all considerations of humanity and of right and is running amuck. We are, let me say again, the sincere friends of the German people, and shall desire nothing so much as the early reestablishment of intimate relations of mutual advantage between us—however hard it may be for them, for the time being, to believe that this is spoken from our hearts.

...

11It is a distressing and oppressive duty, gentlemen of the Congress, which I have performed in thus addressing you. There are, it may be, many months of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. 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.

12To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when

America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.

Source: Woodrow Wilson, *Americanism: Woodrow Wilson's Speeches on the War—Why He Made Them—and—What They Have Done*, edited by Oliver Marble Gale (Chicago: Baldwin, 1918) 36-44.

[Google Books](#)

Alan Seeger on World War I (1914; 1916)

The poet Alan Seeger, born in New York and educated at Harvard University, lived among artists and poets in Greenwich Village, New York and Paris, France. When the Great War engulfed Europe, and before the United States entered the fighting, Seeger joined the French Foreign Legion. He would be killed at the Battle of the Somme in 1916. His wartime experiences would anticipate those of his countrymen, a million of whom would be deployed to France. Seeger's writings were published posthumously. The first selection is excerpted from a letter Seeger wrote to the New York Sun in 1914; the second is from his collection of poems, published in 1916.

1This is our fourth period of service in the trenches since coming to the front a month ago. ... This style of warfare is extremely modern and for the artillerymen is doubtless very interesting, but for the poor common soldier it is anything but romantic. His role is simply to dig himself a hole in the ground and to keep hidden in it as tightly as possible. Continually under the fire of the opposing batteries, he is yet never allowed to get a glimpse of the enemy. Exposed to all the dangers of war, but with none of its enthusiasms or splendid *élan*, he is condemned to sit like an animal in its burrow and hear the shells whistle over his head and take their little daily toll from his comrades.

2The winter morning dawns with gray skies and the hoar frost on the fields. His feet are numb, his canteen frozen, but he is not allowed to make a fire. The winter night falls, with its prospect of sentry duty and the continual apprehension of the hurried call to arms; he is not even permitted to light a candle, but must fold himself in his blanket and lie down cramped in the dirty straw to sleep as best he may. How different from the popular notion of the evening campfire, the songs and good cheer.

3Cramped quarters breed ill temper and disputes. The impossibility of the simplest kind of personal cleanliness makes vermin a universal ill, against which there is no remedy. Cold, dirt, discomfort, are the ever present conditions, and the soldier's life comes to mean to him simply the test of the most misery that the human organism can support. He longs for an attack, to face the barbed wire and the mitrailleuse, anything for a little freedom and function for body and soul.

4My comrade in arms is a young Servian, who went through all the Balkan campaign until the war broke out with the Bulgarians. Then he deserted at Salonica, for he was unwilling to fight against his brother people [T]he present method of fighting is almost insupportable to him, and he frets pitifully under the forced inaction ... It is ignoble, this style of warfare, he exclaims. Instead of bringing out all that is noble in a man it brings out only his worse self—meanness and greed and ill temper. We are not, in fact, leading the life of men at all, but that of animals, living in holes in the ground and only showing our heads outside to fight and to feed.

...

5"I Have a Rendezvous with Death"

6I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air—
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

7It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath—
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

8God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear...
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

Source: Alan Seeger, *Letters and Diary of Alan Seeger* (New York: Scribner's, 1917), 26, 29-30;
Alan Seeger, "I Have a Rendezvous with Death," *Poems* (New York: Scribner's, 1916), 144.

[Google Books](#); [Google Books](#).

The Sedition Act of 1918 (1918)

Passed by Congress in May 1918 and signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson, the Sedition Act of 1918 amended the Espionage Act of 1917 to include greater limitations on war-time dissent.

1Sec. 3. Whoever, when the United States is at war, shall willfully make or convey false reports or false statements with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the United States, or to promote the success of its enemies, or shall willfully make or convey false reports or false statements, or say or do anything except by way of bona fide and not disloyal advice to an investor or investors, with intent to obstruct the sale by the United States of bonds or other securities of the United States or the making of loans by or to the United States, and whoever when the United States is at war, shall willfully cause or attempt to cause, or incite or attempt to incite, insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty, in the military or naval forces of the United States, or shall willfully obstruct or attempt to obstruct the recruiting or enlistment services of the United States, and whoever, when the United States is at war, shall 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 into contempt, scorn, contumely, or disrepute, or shall willfully utter, print, write, or publish any language intended to incite, provoke, or encourage resistance to the United States, or to promote the cause of its enemies, or shall willfully display the flag of any foreign enemy, or shall willfully by utterance, writing, printing, publication, or language spoken, urge, incite, or advocate any curtailment of production in this country of any thing or things, product or products, necessary or essential to the prosecution of the war in which the United States may be engaged, with intent by such curtailment to cripple or hinder the United States in the prosecution of war, and whoever shall willfully advocate, teach, defend, or suggest the doing of any of the acts or things in this section enumerated, and whoever shall by word or act support or favor the cause of any country with which the United States is at war or by word or act oppose the cause of the United States therein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or the imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both: *Provided*, That any employee or official of the United States Government who commits any disloyal act or utters any unpatriotic or disloyal language, or who, in an abusive and violent manner criticizes the Army or Navy or the flag of the United States shall be at once dismissed from the service. . .

2Sec. 4. When the United States is at war, the Postmaster General may, upon evidence satisfactory to him that any person or concern is using the mails in violation of any of the provisions of this Act, instruct the postmaster at any post office at which mail is received addressed to such person or concern to return to the postmaster at the office at which they were originally mailed all letters or other matter so addressed, with the words 'Mail to this address undeliverable under Espionage Act' plainly written or stamped upon the outside thereof, and all such letters or other matter so returned to such postmasters shall be by them

returned to the senders thereof under such regulations as the Postmaster General may prescribe.

3Approved, May 16, 1918.

Source: *United States Statutes at Large, Volume 40, April 1917-March 1919* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919) 553-554.

Emma Goldman on Patriotism (July 9, 1917)

The Anarchist Emma Goldman was tried for conspiring to violate the Selective Service Act. The following is an excerpt from her speech to the court, in which she explains her views on patriotism.

1Who is the real patriot, or rather what is the kind of patriotism that we represent? The kind of patriotism we represent is the kind of patriotism which loves America with open eyes. Our relation towards America is the same as the relation of a man who loves a woman, who is enchanted by her beauty and yet who cannot be blind to her defects. And so I wish to state here, in my own behalf and in behalf of hundreds of thousands whom you decry and state to be antipatriotic, that we love America, we love her beauty, we love her riches, we love her mountains and her forests, and above all we love the people who have produced her wealth and riches, who have created all her beauty, we love the dreamers and the philosophers and the thinkers who are giving America liberty. But that must not make us blind to the social faults of America. That cannot make us deaf to the discords of America. That cannot compel us to be inarticulate to the terrible wrongs committed in the name of patriotism and in the name of the country. We simply insist, regardless of all protests to the contrary, that this war is not a war for democracy. If it were a war for the purpose of making democracy safe for the world, we would say that democracy must first be safe for America before it can be safe for the world.

Emma Goldman, "Trial and Speech," Mother Earth, July, 1917.

[The Emma Goldman Papers Project](#)

W.E.B DuBois, “Returning Soldiers” (May, 1919)

In the aftermath of World War I, W.E.B. DuBois urged returning soldiers to continue fighting for democracy at home.

1We are returning from war! *The Crisis* and tens of thousands of black men were drafted into a great struggle. For bleeding France and what she means and has meant and will mean to us and humanity and against the threat of German race arrogance, we fought gladly and to the last drop of blood; for America and her highest ideals, we fought in far-off hope; for the dominant southern oligarchy entrenched in Washington, we fought in bitter resignation. For the America that represents and gloats in lynching, disfranchisement, caste, brutality and devilish insult—for this, in the hateful upturning and mixing of things, we were forced by vindictive fate to fight also.

2But today we return! We return from the slavery of uniform which the world’s madness demanded us to don to the freedom of civil garb. We stand again to look America squarely in the face and call a spade a spade. We sing: This country of ours, despite all its better souls have done and dreamed, is yet a shameful land.

3It *lynches*.

4And lynching is barbarism of a degree of contemptible nastiness unparalleled in human history. Yet for fifty years we have lynched two Negroes a week, and we have kept this up right through the war.

5It *disfranchises* its own citizens.

6Disfranchisement is the deliberate theft and robbery of the only protection of poor against rich and black against white. The land that disfranchises its citizens and calls itself a democracy lies and knows it lies.

7It encourages *ignorance*.

8It has never really tried to educate the Negro. A dominant minority does not want Negroes educated. It wants servants, dogs, whores and monkeys. And when this land allows a reactionary group by its stolen political power to force as many black folk into these categories as it possibly can, it cries in contemptible hypocrisy: “They threaten us with degeneracy; they cannot be educated.”

9It *steals* from us.

10It organizes industry to cheat us. It cheats us out of our land; it cheats us out of our labor. It confiscates our savings. It reduces our wages. It raises our rent. It steals our profit. It taxes us without representation. It keeps us consistently and universally poor, and then feeds us on charity and derides our poverty.

11It *insults* us.

12It has organized a nation-wide and latterly a world-wide propaganda of deliberate and continuous insult and defamation of black blood wherever found. It decrees that it shall not be possible in travel nor residence, work nor play, education nor instruction for a black man to exist without tacit or open acknowledgment of his inferiority to the dirtiest white dog. And it looks upon any attempt to question or even discuss this dogma as arrogance, unwarranted assumption and treason.

13This is the country to which we Soldiers of Democracy return. This is the fatherland for which we fought! But it is our fatherland. It was right for us to fight. The faults of our country are our faults. Under similar circumstances, we would fight again. But by the God of Heaven, we are cowards and jackasses if now that that war is over, we do not marshal every ounce of our brain and brawn to fight a sterner, longer, more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our own land.

14We *return*.

15We *return from fighting*.

16We *return fighting*.

17Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America, or know the reason why.

Source: W.E.B. DuBois, "Returning Soldiers," *The Crisis*, XVIII (May, 1919), p. 13.

[Google Books](#).

Lutiant Van Wert describes the 1918 Flu Pandemic (1918)

Lutiant Van Wert, a Native American woman, volunteered as a nurse in Washington D.C. during the 1918 influenza pandemic. Here, she writes to a former classmate still enrolled at the Haskell Institute, a government-run boarding school for Native American students in Kansas, and describes her work as a nurse.

Dear friend Louise:

So everybody has the “Flu” at Haskell? I wish to goodness Miss Keck and Mrs. McK. would get it and die with it. Really, it would be such a good riddance, and not much lost either! As many as 90 people die every day here with the “Flu.” Soldiers too, are dying by the dozens. So far, Felicity, C. Zane, and I are the only ones of the Indian girls who have not had it. We certainly consider ourselves lucky too, believe me. Katherine and I just returned last Sunday evening from Camp Humphreys “Somewhere in Virginia” where we volunteered to help nurse soldiers sick with the Influenza. . . . All nurses were required to work twelve hours a day—we worked from seven in the morning until seven at night, with only a short time for luncheon and dinner.

Believe me, we were always glad when night came because we sure did get tired. We had the actual Practical nursing to do—just like the other nurses had, and were given a certain number of wards with three or four patients in each of them to look after. Our chief duties were to give medicines to the patients, take temperatures, fix ice packs, feed them at “eating time”, rub their back or chest with camphorated sweet oil, make egg-nogs, and a whole string of other things I can’t begin to name. I liked the work just fine, but it was too hard, not being used to it. When I was in the Officer’s barracks, four of the officers of whom I had charge, died. Two of them were married and called for their wife nearly all the time. It was sure pitiful to see them die. I was right in the wards alone with them each time, and Oh! The first one that died sure unnerved me—I had to go to the nurses’ quarters and cry it out. The other three were not so bad. Really, Louise, Orderlies carried the dead soldiers out on stretchers at the rate of two every three hours for the first two days were there. Two German spies, posing as doctors, were caught giving these Influenza germs to the soldiers and they were shot last Saturday at sunrise. It is such a horrible thing, it is hard to believe, and yet such things happen almost every day in Washington.

Repeated calls come from the Red Cross for nurses to do district work right here in D. C. I volunteered again, but as yet I have not been called and am waiting. Really, they are certainly “hard up” for nurses—even me can volunteer as a nurse in a camp or in Washington. There are about 800 soldiers stationed at Potomac Park right her in D. C. just a short distance from the Interior building where I work, and this morning’s paper said that the deaths at this Park were increasing, so if fortune favors me, I may find myself there before the week is ended.

...

... All the girls have soldiers—Indian girls also. Some of the girls have soldiers and sailors too. The boys are particularly crazy about the Indian girls. They tell us that the Indian girls are not so “easy” as the white girls, so I guess maybe that’s their reason.

Washington is certainly a beautiful place. There is so much to be said in favor of it, that if I started, I don’t believe I should ever get through. Odile and I have to pass by the Capitol, the Union Station, the War Department, the Pension Bldg., and through the noted Lincoln park every morning to our way to work. The Washington Monument (555ft. high) is within walking distance of the Interior Department (where we work) and we walked there last evening after work. It certainly is high and we are planning to go up in the elevator some time to look over the city. We were going last evening, but the place is closed temporarily, on account of this “Flu”.

...

All the schools, churches, theaters, dancing halls, etc. are closed here also. There is a bill in the Senate today authorizing all the war-workers to be released from work for the duration of this epidemic. It has not passed the house yet, but I can’t help but hope it does. ...

Source: Lutiant Van Wert to “Louise” (10/17/1918). Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75. National Archives Identifier: 2641556. National Archives at Kansas City, Kansas City, MO. Available via National Archives (<https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/influenza-epidemic/records/volunteer-nurse-letter.pdf>).

Manuel Quezon calls for Filipino Independence (1919)

During World War I, Woodrow Wilson set forth a vision for a new global future of democratic self-determination. The United States had controlled the Philippines since the Spanish-American War. After World War I, the U.S. legislature held joint hearings on a possible Philippine independence. Manuel Quezon came to Washington as part of a delegation to make the following case for Filipino independence. It would be fifteen years until the United States acted and, in 1935, Manuel Quezon became the first president of the Philippines.

...The Philippine Legislature, in accordance with the wishes of the Filipino people, sent a special mission to this country bearing the message of good will, respect, and gratitude from the people of the Philippine Islands to the Government and people of the United States. This mission is truly and thoroughly representative. It is composed of men representing all walks of life in the Philippines....

So large and representative a body, Mr. Chairman, has come to you charged by our people with the noble and sacred mission of pleading for the national independence of the Philippine Islands. The Filipino people feel that the time has come when steps should be taken immediately by the Government of the United States for the recognition of the sovereignty of the Filipino people over their own country. It is, I think, the first time in the history of the world where a country under the sovereignty of another seeks its separation from the latter not on the ground of grievances or abuses that call for redress but rather on the ground that the work of the ruling country has been so well and nobly performed that it is no longer necessary that she should still direct the destinies of her colony; and so the colony, with love and gratitude for the governing country, seeks her separation.

We have nothing but words of praise and appreciation for the work so well performed by the United States, and yet you will readily understand why nothing short of independence would ever fully satisfy our people. The granting of our national freedom at this time is in accordance with the avowed policy of the United States with regard to the Philippine Islands.

...the Congress of the United States in 1916 passed a law entitled: "an act to declare the purpose of the people of the United States as to the future political status of the people of the Philippine Islands, and to provide a more autonomous government for those islands."...This law...was enacted for the avowed purpose of promising independence to the Philippines and giving the Filipinos and opportunity to learn—if they did not know, and to demonstrate if they did—their capacity to govern themselves. This act has been in operation for three years. It was passed at a time when the whole world was in one of the most critical periods in its history. It required ability, patriotism, and intelligence of the highest order on the part of the people of the Philippine Islands to create the new government as provided by this act, and to assume the new responsibilities in the face of the perplexing problems brought about by the war....

We have kept order and peace during these three years of war. We have not only done that, we have not only kept peace and order within our borders, but we were ready—nay, anxious—once you had entered the war yourselves, to go outside of the Philippines and fight with you and for you in the battle fields of France, or wherever the Government of the United States would care to send our men. The Filipinos have shown in this critical time their loyalty to the United States, their appreciation of what you have done for them and have shown it not in words but in deeds....

The Filipinos have organized, as I said, a new government. Under this new government the country has made progress in education, in commerce, in industry, in agriculture. In other words, it has made progress in every way. So we feel that the conditions laid down by the Jones Act as prerequisite for the granting of Philippine independence have been performed; that we have shown not only that a stable government can be established in the islands but that there is now one there.

There is still another reason why we think that the independence of the Philippines should be granted at this time and that is because of the attitude taken by this Government in the recent war. You said you have gone to war for the liberation of mankind; for the right of every people to govern themselves. Indeed, you have made good those declarations in thus far recognizing the independent existence of several countries of Europe; certainly it would be nothing but natural that the Filipinos should feel that you would make those declarations good with regard to the people of the Philippines. You have recognized the independence of countries of Europe which have been under the control of autocratic powers; who have had no opportunity of exercising the powers of self-government, and to these countries you were not pledged to give independence, you were not in any way related, you were not tied by bonds of long association and affection. How can you afford not to recognize the independence of the Filipino people whom you have solemnly promised independence, whom you have helped to acquire the science and practice of self-government, and who are bound to you by ties of affection, friendship, and eternal gratitude? The granting of our national freedom will be at this time the object lesson that you could give to the world that this country can give of her belief in democracy and in the rights of every people to be free and to govern themselves.

Source: Manuel Quezon, "Statement of Hon. Manuel L. Quezon, President of the Philippine Senate and Chairman of the Philippine Mission," in *Philippine Independence: Hearings before the Committee on the Philippines, United States Senate, and the Committee on Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, Held Jointly* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), 4-8. Available via Google Books (<https://books.google.com/books?id=PSs4AAAAAYAAJ>).

Boy Scout Charge (1917)



The Boy Scouts of America charge up Fifth Avenue in New York City in a "Wake Up, America" parade to support recruitment efforts. Nearly 60,000 people attended this single parade. Photograph from the National Geographic Magazine, 1917. Via Wikimedia.

Uncle Sam



James Montgomery Flagg, "I Want You." Ca. 1917, Via Library of Congress (LC-USZC2-564). "War poster with the famous phrase "I want you for U. S. Army" shows Uncle Sam pointing his finger at the viewer in order to recruit soldiers for the American Army during World War I. The printed phrase "Nearest recruiting station" has a blank space below to add the address for enlisting." – Library of Congress

22. The New Era

Introduction

The 1920s so reshaped American life that it came to be called by many names: the New Era, the Jazz Age, the Age of the Flapper, the Prosperity Decade, and, perhaps most commonly, the Roaring Twenties. The mass production and consumption of automobiles, household appliances, film, and radio fueled a new economy and new standards of living, new mass entertainment introduced talking films and jazz while sexual and social restraints loosened. But at the same time, many Americans turned their back on political and economic reform, denounced America's shifting demographics, stifled immigration, retreated toward "old time religion," and revived with millions of new members the Ku Klux Klan. On the other hand, many Americans fought harder than ever for equal rights and cultural observers noted the appearance of "the New Woman" and "the New Negro." Old immigrant communities that had predated new immigration quotas, meanwhile, clung to their cultures and their native faiths. The 1920s were a decade of conflict and tension. Whatever the decade was, as the following sources reveal, it was not "normalcy."

Warren G. Harding and the “Return to Normalcy” (1920)

Republican Senator and presidential candidate Warren G. Harding of Ohio delivered the following address to the Home Market Club of Boston on May 14, 1920. In it, Harding outlined his hope that the United States would, after a decade of progressive politics and foreign interventions, return to “normalcy.” In November, Harding received the highest percentage of the popular vote in a presidential election up to that time.

My countrymen, there isn't anything the matter with world civilization, except that humanity is viewing it through a vision impaired in a cataclysmal war. Poise has been disturbed, and nerves have been racked, and fever has rendered men irrational; sometimes there have been draughts upon the dangerous cup of barbarity, and men have wandered far from safe paths, but the human procession still marches in the right direction. . . .

America's present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not agitation, but adjustment; not surgery, but serenity; not the dramatic, but the dispassionate; not experiment, but equipoise; not submergence in internationality, but sustainment in triumphant nationality. It is one thing to battle successfully against world domination by military autocracy, because the infinite God never intended such a program, but it is quite another thing to revise human nature and suspend the fundamental laws of life and all of life's acquirements. . . .

This republic has its ample task. If we put an end to false economics which lure humanity to utter chaos, ours will be the commanding example of world leadership today. If we can prove a representative popular government under which a citizenship seeks what it may do for the government rather than what the government may do for individuals, we shall do more to make democracy safe for the world than all armed conflict ever recorded.

The world needs to be reminded that all human ills are not curable by legislation, and that quantity of statutory enactment and excess of government offer no substitute for quality of citizenship. The problems of maintained civilization are not to be solved by a transfer of responsibility from citizenship to government, and no eminent page in history was ever drafted by the standards of mediocrity. More, no government is worthy of the name which is directed by influence on the one hand, or moved by intimidation on the other.

My best judgment of America's need is to steady down, to get squarely on our feet, to make sure of the right path. Let's get out of the fevered delirium of war, with the hallucination that all the money in the world is to be made in the madness of war and the wildness of its aftermath. Let us stop to consider that tranquility at home is more precious than peace abroad, and that both our good fortune and our eminence are dependent on the normal forward stride of all the American people. We want to go on, secure and unafraid, holding fast to the American inheritance, and confident of the supreme American fulfillment.

[Source: Warren G. Harding, "National Ideals and Policies," *The Protectionist* (May, 1920), 71-81. Available online via The Miller Center (<http://millercenter.org/president/harding/speeches/readjustment>).]

Crystal Eastman, “Now We Can Begin” (1920)

In the following selection, Crystal Eastman, a socialist and feminist, considered what women should fight for following the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted American women the right to vote.

Most women will agree that August 23, the day when the Tennessee legislature finally enacted the Federal suffrage amendment, is a day to begin with, not a day to end with. Men are saying perhaps “Thank God, this everlasting woman’s fight is over!” But women, if I know them, are saying, “Now at last we can begin.” In fighting for the right to vote most women have tried to be either non-committal or thoroughly respectable on every other subject. Now they can say what they are really after; and what they are after, in common with all the rest of the struggling world, is freedom.

Freedom is a large word.

...

What, then, is “the matter with women”? What is the problem of women’s freedom? It seems to me to be this: how to arrange the world so that women can be human beings, with a chance to exercise their infinitely varied gifts in infinitely varied ways, instead of being destined by the accident of their sex to one field of activity—housework and child-raising. And second, if and when they choose housework and child-raising, to have that occupation recognized by the world as work, requiring a definite economic reward and not merely entitling the performer to be dependent on some man.

This is not the whole of feminism, of course, but it is enough to begin with. “Oh, don’t begin with economics,” my friends often protest, “Woman does not live by bread alone. What she needs first of all is a free soul.” And I can agree that women will never be great until they achieve a certain emotional freedom, a strong healthy egotism, and some unpersonal sources of joy — that in this inner sense we cannot make woman free by changing her economic status. What we can do, however, is to create conditions of outward freedom in which a free woman’s soul can be born and grow. It is these outward conditions with which an organized feminist movement must concern itself.

Freedom of choice in occupation and individual economic independence for women: How shall we approach this next feminist objective? First, by breaking down all remaining barriers, actual as well as legal, which make it difficult for women to enter or succeed in the various professions, to go into and get on in business, to learn trades and practice them, to join trades unions. Chief among these remaining barriers is inequality in pay. Here the ground is already broken. This is the easiest part of our program.

Second, we must institute a revolution in the early training and education of both boys and girls. It must be womanly as well as manly to earn your own living, to stand on your own feet. And it must be manly as well as womanly to know how to cook and sew and clean and take care of yourself in the ordinary exigencies of life. I need not add that the second part of this revolution will be more passionately resisted than the first. Men will not give up their

privilege of helplessness without a struggle. The average man has a carefully cultivated ignorance about household matters — from what to do with the crumbs to the grocer's telephone number — a sort of cheerful inefficiency which protects him better than the reputation for having a violent temper. It was his mother's fault in the beginning, but even as a boy he was quick to see how a general reputation for being "no good around the house" would serve him throughout life, and half-consciously he began to cultivate that helplessness until today it is the despair of feminist wives.

...

Cooperative schemes and electrical devices will simplify the business of homemaking, but they will not get rid of it entirely. As far as we can see ahead people will always want homes, and a happy home cannot be had without a certain amount of rather monotonous work and responsibility. How can we change the nature of man so that he will honorably share that work and responsibility and thus make the homemaking enterprise a song instead of a burden? Most assuredly not by laws or revolutionary decrees. Perhaps we must cultivate or simulate a little of that highly prized helplessness ourselves. But fundamentally it is a problem of education, of early training — we must bring up feminist sons.

Sons? Daughters? They are born of women — how can women be free to choose their occupation, at all times cherishing their economic independence, unless they stop having children? This is a further question for feminism. If the feminist program goes to pieces on the arrival of the first baby, it is false and useless. For ninety-nine out of every hundred women want children, and seventy-five out of every hundred want to take care of their own children, or at any rate so closely superintend their care as to make any other full-time occupation impossible for at least ten or fifteen years. Is there any such thing then as freedom of choice in occupation for women? And is not the family the inevitable economic unit and woman's individual economic independence, at least during that period, out of the question?

The feminist must have an answer to these questions, and she has. The immediate feminist program must include voluntary motherhood. Freedom of any kind for women is hardly worth considering unless it is assumed that they will know how to control the size of their families. "Birth control" is just as elementary an essential in our propaganda as "equal pay." Women are to have children when they want them, that's the first thing. That ensures some freedom of occupational choice; those who do not wish to be mothers will not have an undesired occupation thrust upon them by accident, and those who do wish to be mothers may choose in a general way how many years of their lives they will devote to the occupation of childraising.

But is there any way of insuring a woman's economic independence while child-raising is her chosen occupation? Or must she sink into that dependent state from which, as we all know, it is so hard to rise again? That brings us to the fourth feature of our program — motherhood endowment. It seems that the only way we can keep mothers free, at least in a capitalist society, is by the establishment of a principle that the occupation of raising children is peculiarly and directly a service to society, and that the mother upon whom the necessity

and privilege of performing this service naturally falls is entitled to an adequate economic reward from the political government. It is idle to talk of real economic independence for women unless this principle is accepted. But with a generous endowment of motherhood provided by legislation, with all laws against voluntary motherhood and education in its methods repealed, with the feminist ideal of education accepted in home and school, and with all special barriers removed in every field of human activity, there is no reason why woman should not become almost a human thing.

It will be time enough then to consider whether she has a soul.

[Source: Crystal Eastman, "Now We Can Begin," *Liberator* (December 1920).]

Marcus Garvey, Explanation of the Objects of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (1921)

Inspired by the writings of Booker T. Washington, Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey became the most prominent Black Nationalist in the United States. He championed the back-to-Africa movement, advocated for Black-owned businesses—he founded the Black Star Line, a transnational shipping company—and founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Thousands of UNIA chapters formed all across the world. In 1921, Garvey recorded a message in a New York studio explaining the object of the UNIA.

Fellow citizens of Africa, I greet you in the name of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League of the World. You may ask, “what organization is that?” It is for me to inform you that the Universal Negro Improvement Association is an organization that seeks to unite, into one solid body, the four hundred million Negroes in the world. To link up the fifty million Negroes in the United States of America, with the twenty million Negroes of the West Indies, the forty million Negroes of South and Central America, with the two hundred and eighty million Negroes of Africa, for the purpose of bettering our industrial, commercial, educational, social, and political conditions.

As you are aware, the world in which we live today is divided into separate race groups and distinct nationalities. Each race and each nationality is endeavoring to work out its own destiny, to the exclusion of other races and other nationalities. We hear the cry of “England for the Englishman,” of “France for the Frenchman,” of “Germany for the German,” of “Ireland for the Irish,” of “Palestine for the Jew,” of “Japan for the Japanese,” of “China for the Chinese.”

We of the Universal Negro Improvement Association are raising the cry of “Africa for the Africans,” those at home and those abroad. There are 400 million Africans in the world who have Negro blood coursing through their veins, and we believe that the time has come to unite these 400 million people toward the one common purpose of bettering their condition.

The great problem of the Negro for the last 500 years has been that of disunity. No one or no organization ever succeeded in uniting the Negro race. But within the last four years, the Universal Negro Improvement Association has worked wonders. It is bringing together in one fold four million organized Negroes who are scattered in all parts of the world. Here in the 48 States of the American Union, all the West Indies islands, and the countries of South and Central America and Africa. These four million people are working to convert the rest of the four hundred million that are all over the world, and it is for this purpose, that we are asking you to join our land and to do the best you can to help us to bring about an emancipated race.

If anything praiseworthy is to be done, it must be done through unity, and it is for that reason that the Universal Negro Improvement Association calls upon every Negro in the

United States to rally to this standard. We want to unite the Negro race in this country. We want every Negro to work for one common object, that of building a nation of his own on the great continent of Africa. That all Negroes all over the world are working for the establishment of a government in Africa means that it will be realized in another few years.

We want the moral and financial support of every Negro to make this dream a possibility. Our race, this organization, has established itself in Nigeria, West Africa, and it endeavors to do all possible to develop that Negro country to become a great industrial and commercial commonwealth.

Pioneers have been sent by this organization to Nigeria, and they are now laying the foundations upon which the four hundred million Negroes of the world will build. If you believe that the Negro has a soul, if you believe that the Negro is a man, if you believe the Negro was endowed with the senses commonly given to other men by the Creator, then you must acknowledge that what other men have done, Negroes can do. We want to build up cities, nations, governments, industries of our own in Africa, so that we will be able to have a chance to rise from the lowest to the highest position in the African Commonwealth.

[Source: Marcus Garvey, "Explanation of the Objects of the Universal Negro Improvement Association" (1921), Marcus Garvey and the UNIA Papers Project at the University of California, Los Angeles. Available online via *History Matters* (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5124>).]

Hiram Evans on the “The Klan’s Fight for Americanism” (1926)

The “Second” Ku Klux Klan rose to prominence in the 1920s and, at its peak, claimed millions of Americans as members. Klansmen wrapped themselves in the flag and the cross and proclaimed themselves the moral guardians of America. The organization appealed to many “respectable,” middle-class Americans. Here, Imperial Wizard Hiram Evans, a dentist from Dallas, Texas, outlines the Second Klan’s potent mix of Americanism, Protestantism, and white supremacy.

There are three . . . great racial instincts, vital elements in both the historic and the present attempts to build an America which shall fulfill the aspirations and justify the heroism of the men who made the nation. These are the instincts of loyalty to the white race, to the traditions of America, and to the spirit of Protestantism, which has been an essential part of Americanism ever since the days of Roanoke and Plymouth Rock. They are condensed into the Klan slogan: “Native, white, Protestant supremacy.”

First in the Klansman’s mind is patriotism—America for Americans. He believes religiously that a betrayal of Americanism or the American race is treason to the most sacred trusts, a trust from his fathers and a trust from God. He believes too that Americanism can only be achieved if the pioneer stock is kept pure. There is more than race pride in this. Mongrelization has been proven bad. It is only between closely related stocks of the same race that interbreeding has improved men; the kind of interbreeding that went on in the early days of America between English, Dutch, German, Huguenot, Irish, and Scotch.

Racial integrity is a very definite thing to a Klansman. It means even more than good citizenship, for a man may be in all ways a good citizen and yet a poor American, unless he has racial understanding of Americanism, and instinctive loyalty to it. It is in no way a reflection on any man to say that he is un-American; it is merely a statement that he is not one of us. It is often not even wise to try and make an American of the best of aliens. What he is may be spoiled without his becoming American. The races and stocks of men are as distinct as breeds of animals, and every boy knows that if one tries to train a bulldog to herd sheep, he has in the end neither a good bulldog nor a good collie.

Americanism, to the Klansman, is a thing of the spirit, a purpose and a point of view, that can only come through instinctive racial understanding. It has, to be sure, certain defined principles, but he does not believe that many aliens understand those principles, even when they use our words in talking about them. . . . In short, the Klansman believes in the greatest possible diversity and individualism within the limits of the American spirit. But he believes also that few aliens can understand that spirit, that fewer try to, and that there must be resistance, intolerance even, toward anything that threatens it, or the fundamental national unity based upon it.

The second word in the Klansman’s trilogy is “white.” The white race must be supreme, not only in America but in the world. This is equally undebatable, except on the ground that the

racess might live together, each with full regard for the rights and interests of others, and that those rights and interests would never conflict. Such an idea, of course, is absurd; the colored races today, such as Japan, are clamoring not for equality but for their supremacy. The whole history of the world, on its broader lines, has been one of race conflicts, wars, subjugation or extinction. This is not pretty and certainly disagrees with the maudlin theories of cosmopolitanism, but it is truth. The world has been so made that each race must fight for its life, must conquer, accept slavery or die. The Klansman believes that the whites will not become slaves, and he does not intend to die before his time. . . .

The third of the Klan principles is that Protestantism must be supreme; that Rome shall not rule America. The Klansman believes this is not merely because he is a Protestant, nor even because the Colonies that are now our nation were settled for the purpose of wresting America from the control of Rome and establishing a land free of conscience. He believes it also because Protestantism is an essential part of Americanism; without it America could never have been created and without it she cannot go forward. Roman rule would kill it.

Protestantism contains more than just religion. It is the expression in religion of the same spirit of independence, self-reliance, and freedom which are the highest achievements of the Nordic race. . . .

Let it be clear what is meant by "supremacy." It is nothing more than power of control, under just laws. It is not imperialism, far less is it autocracy or even aristocracy of a race or stock of men. What it does mean is that we insist on our inherited right to insure our own safety, individually and as a race, to secure the future of our children, to maintain and develop our racial heritage in our own, white, Protestant, American way, without interference. . . .

There are, however, certain general principles and purposes which are always kept in view. Enough has been said about pioneer Americanism. Another constant aim is better citizenship. The Klan holds that no man can either be a good Klansman or a good American without being a good citizen. A large part of our work is to preach this, and no man can be a Klansman long without feeling it.

Another constant objective is good government, locally and nationally. The Klansman is pledged to support law and order and it is also a part of his duty to see that both law and office are as good as possible. We believe that every man and woman should keep well informed on all public matters and take active and direct part in all public affairs. . . .The Klan however never attempts to dictate the votes of its members, but does furnish information about men and measures.

[Source: Hiram W. Evans, "The Klan's Fight for Americanism," *North American Review* 223 (March 1926). Available online via *The Internet Archive* (<https://archive.org/details/Klansfightamericanism>).]

Herbert Hoover, “Principles and Ideals of the United States Government” (1928)

Republican Herbert Hoover embodied the political conservatism of the 1920s. He denounced the regulation of business and championed the individual against “bureaucracy.” In November 1928, Hoover, a Protestant from the Midwest, soundly defeated Al Smith, an Irish Catholic from New York City. Here, in a speech delivered in late October, Hoover outlined his vision of American government.

... Tonight, I will not deal with the multitude of issues which have been already well canvassed, I propose rather to discuss some of those more fundamental principles and ideals upon which I believe the Government of the United States should be conducted.

Before I enter upon that discussion of principles I wish to lay before you the proof of progress under Republican rule. In doing this I do not need to review its seventy years of constructive history. That history shows that the Republican Party has ever been a party of progress. It has reflected the spirit of the American people. We are a progressive people. Our history of 150 years in the greatest epic of human progress. Tonight to demonstrate the constructive character of our Party, I need only briefly picture the advance of fundamental progress during the past seven and a half years since we took over the Government amidst the ruin of war.

First of all, let me deal with the material side. I do this because upon the well-being, comfort and security of the American home do we build up the moral and spiritual virtues as well as the finer flowers of civilization and the wider satisfactions of life.

As a nation we came out of the war with great losses. ... Yet during these last eight years we have recovered from these losses and increased our national income by over one-third even if we discount the inflation of the dollar. ... In addition to ... evidences of larger savings our people are steadily increasing their spending for higher standards of living. Today there are almost 9 automobiles for each 10 families, where seven and a half years ago only enough automobiles were running to average less than 4 for each 10 families. The slogan of progress is changing from the full dinner pail to the full garage. Our people have more to eat, better things to wear, and better homes. We have even gained in elbow room in our homes, for the increase of residential floor space is over 25 per cent with less than 10 per cent increase in our number of people. We have increased the security of his job to every man and woman. We have decreased the fear of old age, the fear of poverty, the fear of unemployment and these are fears which have always been amongst the greatest calamities of human kind.

... I do not need to recite more figures and more evidence. There is not a person within the sound of my voice that does not know the profound progress which our country has made in this period. Every man and woman knows that their comfort, their hopes and their confidence for the future are higher this day than they were seven and one-half years ago.

...

It detracts nothing from the character and energy of the American people, it minimizes in no degree the quality of their accomplishments to say that the policies of the Republican Party have played a large part in the building of this progress of these last seven and one-half years. I can say with emphasis that without the wise policies which the Republican Party has brought into action in this period, no such progress would have been possible.

The first responsibility of the Republican Administration was to renew the march of progress from its collapse by the war. That task involved the restoration of confidence in the future and the liberation and stimulation of the constructive energies of our people. It is not my purpose to enter upon a detailed recitation of the history of the great constructive measures of the past seven and a half years.

...

But in addition to this great record of contributions of the Republican Party to progress, there has been a further fundamental contribution — a contribution perhaps more important than all the others — and that is the resistance of the Republican Party to every attempt to inject the Government into business in competition with its citizens.

After the war, when the Republican Party assumed administration of the country, we were faced with the problem of determination of the very nature of our national life. Over 150 years we have builded up a form of self-government and we had builded up a social system which is peculiarly our own. It differs fundamentally from all others in the world. It is the American system. It is just as definite and positive a political and social system as has ever been developed on earth. It is founded upon the conception that self-government can be preserved only by decentralization of Government in the State and by fixing local responsibility; but further than this, it is founded upon the social conception that only through ordered liberty, freedom and equal opportunity to the individual will his initiative and enterprise drive the march of progress.

...

I regret, however, to say that there has been revived in this campaign a proposal which would be a long step to the abandonment of our American system, to turn to the idea of government in business. Because we are faced with difficulty and doubt over certain national problems which we are faced — that is prohibition, farm relief and electrical power — our opponents propose that we must to some degree thrust government into these businesses and in effect adopt state socialism as a solution.

There is, therefore submitted to the American people the question — Shall we depart from the American system and start upon a new road. And I wish to emphasize this question on this occasion. I wish to make clear my position on the principles involved for they go to the very roots of American life in every act of our Government. I should like to state to you the effect of the extension of government into business upon our system of self government and our economic system. But even more important is the effect upon the average man. That is

the effect on the very basis of liberty and freedom not only to those left outside the fold of expanded bureaucracy but to those embraced within it.

...

Bureaucracy is ever desirous of spreading its influence and its power. You cannot give to a government the mastery of the daily working life of a people without at the same time giving it mastery of the peoples' souls and thoughts. Every expansion of government means that government in order to protect itself from political consequences of its errors and wrongs is driven onward and onward without peace to greater and greater control of the country's press and platform. Free speech does not live many hours after free industry and free commerce die.

It is false liberalism that interprets itself into the Government operation of business. The bureaucratization of our country would poison the very roots of liberalism that is free speech, free assembly, free press, political equality and equality of opportunity. It is the road, not to more liberty, but to less liberty. Liberalism should be found not striving to spread bureaucracy, but striving to set bounds to it. True liberalism seeks freedom first in the confident belief that without freedom the pursuit of all other blessings and benefits is vain. That belief is the foundation of all American progress, political as well as economic.

Liberalism is a force truly of the spirit, a force proceeding from the deep realization that economic freedom cannot be sacrificed if political freedom is to be preserved. Even if governmental conduct of business could give us more efficiency instead of giving us decreased efficiency, the fundamental objection to it would remain unaltered and unabated. It would destroy political equality. It would cramp and cripple mental and spiritual energies of our people. It would dry up the spirit of liberty and progress. It would extinguish equality of opportunity, and for these reasons fundamentally and primarily it must be resisted. For a hundred and fifty years liberalism has found its true spirit in the American system, not in the European systems.

I do not wish to be misunderstood in this statement. I am defining a general policy! It does not mean that our government is to part with one iota of its national resources without complete protection to the public interest. I have already stated that where the government is engaged in public works for purposes of flood control, of navigation, of irrigation, of scientific research or national defense that, or in pioneering a new art, it will at times necessarily produce power or commodities as a by-product. But they must be by-products, not the major purpose.

Nor do I wish to be misinterpreted as believing that the United States is free-for-all and the devil-take-the-hindmost. The very essence of equality of opportunity is that there shall be no domination by any group or trust or combination in this republic, whether it be business or political. It demands economic justice as well as political and social justice. It is no system to laissez faire.

...

In the last fifty years we have discovered that mass production will produce articles for us at half the cost that obtained previously. We have seen the resultant growth of large units of production and distribution. This is big business. Business must be bigger for our tools are bigger, our country is bigger. We build a single dynamo of a hundred thousand horsepower. Even fifteen years ago that would have been a big business all by itself. Yet today advance in production requires that we set ten of these units together.

...

[Source: Herbert Hoover, "Principles and Ideals of the United States Government," Speech, (October 22, 1928). Available online via <http://millercenter.org/president/hover/speeches/speech-6000>.]

Ellen Welles Page, “A Flapper’s Appeal to Parents” (1922)

By 1922, “the Flapper” had become a full-blown cultural phenomenon. In the following article, Ellen Welles Page, a self-described “semi-flapper,” attempted to explain the appeal of the flapper and pled with America’s mothers and fathers not to reflexively judge their flapper daughters.

If one judges by appearances, I suppose I am a flapper. I am within the age limit. I wear bobbed hair, the badge of flapperhood. (And, oh, what a comfort it is!) I powder my nose. I wear fringed skirts and bright-colored sweaters, and scarfs, and waists with Peter Pan collars, and low-heeled “finale hopper” shoes. I adore to dance. I spend a large amount of time in automobiles. I attend hops, and proms, and ball-games, and crew races, and other affairs at men’s colleges. But none the less some of the most thoroughbred superflappers might blush to claim sistership or even remote relationship with such as I. I don’t use rouge, or lipstick, or pluck my eyebrows. I don’t smoke (I’ve tried it, and don’t like it), or drink, or tell “peppy stories.” I don’t pet. And, most unpardonable infringement of all the rules and regulations of Flapperdom, I haven’t a line! But then—there are many degrees of flapper. There is the semi-flapper; the flapper; the superflapper. Each of these three main general divisions has its degrees of variation. I might possibly be placed somewhere in the middle of the first class.

...

I want to beg all you parents, and grandparents, and friends, and teachers, and preachers—you who constitute the “older generation”—to overlook our shortcomings, at least for the present, and to appreciate our virtues. I wonder if it ever occurred to any of you that it required brains to become and remain a successful flapper? Indeed it does! It requires an enormous amount of cleverness and energy to keep going at the proper pace. It requires self-knowledge and self-analysis. We must know our capabilities and limitations. We must be constantly on the alert. Attainment of flapperhood is a big and serious undertaking!

“Brains?” you repeat, skeptically. “Then why aren’t they used to better advantage?” That is exactly it! And do you know who is largely responsible for all this energy being spent in the wrong directions? You! You parents, and grandparents, and friends, and teachers, and preachers—all of you! “The war!” you cry. “It is the effect of the war!” And then you blame prohibition. Yes! Yet it is you who set the example there! But this is my point: Instead of helping us work out our problems with constructive, sympathetic thinking and acting, you have muddled them for us more hopelessly with destructive public condemnation and denunciation.

Think back to the time when you were struggling through the teens. Remember how spontaneous and deep were the joys, how serious and penetrating the sorrows. Most of us, under the present system of modern education, are further advanced and more thoroughly developed mentally, physically, and vocationally than were our parents at our age. We hold the infinite possibilities of the myriads of new inventions within our grasp. We have learned

to take for granted conveniences, and many luxuries, which not so many years ago were as yet undreamed of. We are in touch with the whole universe. We have a tremendous problem on our hands. You must help us. Give us confidence—not distrust. Give us practical aid and advice—not criticism. Praise us when praise is merited. Be patient and understanding when we make mistakes.

We are the Younger Generation. The war tore away our spiritual foundations and challenged our faith. We are struggling to regain our equilibrium. The times have made us older and more experienced than you were at our age. It must be so with each succeeding generation if it is to keep pace with the rapidly advancing and mighty tide of civilization. Help us to put our knowledge to the best advantage. Work with us! That is the way! Outlets for this surplus knowledge and energy must be opened. Give us a helping hand.

Youth has many disillusionments. Spiritual forces begin to be felt. The emotions are frequently in a state of upheaval, struggling with one another for supremacy. And Youth does not understand. There is no one to turn to—no one but the rest of Youth, which is as perplexed and troubled with its problems as ourselves. Everywhere we read and hear the criticism and distrust of older people toward us. It forms an insurmountable barrier between us. How can we turn to them? In every person there is a desire, an innate longing, toward some special goal or achievement. Each of us has his place to fill.

... It is up to you who have the supervision of us of less ripe experience to guide us sympathetically, and to help us find, encourage, and develop our special abilities and talents. Study us. Make us realize that you respect us as fellow human beings, that you have confidence in us, and, above all, that you expect us to live up to the highest ideals, and to the best that is in us.

Source: Ellen Welles Page, "A Flapper's Appeal to Parents," *Outlook*, December 6, 1922, p. 607. Available via Google Books (<https://books.google.com/books?id=jb9OQAAMAAJ>).

Alain Locke on the “New Negro” (1925)

Alain Locke, a leading figure of the Harlem Renaissance, was a distinguished academic—the first African American Rhodes Scholar, he obtained a Ph.D. in philosophy from Harvard—who taught at Howard University for 35 years. In 1925, he published an essay, “Enter the New Negro,” that described an African American population busy seeing “a new vision of opportunity.”

In the last decade something beyond the watch and guard of statistics has happened in the life of the American Negro and the three norns [goddesses of Norse mythology] who have traditionally presided over the Negro problem have a changeling in their laps. The Sociologist, The Philanthropist, the Race-leader are not unaware of the New Negro but they are at a loss to account for him. He simply cannot be swathed in their formulae. For the younger generation is vibrant with a new psychology; the new spirit is awake in the masses, and under the very eyes of the professional observers is transforming what has been a perennial problem into the progressive phases of contemporary Negro life.

Could such a metamorphosis have taken place as suddenly as it has appeared to? The answer is no; not because the New Negro is not here, but because the Old Negro had long become more of a myth than a man. The Old Negro, we must remember, was a creature of moral debate and historical controversy. His has been a stock figure perpetuated as an historical fiction partly in innocent sentimentalism, partly in deliberate reactionism. The Negro himself has contributed his share to this through a sort of protective social mimicry forced upon him by the adverse circumstances of dependence. So for generations in the mind of America, the Negro has been more of a formula than a human being—a something to be argued about, condemned or defended, to be “kept down,” or “in his place,” or “helped up,” to be worried with or worried over, harassed or patronized, a social bogey or a social burden. The thinking Negro even has been induced to share this same general attitude, to focus his attention on controversial issues, to see himself in the distorted perspective of a social problem. His shadow, so to speak, has been more real to him than his personality. Through having had to appeal from the unjust stereotypes of his oppressors and traducers to those of his liberators, friends and benefactors he has subscribed to the traditional positions from which his case has been viewed. Little true social or self-understanding has or could come from such a situation.

We have not been watching in the right direction; set North and South on a sectional axis, we have not noticed the East till the sun has us blinking.

... The mind of the Negro seems suddenly to have slipped from under the tyranny of social intimidation and to be shaking off the psychology of imitation and implied inferiority. By shedding the old chrysalis of the Negro problem we are achieving something like a spiritual emancipation. Until recently, lacking self-understanding, we have been almost as much of a problem to ourselves as we still are to others. But the decade that found us with a problem has left us with only a task. The multitude perhaps feels as yet only a strange relief and a new vague urge, but the thinking few know that in the reaction the vital inner grip of prejudice has been broken.

With this renewed self-respect and self-dependence, the life of the Negro community is bound to enter a new dynamic phase, the buoyancy from within compensating for whatever pressure there may be of conditions from without. The migrant masses, shifting from countryside to city, hurdle several generations of experience at a leap, but more important, the same thing happens spiritually in the life-attitudes and self-expression of the Young Negro, in his poetry, his art, his education and his new outlook, with the additional advantage, of course, of the poise and greater certainty of knowing what it is all about. From this comes the promise and warrant of a new leadership.

... The day of “aunties,” “uncles” and “mammies” is equally gone. Uncle Tom and Sambo have passed on, and even the “Colonel” and “George” play barnstorm roles from which they escape with relief when the public spotlight is off. The popular melodrama has about played itself out, and it is time to scrap the fictions, garret the bogeys and settle down to a realistic facing of facts.

First we must observe some of the changes which since the traditional lines of opinion were drawn have rendered these quite obsolete. A main change has been, of course, that shifting of the Negro population which has made the Negro problem no longer exclusively or even predominantly Southern. Why should our minds remain sectionalized, when the problem itself no longer is? Then the trend of migration has not only been toward the North and the Central Midwest, but city-ward and to the great centers of industry—the problems of adjustment are new, practical, local and not peculiarly racial. Rather they are an integral part of the large industrial and social problems of our present-day democracy. And finally, with the Negro rapidly in process of class differentiation, if it ever was warrantable to regard and treat the Negro en masse it is becoming with every day less possible, more unjust and more ridiculous.

... If in our lifetime the Negro should not be able to celebrate his full initiation into American democracy, he can at least, on the warrant of these things, celebrate the attainment of a significant and satisfying new phase of group development, and with it a spiritual Coming of Age.

Source: Alain Locke, “Enter the New Negro,” *Survey Graphic* 6 (March 1925), 631–34.

Available via National Humanities Center

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai3/migrations/text8/lockenewnegro.pdf>.

Advertisements (1924)

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“Advertising Section” Photoplay (October 1924) Museum of Modern Art Library, via [Archive.org](https://www.archive.org).

In the 1920's Americans across the country bought magazines like Photoplay in order to get more information about the stars of their new favorite entertainment media: the movies. Advertisers took advantage of this broad audience to promote a wide range of goods and services to both men and women who enjoyed the proliferation of consumer culture during this time.

Klan Gathering (ca. 1920s)



Underwood and Underwood, "Klan assembles Short Distance from U.S. Capitol," (ca. 1920's). [Library of Congress](#).

This photo by popular news photographers Underwood and Underwood shows a gathering of a reported 300 Ku Klux Klansmen just outside Washington DC to initiate a new group of men into their order. The proximity of the photographer to his subjects for one of the Klan's notorious night-time rituals suggests that this was yet another of the Klan's numerous publicity stunts.

23. The Great Depression

Introduction

The wonder of the stock market permeated popular culture in the 1920s. Although it was released during the first year of the Great Depression, the 1930 film *High Society Blues* captured the speculative hope and prosperity of the previous decade. “I’m in the Market for You,” a popular musical number from the film, even used the stock market as a metaphor for love: *You’re going up, up, up in my estimation, / I want a thousand shares of your caresses, too. / We’ll count the hugs and kisses, / When dividends are due, / Cause I’m in the market for you.* But, just as the song was being recorded in 1929, the stock market reached the apex of its swift climb, crashed, and brought an abrupt end to the seeming prosperity of the “Roaring ‘20s.” The Great Depression had arrived, and with it, as the following sources chronicle, a rupturing of American life.

Herbert Hoover on the New Deal (1932)

Americans elected a string of conservative Republicans to the presidency during the boom years of the 1920s. When the economy crashed in 1929, however, and the nation descended deeper into the Great Depression, voters abandoned the Republican Party and conservative politicians struggled to in office. In this speech on the eve of the 1932 election, Herbert Hoover warned against Franklin Roosevelt's proposed New Deal.

This campaign is more than a contest between two men. It is more than a contest between two parties. It is a contest between two philosophies of government.

We are told by the opposition that we must have a change, that we must have a new deal. It is not the change that comes from normal development of national life to which I object but the proposal to alter the whole foundations of our national life which have been builded through generations of testing and struggle, and of the principles upon which we have builded the nation. The expressions our opponents use must refer to important changes in our economic and social system and our system of government, otherwise they are nothing but vacuous words. And I realize that in this time of distress many of our people are asking whether our social and economic system is incapable of that great primary function of providing security and comfort of life to all of the firesides of our 25 million homes in America, whether our social system provides for the fundamental development and progress of our people, whether our form of government is capable of originating and sustaining that security and progress.

This question is the basis upon which our opponents are appealing to the people in their fears and distress. They are proposing changes and so-called new deals which would destroy the very foundations of our American system.

Our people should consider the primary facts before they come to the judgment—not merely through political agitation, the glitter of promise, and the discouragement of temporary hardships—whether they will support changes which radically affect the whole system which has been builded up by 150 years of the toil of our fathers. They should not approach the question in the despair with which our opponents would clothe it.

Our economic system has received abnormal shocks during the past three years, which temporarily dislocated its normal functioning. These shocks have in a large sense come from without our borders, but I say to you that our system of government has enabled us to take such strong action as to prevent the disaster which would otherwise have come to our nation. It has enabled us further to develop measures and programs which are now demonstrating their ability to bring about restoration and progress.

...

I may say at once that the changes proposed from all these Democratic principals and allies are of the most profound and penetrating character. If they are brought about, this will not be the America which we have known in the past.

Let us pause for a moment and examine the American system of government, of social and economic life, which it is now proposed that we should alter. Our system is the product of our race and of our experience in building a nation to heights unparalleled in the whole history of the world. It is a system peculiar to the American people. It differs essentially from all others in the world. It is an American system.

It is founded on the conception that only through ordered liberty, through freedom to the individual, and equal opportunity to the individual will his initiative and enterprise be summoned to spur the march of progress.

...

The implacable march of scientific discovery with its train of new inventions presents every year new problems to government and new problems to the social order. Questions often arise whether, in the face of the growth of these new and gigantic tools, democracy can remain master in its own house, can preserve the fundamentals of our American system. I contend that it can; and I contend that this American system of ours has demonstrated its validity and superiority over any other system yet invented by human mind.

It has demonstrated it in the face of the greatest test of our history—that is the emergency which we have faced in the past three years.

...

I therefore contend that the problem of today is to continue ... measures and policies to restore this American system to its normal functioning, to repair the wounds it has received, to correct the weaknesses and evils which would defeat that system. To enter upon a series of deep changes, to embark upon this inchoate new deal which has been propounded in this campaign, would be to undermine and destroy our American system.

[Source: *The State Papers and Other Public Writings of Herbert Hoover*, vol. 2, William S. Myers, ed., 1934, pp. 408-413. Available online via *The American Presidency Project* (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=23317>).]

Huey P. Long, “Every Man a King” and “Share our Wealth” (1934)

Amid the economic indignities of the Great Depression, Huey P. Long of Louisiana championed an aggressive program of public spending and wealth redistribution. Critics denounced Long, who served as both governor and a senator from Louisiana, as a corrupt demagogue, but “the Kingfish” appealed to impoverished Louisianans and Americans wracked by joblessness and resentful of American economic inequality. He was assassinated before he could mount his independent bid for the White House in 1936. In the following extracts from two of his most famous speeches, Long outlines his political program.

“Every Man a King”

...

We have a marvelous love for this Government of ours; in fact, it is almost a religion, and it is well that it should be, because we have a splendid form of government and we have a splendid set of laws. We have everything here that we need, except that we have neglected the fundamentals upon which the American Government was principally predicated.

How many of you remember the first thing that the Declaration of Independence said? It said: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that there are certain inalienable rights for the people, and among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;” and it said further, “We hold the view that all men are created equal.”

Now, what did they mean by that? Did they mean, my friends, to say that all men are created equal and that that meant that any one man was born to inherit \$10,000,000,000 and that another child was to be born to inherit nothing?

Did that mean, my friends, that someone would come into this world without having had an opportunity, of course, to have hit one lick of work, should be born with more than it and all of its children and children’s children could ever dispose of, but that another one would have to be born into a life of starvation?

That was not the meaning of the Declaration of Independence when it said that all men are created equal or “That we hold that all men are created equal.”

Nor was it the meaning of the Declaration of Independence when it said that they held that there were certain rights that were inalienable—the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Is that right of life, my friends, when the young children of this country are being reared into a sphere which is more owned by 12 men than it by 120,000,000 people?

Is that, my friends, giving them a fair shake of the dice or anything like the inalienable right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, or anything resembling the fact that all people are created equal; when we have today in America thousands and hundreds of thousands and

millions of children on the verge of starvation in a land that is overflowing with too much to eat and too much to wear?

I do not think you will contend that, and I do not think for a moment that they will contend it.

...

Now, my friends, if you were off on an island where there were 100 lunches, you could not let one man eat up the hundred lunches, or take the hundred lunches and not let anybody else eat any of them. If you did, there would not be anything else for the balance of the people to consume.

...

Now, we have organized a society, and we call it "Share Our Wealth Society," a society with the motto "Every Man a King."

Every man a king, so there would be no such thing as a man or woman who did not have the necessities of life, who would not be dependent upon the whims and caprices and ipsi dixit [unproved assertion] of the financial barons for a living. What do we propose by this society? We propose to limit the wealth of big men in the country. There is an average of \$15,000 in wealth to every family in America. That is right here today.

We do not propose to divide it up equally. We do not propose a division of wealth, but we propose to limit poverty that we will allow to be inflicted upon any man's family. We will not say we are going to try to guarantee any equality, or \$15,000 to a family. No; but we do say that one third of the average is low enough for any one family to hold, that there should be a guarantee of a family wealth of around \$5,000; enough for a home, an automobile, a radio, and the ordinary conveniences, and the opportunity to educate their children; a fair share of the income of this land thereafter to that family so there will be no such thing as merely the select to have those things, and so there will be no such thing as a family living in poverty and distress.

We have to limit fortunes. Our present plan is that we will allow no one man to own more than \$50,000,000. We think that with that limit we will be able to carry out the balance of the program. It may be necessary that we limit it to less than \$50,000,000. It may be necessary, in working out of the plans that no man's fortune would be more than \$10,000,000 or \$15,000,000. But be that as it may, it will still be more than any one man, or any one man and his children and their children, will be able to spend in their lifetimes; and it is not necessary or reasonable to have wealth piled up beyond that point where we cannot prevent poverty among the masses.

...

Those are the things we propose to do. “Every Man a King.” Every man to eat when there is something to eat; all to wear something when there is something to wear. That makes us all a sovereign.

“Share our Wealth”

For 20 years I have been in the battle to provide that, so long as America has, or can produce, an abundance of the things which make life comfortable and happy, that none should own so much of the things which he does not need and cannot use as to deprive the balance of the people of a reasonable proportion of the necessities and conveniences of life. The whole line of my political thought has always been that America must face the time when the whole country would shoulder the obligation which it owes to every child born on earth—that is, a fair chance to life, liberty, and happiness.

... [I]n the land of plenty there shall be comfort for all. The organized 600 families who control the wealth of America have been able to keep the 125,000,000 people in bondage because they have never once known how to effectually strike for their fair demands.

...

It is impossible for the United States to preserve itself as a republic or as a democracy when 600 families own more of this Nation’s wealth—in fact, twice as much—as all the balance of the people put together. Ninety-six percent of our people live below the poverty line, while 4 percent own 87 percent of the wealth. America can have enough for all to live in comfort and still permit millionaires to own more than they can ever spend and to have more than they can ever use; but America cannot allow the multimillionaires and the billionaires, a mere handful of them, to own everything unless we are willing to inflict starvation upon 125,000,000 people.

Here is the whole sum and substance of the share-our-wealth movement:

1. Every family to be furnished by the Government a homestead allowance, free of debt, of not less than one-third the average family wealth of the country, which means, at the lowest, that every family shall have the reasonable comforts of life up to a value of from \$5,000 to \$6,000. No person to have a fortune of more than 100 to 300 times the average family fortune, which means that the limit to fortunes is between \$1,500,000 and \$5,000,000, with annual capital levy taxes imposed on all above \$1,000,000.
2. The yearly income of every family shall be not less than one-third of the average family income, which means that, according to the estimates of the statisticians of the United States Government and Wall Street, no family’s annual income would be less than from \$2,000 to \$2,500. No yearly income shall be allowed to any person larger than from 100 to 300 times the size of the average family income, which means; that no person would be allowed to earn in any year more than from \$600,000 to \$1,800,000, all to be subject to present income-tax laws.

3. To limit or regulate the hours of work to such an extent as to prevent overproduction; the most modern and efficient machinery would be encouraged, so that as much would be produced as possible so as to satisfy all demands of the people, but to also allow the maximum time to the workers for recreation, convenience, education, and luxuries of life.
4. An old-age pension to the persons of 60.
5. To balance agricultural production with what can be consumed according to the laws of

God, which includes the preserving and storage of surplus commodities to be paid for and held by the Government for the emergencies when such are needed. ...

6. To pay the veterans of our wars what we owe them and to care for their disabled.
7. Education and training for all children to be equal in opportunity in all schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions for training in the professions and vocations of life; to be regulated on the capacity of children to learn, and not on the ability of parents to pay the costs. Training for life's work to be as much universal and thorough for all walks in life as has been the training in the arts of killing.
8. The raising of revenue and taxes for the support of this program to come from the reduction of swollen fortunes from the top, as well as for the support of public works to give employment whenever there may be any slackening necessary in private enterprise.

I now ask those who read this circular to help us at once in this work of giving life and happiness to our people — not a starvation dole upon which someone may live in misery from week to week. Before this miserable system of wreckage has destroyed the life germ of respect and culture in our American people let us save what was here, merely by having none too poor and none too rich. The theory of the Share Our Wealth Society is to have enough for all, but not to have one with so much that less than enough remains for the balance of the people.

...

Let everyone who feels he wishes to help in our work start right out and go ahead. One man or woman is as important as any other. Take up the fight! Do not wait for someone else to tell you what to do. There are no high lights in this effort. We have no State managers and no city managers. Everyone can take up the work, and as many societies can be organized as there are people to organize them. One is the same as another. The reward and compensation is the salvation of humanity. Fear no opposition. "He who fails in this fight falls in the radiance of the future!"

Yours sincerely,

Huey P. Long,

United States Senator, Washington, D.C.

[Sources: Senator Huey P. Long, "Statement of the Share Our Wealth Movement" (May 23, 1935). In *Congressional Record*, 74th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 79, 8040-43; Huey Long, "Every Man a King," Radio Address (February 23, 1934).]

Franklin Roosevelt's Re-Nomination Acceptance Speech (1936)

In July 27, 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt accepted his re-nomination as the Democratic Party's presidential choice. In his acceptance speech, Roosevelt laid out his understanding of what "freedom" and "tyranny" meant in an industrial democracy.

... Philadelphia is a good city in which to write American history. This is fitting ground on which to reaffirm the faith of our fathers; to pledge ourselves to restore to the people a wider freedom; to give to 1936 as the founders gave to 1776—an American way of life.

That very word freedom, in itself and of necessity, suggests freedom from some restraining power. In 1776 we sought freedom from the tyranny of a political autocracy—from the eighteenth century royalists who held special privileges from the crown. It was to perpetuate their privilege that they governed without the consent of the governed; that they denied the right of free assembly and free speech; that they restricted the worship of God; that they put the average man's property and the average man's life in pawn to the mercenaries of dynastic power; that they regimented the people.

And so it was to win freedom from the tyranny of political autocracy that the American Revolution was fought. That victory gave the business of governing into the hands of the average man, who won the right with his neighbors to make and order his own destiny through his own Government. Political tyranny was wiped out at Philadelphia on July 4, 1776.

Since that struggle, however, man's inventive genius released new forces in our land which reordered the lives of our people. The age of machinery, of railroads; of steam and electricity; the telegraph and the radio; mass production, mass distribution—all of these combined to bring forward a new civilization and with it a new problem for those who sought to remain free.

For out of this modern civilization economic royalists carved new dynasties. New kingdoms were built upon concentration of control over material things. Through new uses of corporations, banks and securities, new machinery of industry and agriculture, of labor and capital—all undreamed of by the fathers—the whole structure of modern life was impressed into this royal service.

There was no place among this royalty for our many thousands of small business men and merchants who sought to make a worthy use of the American system of initiative and profit. They were no more free than the worker or the farmer. Even honest and progressive-minded men of wealth, aware of their obligation to their generation, could never know just where they fitted into this dynastic scheme of things.

It was natural and perhaps human that the privileged princes of these new economic dynasties, thirsting for power, reached out for control over Government itself. They created

a new despotism and wrapped it in the robes of legal sanction. In its service new mercenaries sought to regiment the people, their labor, and their property. And as a result the average man once more confronts the problem that faced the Minute Man.

...

An old English judge once said: "Necessitous men are not free men." Liberty requires opportunity to make a living—a living decent according to the standard of the time, a living which gives man not only enough to live by, but something to live for.

For too many of us the political equality we once had won was meaningless in the face of economic inequality. A small group had concentrated into their own hands an almost complete control over other people's property, other people's money, other people's labor—other people's lives. For too many of us life was no longer free; liberty no longer real; men could no longer follow the pursuit of happiness.

Against economic tyranny such as this, the American citizen could appeal only to the organized power of Government. The collapse of 1929 showed up the despotism for what it was. The election of 1932 was the people's mandate to end it. Under that mandate it is being ended.

...

Today we stand committed to the proposition that freedom is no half-and-half affair. If the average citizen is guaranteed equal opportunity in the polling place, he must have equal opportunity in the market place.

These economic royalists complain that we seek to overthrow the institutions of America. What they really complain of is that we seek to take away their power. Our allegiance to American institutions requires the overthrow of this kind of power. In vain they seek to hide behind the Flag and the Constitution. In their blindness they forget what the Flag and the Constitution stand for. Now, as always, they stand for democracy, not tyranny; for freedom, not subjection; and against a dictatorship by mob rule and the over-privileged alike.

...

Governments can err, Presidents do make mistakes, but the immortal Dante tells us that divine justice weighs the sins of the cold-blooded and the sins of the warm-hearted in different scales.

Better the occasional faults of a Government that lives in a spirit of charity than the consistent omissions of a Government frozen in the ice of its own indifference.

There is a mysterious cycle in human events. To some generations much is given. Of other generations much is expected. This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny.

[Source: Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Acceptance Speech for the Re-Nomination for the Presidency," Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 27, 1936. Available online via *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15314>.]

Second Inaugural Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt (1937)

After winning a landslide victory in his 1936 quest for a second presidential term, President Franklin Roosevelt championed again the ambitious goals of his New Deal economic programs and their relationship to American democracy.

...

Our progress out of the depression is obvious. But that is not all that you and I mean by the new order of things. Our pledge was not merely to do a patchwork job with secondhand materials. By using the new materials of social justice we have undertaken to erect on the old foundations a more enduring structure for the better use of future generations.

... Old truths have been relearned; untruths have been unlearned. We have always known that heedless self-interest was bad morals; we know now that it is bad economics. ... we are fashioning an instrument of unimagined power for the establishment of a morally better world.

This new understanding undermines the old admiration of worldly success as such. We are beginning to abandon our tolerance of the abuse of power by those who betray for profit the elementary decencies of life.

In this process evil things formerly accepted will not be so easily condoned. Hard-headedness will not so easily excuse hardheartedness. We are moving toward an era of good feeling. But we realize that there can be no era of good feeling save among men of good will.

For these reasons I am justified in believing that the greatest change we have witnessed has been the change in the moral climate of America.

Among men of good will, science and democracy together offer an ever-richer life and ever-larger satisfaction to the individual. With this change in our moral climate and our rediscovered ability to improve our economic order, we have set our feet upon the road of enduring progress.

Shall we pause now and turn our back upon the road that lies ahead? Shall we call this the promised land? Or, shall we continue on our way? For "each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth."

...

True, we have come far from the days of stagnation and despair. Vitality has been preserved. Courage and confidence have been restored. Mental and moral horizons have been extended.

...

But here is the challenge to our democracy: In this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens—a substantial part of its whole population—who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life.

I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day.

I see millions whose daily lives in city and on farm continue under conditions labeled indecent by a so-called polite society half a century ago.

I see millions denied education, recreation, and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children.

I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions.

I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

It is not in despair that I paint you that picture. I paint it for you in hope—because the Nation, seeing and understanding the injustice in it, proposes to paint it out. We are determined to make every American citizen the subject of his country's interest and concern; and we will never regard any faithful law-abiding group within our borders as superfluous. The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

...

Today we reconsecrate our country to long-cherished ideals in a suddenly changed civilization. In every land there are always at work forces that drive men apart and forces that draw men together. In our personal ambitions we are individualists. But in our seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up, or else we all go down, as one people.

To maintain a democracy of effort requires a vast amount of patience in dealing with differing methods, a vast amount of humility. But out of the confusion of many voices rises an understanding of dominant public need. Then political leadership can voice common ideals, and aid in their realization.

In taking again the oath of office as President of the United States, I assume the solemn obligation of leading the American people forward along the road over which they have chosen to advance.

...

[Source: Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Second Inaugural Address," January 20, 1937. Available online via *Avalon Project* (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/froos2.asp).]

Lester Hunter, “I’d Rather Not Be on Relief” (1938)

Lester Hunter left the Dust Bowl for the fields of California and wrote this poem, later turned into a song by migrant workers in California’s Farm Security Administration camps. The “C.I.O.” in the final line refers to the Congress of Industrial Unions, a powerful new industrial union founded in 1935.

We go around all dressed in rags
While the rest of the world goes neat,
And we have to be satisfied
With half enough to eat.
We have to live in lean-tos,
Or else we live in a tent,
For when we buy our bread and beans
There’s nothing left for rent.

I’d rather not be on the rolls of relief,
Or work on the W. P. A.,
We’d rather work for the farmer
If the farmer could raise the pay;
Then the farmer could plant more cotton
And he’d get more money for spuds,
Instead of wearing patches,
We’d dress up in new duds.

From the east and west and north and south
Like a swarm of bees we come;
The migratory workers

Are worse off than a bum.

We go to Mr. Farmer

And ask him what he'll pay;

He says, "You gypsy workers

Can live on a buck a day."

I'd rather not be on the rolls of relief,

Or work on the W. P. A.,

We'd rather work for the farmer

If the farmer could raise the pay;

Then the farmer could plant more cotton

And he'd get more money for spuds,

Instead of wearing patches,

We'd dress up in new duds.

We don't ask for luxuries

Or even a feather bed.

But we're bound to raise the dickens

While our families are underfed.

Now the winter is on us

And the cotton picking is done,

What are we going to live on

While we're waiting for spuds to come?

Now if you will excuse me

I'll bring my song to an end.

I've got to go and chuck a crack

Where the howling wind comes in.

The times are going to better

And I guess you'd like to know

I'll tell you all about it,

I've joined the C. I. O.

[Source: Lester Hunter, "I'd Rather Not Be on Relief" (1938). Available online via *Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress*, <https://www.loc.gov/folklife/archive.html>.]

Bertha McCall on America's "Moving People" (1940)

Bertha McCall, general director of the National Travelers Aid Association, acquired a special knowledge of the massive displacement of individuals and families during the Great Depression. In 1940, McCall testified before the House of Representatives' Select Committee to Investigate the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens on the nature of America's internal migrants.

My name is Bertha McCall. I am the general director of the National Travelers Aid Association. I am here because our association, together with a number of other private national organizations, has been interested for many years in the problem of what we call "moving people." We are interested in this problem because we see the individuals, and go from the specific back to the general. You have just heard of the general, and we start with the specific and go to that general.

...

The problem of transiency and migration was not a new phenomenon in our history. Drought, flood, war, opening of new territory — all resulted in making individuals in the families move to new pastures in hopes of finding better ones. ...

The national private agencies of the United States have used such terms as "nonresident," "transient," "migrant," "migratory workers," "immigrants," "travelers," "strangers," "nonsettled," "dislodged"— these are all terms that we apply to people who are without roots in a community.

In the 2 years from 1929 to 1931 there was special cause for migration. For those in our country who had remained stationary for many years, carrying on the work of the world, came the closing of shops and factories and the loss of jobs that had seemed as permanent as life itself. It is not necessary to recall the problem of transiency in the days of 1930 and 1931. The Federal Government felt the pressure of this and called upon such agencies as the National Y. W. C. A., the Family Welfare Association, the National Travelers Aid, to advise in planning for this special problem. Community after community reported that it was swamped with the numbers of people moving around, especially the young because one was doing one thing in one area and one in another.

The problem of transiency and migration was not new in 1931. We had known about it off and on for many years. I recall from my own experience seeing the letters that came into the Federal Government agency, the reconstruction group of Washington, stacked very high, from all parts of the country, saying, "Come out and help us."

...

We have known for a long time the nature of the people in this group. We have evidence to prove from private agencies, from public agencies, from direct association with the transients themselves, that a transient population differs very little from the average static

population. ... We all know that there was a period in which the general public looked upon transients as bums and hoboes. The Federal transient program records show that most of these people were enterprising and energetic. A good many of them had good social background and good educational preparation. Except for the fact that these people are nonresidents, they are not a distinct and separate group of Americans.

...

Mr. Curtis: Miss McCall, what one thing more than anything else makes it necessary for families to take to the road in search of a home or jobs or something or other? What puts these people out?

Miss McCall: Well, the whole family, that is, the family as a whole, when it picks up and goes, does so because it does not have enough to live on well where it is and thinks that the next field is much greener than the one where it is, and it keeps on going in that way.

Source: U.S. House of Representatives, *Interstate Migration: Hearings before the Select Committee to Investigate the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1940), 43-45, 60. Available via Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/stream/interstatemigrat01unit/interstatemigrat01>).

Dorothy West, “Amateur Night in Harlem” (1938)

Amateur night at the Apollo Theater attracted not only Harlem’s African American population but a national radio audience. In this account, written through the New Deal’s Federal Writers’ Project, Dorothy West describes an amateur night at the theater in November 1938 and reflects on the relationship between entertainment, race, and American life.

... The crowd has come early, for it is amateur night. The Apollo Theater is full to overflowing. Amateur night is an institution. Every Wednesday, from eleven until midnight, the hopeful aspirants come to the mike, lift up their voices and sing, and retire to the wings for the roll call, when a fluttering piece of paper dangled above their heads comes to rest—determined by the volume of applause—to indicate to whom the prizes shall go.

The boxes are filled with sightseeing whites led in tow by swaggering blacks. The floor is chocolate liberally sprinkled with white sauce. But the balconies belong to the hardworking, holidaying Negroes, and the jitterbug whites are intruders, and their surface excitement is silly compared to the earthy enjoyment of the Negroes. ...

A Negro show would rather have the plaudits of an Apollo audience than any other applause. For the Apollo is the hard, testing ground of Negro show business, and approval there can make or break an act.

It is eleven now. The house lights go up. The audience is restless and expectant. Somebody has brought a whistle that sounds like a wailing baby. The cry fills the theater and everybody laughs. ...

The emcee comes out of the wings. The audience knows him. He is Negro to his toes, but even Hitler would classify him as Aryan at first glance. He begins a steady patter of jive. When the audience is ready and mellow, he calls the first amateur out of the wings.

... Willie sings “I surrender Dear” in a pure Georgia accent. “I can’ mak’ mah way,” he moans.

The audience hears him out and claps kindly. ... Vanessa appears. She is black and the powder makes her look purple. ... Vanessa is an old-time “coon-shouter.” She wails and moans deep blue notes. The audience give her their highest form of approval. They clap their hands in time with the music. She finishes to tumultuous applause ... Ida comes out in a summer print to sing that beautiful lyric, “I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart,” in a nasal, off-key whine. ... Coretta steps to the mike. Her first note is so awful that the emcee goes to the Tree of Hope and touches it for her. The audience lets her sing the first bar, then bursts into catcalls and derisive whistling. ...

A white man comes out of the wings, but nobody minds. They have got accustomed to occasional white performers at the Apollo. There was a dancing act in the regular stage show which received deserved applause. The emcee announces the song, “That’s Why ——” he

omits the next word “Were Born.” He is a Negro emcee. He will not use the word “darky” in announcing a song a white man is to sing.

The white man begins to sing, “Someone had to plough the cotton, Someone had to plant the corn, Someone had to work while the white folks played, That’s why darkies were born.” The Negroes hiss and boo. Instantly the audience is partisan. The whites applaud vigorously. But the greater volume of hisses and boos drown out the applause. The singer halts. The emcee steps to the house mike and raises his hand for quiet. He does not know what to say, and says ineffectually that the song was written to be sung and urges that the singer be allowed to continue. The man begins again, and on the instant is booed down. The emcee does not know what to do. . . . The studio officials, the listening audience, largely white, has heard a Negro audience booing a white man. It is obvious that in his confusion the emcee has forgotten what the song connotes. The Negroes are not booing the white man as such. They are booing him for his categorization of them. The song is not new. A few seasons ago they listened to it in silent resentment. Now they have learned to vocalize their bitterness. They cannot bear that a white man, as poor as themselves, should so separate himself from their common fate and sing paternally for a price of their predestined lot to serve.

For the third time the man begins, and now all the fun that has gone before is forgotten. There is resentment in every heart. The white man will not save the situation by leaving the stage, and the emcee steps again to the house mike with an impassioned plea. The Negroes know this emcee. He is as white as any white man. Now it is ironic that he should be so fair, for the difference between him and the amateur is too undefined. The emcee spreads out his arms and begins, “My people ——.” He says without explanation that “his people” should be proud of the song. He begs “his people” to let the song be sung to show that they are ladies and gentlemen. He winds up with a last appeal to “his people” for fair-play. He looks for all the world like the plantation

owner’s yellow boy acting as buffer between the black and the big house.

The whole house breaks into applause, and this time the scattered hisses are drowned out. The amateur begins and ends in triumph. He is the last contestant, and in the lineup immediately following, he is overwhelmingly voted first prize. More of the black man’s blood money goes out of Harlem.

The show is over. The orchestra strikes up, “I think you’re wonderful, I think you’re grand.” The audience files out. They are quiet and confused and sad. It is twelve on the dot. Six hours of sleep and then back to the Bronx or up and down an elevator shaft. Yessir, Mr. White Man, I work all day while you-all play. It’s only fair. That’s why darkies were born.

Source: Dorothy West, “Amateur Night in Harlem,” Federal Writers’ Project, 1938. Available via the Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh001719/>).

Family Walking on Highway 1936



During her assignment as a photographer for the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Dorothea Lange documented the movement of migrant families forced from their homes by drought and economic depression. This family was in the process of traveling 124 miles by foot, across Oklahoma, because the father was unable to receive relief or WPA work of his own due to an illness. Dorothea Lange, "Family walking on highway, five children" (June 1938) Works Progress Administration, [Library of Congress](#).

“Bonus Army Routed” (1932)

[FILM available at <http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/23-the-great-depression/>]

This short newsreel clip made by British film company Pathé shows the federal government's response to the thousands of WWI veterans who organized in Washington DC during the summer of 1932 to form what was called a "Bonus Army." At the demand of attorney general, the marchers were violently removed from government property.

24. World War II

Introduction

The 1930s and 1940s were trying times. A global economic crisis gave way to a global war that would become the deadliest and most destructive in human history. Perhaps 80 million lost their lives during World War II. The war saw industrialized genocide and nearly threatened the eradication of an entire people. It also unleashed the most fearsome wartime technology that has ever been used in war. It And when it ended, the United States found itself alone as the world's greatest superpower, armed with the world's greatest economy and looking forward to a prosperous consumers' economy. But of course the war would raise as many questions as it would settle: it unleashed new social forces at home and abroad that would confront new generations of Americans to come.

Charles A. Lindbergh, “America First” (1941)

Charles Lindbergh won international fame in 1927 after completing the first non-stop, solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean. As Hitler’s armies marched across the European continent, many Americans began to imagine American participation in the war. Charles Lindbergh and the America First Committee, advocating “America First,” championed American isolationism.

There are many ... interventionists in America, but there are more people among us of a different type. That is why you and I are assembled here tonight. There is a policy open to this nation that will lead to success—a policy that leaves us free to follow our own way of life, and to develop our own civilization. It is not a new and untried idea. It was advocated by Washington. It was incorporated in the Monroe Doctrine. Under its guidance, the United States became the greatest nation in the world.

It is based upon the belief that the security of a nation lies in the strength and character of its own people. It recommends the maintenance of armed forces sufficient to defend this hemisphere from attack by any combination of foreign powers. It demands faith in an independent American destiny. This is the policy of the America First Committee today. It is a policy not of isolation, but of independence; not of defeat, but of courage. It is a policy that led this nation to success during the most trying years of our history, and it is a policy that will lead us to success again.

We have weakened ourselves for many months, and still worse, we have divided our own people by this dabbling in Europe’s wars. While we should have been concentrating on American defense we have been forced to argue over foreign quarrels. We must turn our eyes and our faith back to our own country before it is too late. And when we do this, a different vista opens before us. Practically every difficulty we would face in invading Europe becomes an asset to us in defending America. Our enemy, and not we, would then have the problem of transporting millions of troops across the ocean and landing them on a hostile shore. They, and not we, would have to furnish the convoys to transport guns and trucks and munitions and fuel across three thousand miles of water. Our battleships and submarines would then be fighting close to their home bases. We would then do the bombing from the air and the torpedoing at sea. And if any part of an enemy convoy should ever pass our Navy and our air force, they would still be faced with the guns of our coast artillery and behind them the divisions of our Army.

The United States is better situated from a military standpoint than any other nation in the world. Even in our present condition of unpreparedness no foreign power is in a position to invade us today. If we concentrate on our own defenses and build the strength that this nation should maintain, no foreign army will every attempt to land on American shores.

War is not inevitable for this country. Such a claim is defeatism in the true sense. No one can make us fight abroad unless we ourselves are willing to do so. No one will attempt to fight us here if we arm ourselves as a great nation should be armed. Over a hundred million people in this nation are opposed to entering the war. If the principles of democracy mean

anything at all, that is reason enough for us to stay out. If we are forced into a war against the wishes of an overwhelming majority of our people, we will have proved democracy such a failure at home that there will be little use of fighting for it abroad.

The time has come when those of us who believe in an independent American destiny must band together and organize for strength. We have been led toward war by a minority of our people. This minority has power. It has influence. It has a loud voice. But it does not represent the American people. During the last several years I have traveled over this country from one end to the other. I have talked to many hundreds of men and women, and I have letters from tens of thousands more, who feel the same way as you and I.

Most of these people have no influence or power. Most of them have no means of expressing their convictions, except by their vote which has always been against this war. They are the citizens who have had to work too hard at their daily jobs to organize political meetings. Hitherto, they have relied upon their vote to express their feelings; but now they find that it is hardly remembered except in the oratory of a political campaign. These people—the majority of hardworking American citizens, are with us. They are the true strength of our country. And they are beginning to realize, as you and I, that there are times when we must sacrifice our normal interests in life in order to insure the safety and the welfare of our nation.

Such a time has come. Such a crisis is here. That is why the America First Committee has been formed—to give voice to the people who have no newspaper, or newsreel, or radio station at their command; to the people who must do the paying, and the fighting, and the dying if this country enters the war.

Whether or not we do enter the war rests upon the shoulders of you in this audience, upon us here on this platform, upon meetings of this kind that are being held by Americans in every section of the United States today. It depends upon the action we take, and the courage we show at this time. If you believe in an independent destiny for America, if you believe that this country should not enter the war in Europe, we ask you to join the America First Committee in its stand. We ask you to share our faith in the ability of this nation to defend itself, to develop its own civilization, and to contribute to the progress of mankind in a more constructive and intelligent way than has yet been found by the warring nations of Europe. We need your support, and we need it now. The time to act is here.

[Source: Charles A. Lindbergh, address delivered at the America First Committee meeting in New York City, April 23, 1941. Available online via *Teaching American History*, <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/charles-a-lindberghs-address-in-new-york/>.]

A Phillip Randolph and Franklin Roosevelt on Racial Discrimination in the Defense Industry (1941)

As the United States prepared for war, Black labor leader A. Philip Randolph recoiled at rampant employment discrimination in the defense industry. Together with NAACP head Walter White and other leaders, Randolph planned “a mass March on Washington” to push for fair employment practices. President Franklin Roosevelt met with Randolph and White on June 18, and, faced with mobilized discontent and a possible disruption of wartime industries, Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802 on June 25. The order prohibited racial discrimination in the defense industry. Randolph and other leaders declared victory and called off the march.

A. Philip Randolph on a March on Washington (March 18, 1941)

Dear Walter:

Just a word of remembrance and good hope that you are feeling fine.

Now I have been thinking about the Negro and national defense and have come to the conclusion that something drastic has got to be done to shake official Washington and the white industrialists and labor forces of America to the realization of the fact that Negroes mean business about getting their rights as American citizens under national defense. To this end I have decided to undertake the organization of a march of ten thousand Negroes or more upon Washington. When I come back East I want to talk with you about it.

I hope it may be convenient for you to join with me and a few other persons in the issuance of a call to the Negro people for such as march.

If we are able to mobilize Negroes on such a program it is certain to have a favorable effect upon your splendid plan to get the whole question of national defense and the Negro probed by the Senate.

It is my hope that we may be able to plan the march to take place either before or directly after the conference of the NAACP in Houston.

Cordially yours,

A. Philip Randolph

Executive Order 8802 (June 25, 1941)

Whereas it is the policy of the United States to encourage full participation in the national defense program by all citizens of the United States, regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin, in the firm belief that the democratic way of life within the Nation can be defended successfully only with the help and support of all groups within its borders; and

Whereas there is evidence that available and needed workers have been barred from employment in industries engaged in defense production solely because of considerations of race, creed, color, or national origin, to the detriment of workers' morale and of national unity:

Now, Therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the statutes, and as a prerequisite to the successful conduct of our national defense production effort, I do hereby reaffirm the policy of the United States that there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin, and I do hereby declare that it is the duty of employers and of labor organizations, in furtherance of said policy and of this order, to provide for the full and equitable participation of all workers in defense industries, without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin.

Source: A. Philip Randolph to Walter White, March 18, 1941. NAACP Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Available online via the Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/naacp/world-war-ii-and-the-post-war-years.html#obj1>); Source: Executive Order 8802 dated June 25, 1941, General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives. Available online via the National Archives (<https://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/?dod-date=625>).

The Atlantic Charter (1941)

The leaders of the United States and United Kingdom signed the Atlantic Charter in August 1941. The short document neatly outlined an idealized vision for political and economic order of the postwar world.

AUGUST 14, 1941

The President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.

First, their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;

Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;

Third, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;

Fourth, they will endeavor, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;

Fifth, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security;

Sixth, after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want;

Seventh, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

Eighth, they believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measure which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Winston S. Churchill

[Available online via *The Avalon Project*, <http://avalon.lam.yale.edu/wwii/atlantic.asp>.]

FDR, Executive Order No. 9066 (1942)

During World War II, the federal government removed over 120,000 men, women, and children of Japanese descent (both foreign-born "issei" and native-born "nisei") from the West Coast and interned in camps. President Roosevelt authorized the internments with his Executive Order No. 9066, issued on February 19, 1942.

Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate, whenever he or any designated Commander deems such action necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate Military Commander may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide for residents of any such area who are excluded therefrom, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary, in the judgment of the Secretary of War or the said Military Commander, and until other arrangements are made, to accomplish the purpose of this order. The designation of military areas in any region or locality shall supersede designations of prohibited and restricted areas by the Attorney General under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, and shall supersede the responsibility and authority of the Attorney General under the said Proclamations in respect of such prohibited and restricted areas.

I hereby further authorize and direct the Secretary of War and the said Military Commanders to take such other steps as he or the appropriate Military Commander may deem advisable to enforce compliance with the restrictions applicable to each Military area hereinabove authorized to be designated, including the use of Federal troops and other Federal Agencies, with authority to accept assistance of state and local agencies.

I hereby further authorize and direct all Executive Departments, independent establishments and other Federal Agencies, to assist the Secretary of War or the said Military Commanders in carrying out this Executive Order, including the furnishing of medical aid, hospitalization, food, clothing, transportation, use of land, shelter, and other supplies, equipment, utilities, facilities, and services.

This order shall not be construed as modifying or limiting in any way the authority heretofore granted under Executive Order No. 8972, dated December 12, 1941, nor shall it be construed as limiting or modifying the duty and responsibility of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with respect to the investigation of alleged acts of sabotage or the duty and responsibility of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, prescribing regulations for the conduct and control of alien enemies, except as such duty and responsibility is superseded by the designation of military areas hereunder.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The White House,

February 19, 1942.

[Source: Executive Order No. 9066, February 19, 1942. Available online via *History Matters*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5154>.]

Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga on Japanese Internment (1942/1994)

Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga was born in 1924 in Sacramento, California and moved to Los Angeles at the age of nine. A second-generation ("Nisei") Japanese American, she was incarcerated at the Manzanar internment camp in California and later at other internment camps in Arkansas. Her she describes learning about Pearl Harbor, her family's forced evacuation, and her impressions of her internment camp.

EO: Do you remember what you were doing when you heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

AH: When the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred, I was at a party of my high school friends, and it was, we were just shocked. It was hard to believe that this had happened. ... The party broke up, we all went home. And I think our parents took it much harder because, as you know, as most — perhaps a lot of people don't know — that persons of Japanese ancestry who were immigrants were not permitted to become American citizens at that time, in 1942. ... My father and mother had been here a number of years, but by law, they were, could not become naturalized citizens. So, of course, we were concerned as to what would happen to the immigrant parents who were considered aliens. ... We did not think — at least I didn't, and I think many of us who were second-generation Japanese, *Nisei* — didn't think much about what would be happening to us. We were concerned about our parents. We thought we were American citizens, therefore we were protected. We were protected by the Constitution to continue to have the freedom, the liberty that we, all Americans have a right to

...

EO: And did you go back to school the next day?

AH: We, as I recall, we did go back to school. Things had changed, though. I think our friends, non-Japanese friends, didn't really know how to treat us. I think they knew that we would be hurt if they ostracized us. On the other hand, just like our neighbors who lived around us, I believe that they felt if they were too friendly with us, they would be labeled "Jap-lovers." ... We were treated with a sort of disdain. I think we were stigmatized simply because of, of our ethnicity. And I think that that's one of the most painful experiences, the feelings about the entire wartime experience. That we were judged, not on our own character as people and persons, but simply because of our ethnicity, something that I think goes against the grain of democracy, of the Constitution and every right and privilege that we're supposed to enjoy as American citizens. It was very difficult to accept being non-Caucasian at the, at the time.

...

EO: So tell me, now, about having to move. How long did you have, and what did you decide to take, and how did you dispose of things?

AH: Oh. I was all of seventeen years old, ready to graduate high school, madly in love with this young *Nisei* man, a young man, who lived on the other side of town, other side of Los Angeles. We were all frantic about where each one of us would be moving to. ...Each family started to roll, to get rid of, to sell or to store their household goods. And then trying to separate out what they thought they would need and what they thought they could either store or sell. It was a hectic, frantic time for all the Japanese families. In our family, my father, as a matter of fact, destroyed all of his Japanese language books because rumors spread that if the FBI came to your home and found Japanese language books, your father or uncle, or mother would be taken away and fear just gripped the community over things like that....

...

EO: ...What did you do with your things?

AH: ... Many families owned their homes, so they had a lot more problems in terms of their economic situation and property. We were so poor, we didn't own the home, we were renting, so that, that was not as big a problem for us. Our problem was what to take, what to destroy, what to sell. And the neighbors, the persons, the non-Japanese who were not moving, being asked to move, knew that the shorter time we had to leave, the more willing we would be to lower our prices. So there were "vultures" all around, hanging around for days, waiting for the day that we would move, and that we would literally have to give things away. ...

EO: And when you got to Manzanar, how did you get there?

AH: We first boarded a train in Los Angeles, went north and we were, we came off the train and buses were there to take us to this desolate, desert area, to this camp called Manzanar ... The day we arrived was hot, dusty. When we got off the bus we were, we lined up and were told which barrack we should go to, to leave our suitcases, then told to go to a certain area where we were issued a sack, long sack which served as the mattress cover, told to fill it with hay, which was, served as our mattress for the period that we were in the camps. It was devastating.

EO: Tell me a little about the landscape and conditions, weather conditions at Manzanar.

AH: Manzanar was, of course, a desert, and all around us was sagebrushes. ... The area was known for... what do they call it? Dust storms where it looked like a tornado, shaped like an upside-down cone. We were besieged by these dust storms day after day after day. The summers were desperately hot and winters were quite cold. The ill, those persons who were ill, the people who were senior citizens, and mothers with little infants, the infants, these persons were the ones who suffered the most because of the unavailability of water in the barracks, the unavailability of food, immediate, which was of such importance.

...

EO: Can you recall how you felt when you saw this place?

AH: Yes. As I got off the bus, I could not believe that people were going to live in a place like that. I'd never seen a desert before and there was no civilization. It was just barren, sagebrush-filled area. And it was so depressing. ...

EO: Describe to me your living space.

AH: When we first were assigned to barracks, I was sharing a room, there were seven of us. The room size, I believe, was 16 x 20 feet. ... We separated our living quarters by putting up slats and putting blankets or sheets, I think it was blankets, GI-issued blankets, to give us a little privacy. That's the second thing, privacy. We just didn't know what it meant anymore. These barracks were built so quickly and with poor quality wood If somebody sneezed in apartment 1, you could hear it in apartment 5. If you snored loudly it could be heard. [Laughs] Which now it stands to reason that if something like carried, like that carried... conversations were never private because you could hear everything. The lack of privacy did a lot of damage in the camps, I think. You couldn't, you had to go outside if you wanted to carry on a confidential, private conversation. ...

Source: Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga Interview, March 20, 1994, Courtesy of Emiko and Chizuko Omori, via Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project (<https://densho.org/>). Available via Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project (<http://ddr.densho.org/interviews/ddr-densho-1002-8-1/>).

Harry Truman Announcing the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima (1945)

On August 6, 1945, Harry Truman disclosed to the American public that the United States had detonated an atomic bomb over Hiroshima, Japan.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington, D.C.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima and destroyed its usefulness to the enemy. That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of TNT. It had more than two thousand times the blast power of the British "Grand Slam" which is the largest bomb ever yet used in the history of warfare.

The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold. And the end is not yet. With this bomb we have now added a new and revolutionary increase in destruction to supplement the growing power of our armed forces. In their present form these bombs are now in production and even more powerful forms are in development.

It is an atomic bomb. It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East.

Before 1939, it was the accepted belief of scientists that it was theoretically possible to release atomic energy. But no one knew any practical method of doing it. By 1942, however, we knew that the Germans were working feverishly to find a way to add atomic energy to the other engines of war with which they hoped to enslave the world. But they failed. We may be grateful to Providence that the Germans got the V-1's and V-2's late and in limited quantities and even more grateful that they did not get the atomic bomb at all.

The battle of the laboratories held fateful risks for us as well as the battles of the air, land, and sea, and we have now won the battle of the laboratories as we have won the other battles.

Beginning in 1940, before Pearl Harbor, scientific knowledge useful in was pooled between the United States and Great Britain, and many priceless helps to our victories have come from that arrangement. Under that general policy the research on the atomic bomb was begun. With American and British scientists working together we entered the race of discovery against the Germans.

The United States had available the large number of scientists of distinction in the many needed areas of knowledge. It had the tremendous industrial and financial resources necessary for the project and they could be devoted to it without undue impairment of other

vital war work. In the United States the laboratory work and the production plants, on which a substantial start had already been made, would be out of reach of enemy bombing, while at that time Britain was exposed to constant air attack and was still threatened with the possibility of invasion. For these reasons Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt agreed that it was wise to carry on the project here. We now have two great plants and many lesser works devoted to the production of atomic power. Employment during peak construction numbered 125,000 and over 65,000 individuals are even now engaged in operating the plants. Many have worked there for two and a half years. Few know what they have been producing. They see great quantities of material going in and they see nothing coming out of these plants, for the physical size of the explosive charge is exceedingly small. We have spent two billion dollars on the greatest scientific gamble in history — and won.

But the greatest marvel is not the size of the enterprise, its secrecy, nor its cost, but the achievement of scientific brains in putting together infinitely complex pieces of knowledge held by many men in different fields of science into a workable plan. And hardly less marvelous has been the capacity of industry to design and of labor to operate, the machines and methods to do things never done before so that the brainchild of many minds came forth in physical shape and performed as it was supposed to do. Both science and industry worked under the direction of the United States Army, which achieved a unique success in managing so diverse a problem in the advancement of knowledge in an amazingly short time. It is doubtful if such another combination could be got together in the world. What has been done is the greatest achievement of organized science in history. It was done under pressure and without failure.

We are now prepared to obliterate more rapidly and completely every productive enterprise the Japanese have above ground in any city. We shall destroy their docks, their factories, and their communications. Let there be no mistake; we shall completely destroy Japan's power to make war.

It was to spare the Japanese people from utter destruction that the ultimatum of July 26 was issued at Potsdam. Their leaders promptly rejected that ultimatum. If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth. Behind this air attack will follow sea and land forces in such number that and power as they have not yet seen and with the fighting skill of which they are already well aware.

...

I shall recommend that the Congress of the United States consider promptly the establishment of an appropriate commission to control the production and use of atomic power within the United States. I shall give further consideration and make further recommendations to the Congress as to how atomic power can become a powerful and forceful influence towards the maintenance of world peace.

[Source: Harry S. Truman Library, "Army Press Notes," box 4, Papers of Eben A. Ayers. Available online

via http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/bomb/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1945-08-06&documentid=59&pagenumber=1.]

Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1945)

Vietnam, which had been colonized by the French and then by the Japanese, declared their independence from colonial rule—particularly the re-imposition of a French colonial regime—in the aftermath of Japan's defeat in World War II. Proclaimed by Ho Chi Minh in September 1945, Vietnam's Declaration of Independence reflected back the early promises of the Allies in World War II and even borrowed directly from the American Declaration of Independence.

“All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

This immortal statement was made in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense, this means: All the peoples on the earth are equal from birth, all the peoples have a right to live, to be happy and free.

The Declaration of the French Revolution made in 1791 on the Rights of Man and the Citizen also states: “All men are born free and with equal rights, and must always remain free and have equal rights.”

Those are undeniable truths.

Nevertheless, for more than eighty years, the French imperialists, abusing the standard of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, have violated our Fatherland and oppressed our fellow-citizens. They have acted contrary to the ideals of humanity and justice.

In the field of politics, they have deprived our people of every democratic liberty.

They have enforced inhuman laws; they have set up three distinct political regimes in the North, the Center and the South of Vietnam in order to wreck our national unity and prevent our people from being united.

They have built more prisons than schools. They have mercilessly slain our patriots; they have drowned our uprisings in rivers of blood.

They have fettered public opinion; they have practiced obscurantism against our people.

To weaken our race they have forced us to use opium and alcohol.

In the field of economics, they have fleeced us to the backbone, impoverished our people, and devastated our land.

They have robbed us of our rice fields, our mines, our forests, and our raw materials. They have monopolized the issuing of bank-notes and the export trade.

They have invented numerous unjustifiable taxes and reduced our people, especially our peasantry, to a state of extreme poverty.

They have hampered the prospering of our national bourgeoisie; they have mercilessly exploited our workers.

In the autumn of 1940, when the Japanese Fascists violated Indochina's territory to establish new bases in their fight against the Allies, the French imperialists went down on their bended knees and handed over our country to them.

Thus, from that date, our people were subjected to the double yoke of the French and the Japanese. Their sufferings and miseries increased. The result was that from the end of last year to the beginning of this year, from Quang Tri province to the North of Vietnam, more than two million of our fellow-citizens died from starvation. On March 9, the French troops were disarmed by the Japanese. The French colonialists either fled or surrendered showing that not only were they incapable of "protecting" us, but that, in the span of five years, they had twice sold our country to the Japanese.

On several occasions before March 9, the Vietminh League urged the French to ally themselves with it against the Japanese. Instead of agreeing to this proposal, the French colonialists so intensified their terrorist activities against the Vietminh members that before fleeing they massacred a great number of our political prisoners detained at Yen Bay and Caobang.

Notwithstanding all this, our fellow-citizens have always manifested toward the French a tolerant and humane attitude. Even after the Japanese putsch of March 1945, the Vietminh League helped many Frenchmen to cross the frontier, rescued some of them from Japanese jails, and protected French lives and property.

From the autumn of 1940, our country had in fact ceased to be a French colony and had become a Japanese possession.

After the Japanese had surrendered to the Allies, our whole people rose to regain our national sovereignty and to found the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The truth is that we have wrested our independence from the Japanese and not from the French.

The French have fled, the Japanese have capitulated, Emperor Bao Dai has abdicated. Our people have broken the chains which for nearly a century have fettered them and have won independence for the Fatherland. Our people at the same time have overthrown the monarchic regime that has reigned supreme for dozens of centuries. In its place has been established the present Democratic Republic.

For these reasons, we, members of the Provisional Government, representing the whole Vietnamese people, declare that from now on we break off all relations of a colonial character with France; we repeal all the international obligation that France has so far subscribed to on behalf of Vietnam and we abolish all the special rights the French have unlawfully acquired in our Fatherland.

The whole Vietnamese people, animated by a common purpose, are determined to fight to the bitter end against any attempt by the French colonialists to reconquer their country.

We are convinced that the Allied nations which at Tehran and San Francisco have acknowledged the principles of self-determination and equality of nations, will not refuse to acknowledge the independence of Vietnam.

A people who have courageously opposed French domination for more than eight years, a people who have fought side by side with the Allies against the Fascists during these last years, such a people must be free and independent.

For these reasons, we, members of the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, solemnly declare to the world that Vietnam has the right to be a free and independent country—and in fact is so already. The entire Vietnamese people are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their independence and liberty.

[Source: Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Works* Vol. 3, (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960–62), 17–21. Available online via <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5139/>.]

Tuskegee Airmen (1941)



The Tuskegee Airmen stand at attention as Major James A. Ellison returns the salute of Mac Ross, one of the first graduates of the Tuskegee cadets. The photograph shows the pride and poise of the Tuskegee Airmen, who continued a tradition of African Americans honorably serving a country that still considered them second-class citizens. Photograph, 1941. Via [Wikimedia](#).

WWII Posters



This pair of US Military recruiting posters demonstrates the way that two branches of the military—the Marines and the Women's Army Corps—borrowed techniques from advertising professionals to “sell” a romantic vision of war to Americans. These two images take different strategies: one shows Marines at war in a lush jungle, reminding viewers that the war was taking place in exotic lands, the other depicted women taking on new jobs as a patriotic duty. Bradshaw Crandall, “Are you a girl with a star-spangled heart?” Recruiting Publicity Bureau, US Women's Army Corps Recruiting Poster (1943); Unknown, “Let's Go Get 'Em.” Beck Engraving Co. (1942).

25. The Cold War

Introduction

The Cold War was a global political and ideological struggle between capitalist and communist countries, led by the two surviving superpowers of the postwar world: the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). “Cold” because it was never a “hot,” direct shooting war between the United States and the Soviet Union, the generations-long, multifaceted rivalry nevertheless bent the world to its whims. Tensions ran highest, perhaps, during the “first Cold War,” which lasted from the mid-1940s through the mid-1960s, after which followed a period of relaxed tensions and increased communication and cooperation, known by the French term *détente*, until the “second Cold War” interceded from roughly 1979 until the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. As the following sources reveal, the Cold War reshaped the world, and in so doing forever altered American life and the generations of Americans that lived within its shadow.

The Truman Doctrine (1947)

The "Truman Doctrine" directed the United States to actively support anti-communist forces around the world. The following is from President Truman's March 12, 1947 address before a joint session of congress requesting support for anti-communist regimes in Greece and Turkey.

I am fully aware of the broad implications involved if the United States extends assistance to Greece and Turkey, and I shall discuss these implications with you at this time.

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. This was a fundamental issue in the war with Germany and Japan. Our victory was won over countries which sought to impose their will, and their way of life, upon other nations.

To ensure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations, The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members. We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.

...

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

...

It would be an unspeakable tragedy if these countries, which have struggled so long against overwhelming odds, should lose that victory for which they sacrificed so much. Collapse of free institutions and loss of independence would be disastrous not only for them but for the

world. Discouragement and possibly failure would quickly be the lot of neighboring peoples striving to maintain their freedom and independence.

Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East.

We must take immediate and resolute action.

...

This is a serious course upon which we embark.

I would not recommend it except that the alternative is much more serious. The United States contributed \$341,000,000,000 toward winning World War II. This is an investment in world freedom and world peace.

...

The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive.

The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms.

If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world — and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation.

Great responsibilities have been placed upon us by the swift movement of events.

I am confident that the Congress will face these responsibilities squarely.

[Source: President Harry S. Truman's Address Before a Joint Session of Congress, March 12, 1947. Available online via *The Avalon Project* (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp).]

NSC-68 (1950)

In 1950, the National Security Council produced a 58-page, top-secret report proclaiming the threat of Soviet communism. In the new postwar world, the report argued, the United States could no longer retreat toward isolationism without encouraging the aggressive expansion of communism across the globe. The United States, the report said, had to mobilize to ensure the survival of "civilization itself."

Within the past thirty-five years the world has experienced two global wars of tremendous violence. It has witnessed two revolutions—the Russian and the Chinese—of extreme scope and intensity. It has also seen the collapse of five empires—the Ottoman, the Austro-Hungarian, German, Italian, and Japanese—and the drastic decline of two major imperial systems, the British and the French. During the span of one generation, the international distribution of power has been fundamentally altered. For several centuries it had proved impossible for any one nation to gain such preponderant strength that a coalition of other nations could not in time face it with greater strength. The international scene was marked by recurring periods of violence and war, but a system of sovereign and independent states was maintained, over which no state was able to achieve hegemony.

Two complex sets of factors have now basically altered this historic distribution of power. First, the defeat of Germany and Japan and the decline of the British and French Empires have interacted with the development of the United States and the Soviet Union in such a way that power increasingly gravitated to these two centers. Second, the Soviet Union, unlike previous aspirants to hegemony, is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world. Conflict has, therefore, become endemic and is waged, on the part of the Soviet Union, by violent or non-violent methods in accordance with the dictates of expediency. With the development of increasingly terrifying weapons of mass destruction, every individual faces the ever-present possibility of annihilation should the conflict enter the phase of total war.

...

The issues that face us are momentous, involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself. They are issues which will not await our deliberations. With conscience and resolution this Government and the people it represents must now take new and fateful decisions.

... The idea of freedom ... is peculiarly and intolerably subversive of the idea of slavery. But the converse is not true. The implacable purpose of the slave state to eliminate the challenge of freedom has placed the two great powers at opposite poles. It is this fact which gives the present polarization of power the quality of crisis.

... Thus unwillingly our free society finds itself mortally challenged by the Soviet system. No other value system is so wholly irreconcilable with ours, so implacable in its purpose to destroy ours, so capable of turning to its own uses the most dangerous and divisive trends in our own society, no other so skillfully and powerfully evokes the elements of irrationality in

human nature everywhere, and no other has the support of a great and growing center of military power.

...

In a shrinking world, which now faces the threat of atomic warfare, it is not an adequate objective merely to seek to check the Kremlin design, for the absence of order among nations is becoming less and less tolerable. This fact imposes on us, in our own interests, the responsibility of world leadership. It demands that we make the attempt, and accept the risks inherent in it, to bring about order and justice by means consistent with the principles of freedom and democracy. ...

...

Compulsion is the negation of freedom, except when it is used to enforce the rights common to all. The resort to force, internally or externally, is therefore a last resort for a free society. The act is permissible only when one individual or groups of individuals within it threaten the basic rights of other individuals or when another society seeks to impose its will upon it. The free society cherishes and protects as fundamental the rights of the minority against the will of a majority, because these rights are the inalienable rights of each and every individual.

... Practical and ideological considerations therefore both impel us to the conclusion that we have no choice but to demonstrate the superiority of the idea of freedom by its constructive application, and to attempt to change the world situation by means short of war in such a way as to frustrate the Kremlin design and hasten the decay of the Soviet system.

For us the role of military power is to serve the national purpose by deterring an attack upon us while we seek by other means to create an environment in which our free society can flourish, and by fighting, if necessary, to defend the integrity and vitality of our free society and to defeat any aggressor. The Kremlin uses Soviet military power to back up and serve the Kremlin design. It does not hesitate to use military force aggressively if that course is expedient in the achievement of its design. The differences between our fundamental purpose and the Kremlin design, therefore, are reflected in our respective attitudes toward and use of military force.

Our free society, confronted by a threat to its basic values, naturally will take such action, including the use of military force, as may be required to protect those values. The integrity of our system will not be jeopardized by any measures, covert or overt, violent or non-violent, which serve the purposes of frustrating the Kremlin design, nor does the necessity for conducting ourselves so as to affirm our values in actions as well as words forbid such measures, provided only they are appropriately calculated to that end and are not so excessive or misdirected as to make us enemies of the people instead of the evil men who have enslaved them.

[Source: *NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security* (April 14, 1950). Available online via Truman

Library, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/10-1.pdf.]

Joseph McCarthy on Communism (1950)

Senator Joseph McCarthy's relentless attacks on suspected communist influence in American government so captivated American attention that "McCarthyism" came to stand in for the fervor of Cold War America's anti-communism. In the following extract, McCarthy depicts what he imagined were the stakes his anti-communist crusades.

Five years after a world war has been won, men's hearts should anticipate a long peace, and men's minds should be free from the heavy weight that comes with war. But this is not such a period — for this is not a period of peace. This is a time of the Cold War. This is a time when all the world is split into two vast, increasingly hostile armed camps — a time of a great armaments race. Today we can almost physically hear the mutterings and rumblings of an invigorated god of war. You can see it, feel it, and hear it all the way from the hills of Indochina, from the shores of Formosa right over into the very heart of Europe itself. ...

Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time. And, ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down — they are truly down.

...

Ladies and gentlemen, can there be anyone here tonight who is so blind as to say that the war is not on? Can there be anyone who fails to realize that the communist world has said, "The time is now" — that this is the time for the showdown between the democratic Christian world and the communist atheistic world? Unless we face this fact, we shall pay the price that must be paid by those who wait too long.

... As one of our outstanding historical figures once said, "When a great democracy is destroyed, it will not be because of enemies from without but rather because of enemies from within." The truth of this statement is becoming terrifyingly clear as we see this country each day losing on every front.

At war's end we were physically the strongest nation on Earth and, at least potentially, the most powerful intellectually and morally. Ours could have been the honor of being a beacon in the desert of destruction, a shining, living proof that civilization was not yet ready to destroy itself. Unfortunately, we have failed miserably and tragically to arise to the opportunity.

The reason why we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our only powerful, potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores, but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this nation. It has not been the less fortunate or members of minority groups who have been selling this nation out, but rather those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest nation on earth has had to offer — the finest homes, the finest college education, and the finest jobs in government we can give.

This is glaringly true in the State Department. There the bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been worst.

... In my opinion the State Department, which is one of the most important government departments, is thoroughly infested with communists.

I have in my hand 57 cases of individuals who would appear to be either card-carrying members or certainly loyal to the Communist Party, but who nevertheless are still helping to shape our foreign policy.

...

This brings us down to the case of one Alger Hiss

As you hear this story of high treason, I know that you are saying to yourself, "Well, why doesn't the Congress do something about it?" Actually, ladies and gentlemen, one of the important reasons for the graft, the corruption, the dishonesty, the disloyalty, the treason in high government positions — one of the most important reasons why this continues — is a lack of moral uprising on the part of the 140 million American people. In the light of history, however, this is not hard to explain.

It is the result of an emotional hangover and a temporary moral lapse which follows every war. It is the apathy to evil which people who have been subjected to the tremendous evils of war feel. As the people of the world see mass murder, the destruction of defenseless and innocent people, and all of the crime and lack of morals which go with war, they become numb and apathetic. It has always been thus after war. However, the morals of our people have not been destroyed. They still exist. This cloak of numbness and apathy has only needed a spark to rekindle them. Happily, this spark has finally been supplied.

...

He has lighted the spark which is resulting in a moral uprising and will end only when the whole sorry mess of twisted warped thinkers are swept from the national scene so that we may have a new birth of national honesty and decency in government.

[Source: *Congressional Record*, 81st, 2nd, pt 2, 1954-56 / U.S. Senate, State Department Loyalty Investigation Committee on Foreign Relations, 81st Congress. Available online via *History Matters* (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6456>).]

Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Atoms for Peace” (1953)

In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower spoke to the United Nations’ General Assembly about the possibilities of peace in “the atomic age.”

I feel impelled to speak today in a language that in a sense is new, one which I, who have spent so much of my life in the military profession, would have preferred never to use. That new language is the language of atomic warfare.

The atomic age has moved forward at such a pace that every citizen of the world should have some comprehension, at least in comparative terms, of the extent of this development, of the utmost significance to every one of us. Clearly, if the peoples of the world are to conduct an intelligent search for peace, they must be armed with the significant facts of today’s existence.

...

On 16 July 1945, the United States set off the world’s biggest atomic explosion. Since that date in 1945, the United States of America has conducted forty-two test explosions. Atomic bombs are more than twenty-five times as powerful as the weapons with which the atomic age dawned, while hydrogen weapons are in the ranges of millions of tons of TNT equivalent.

Today, the United States stockpile of atomic weapons, which, of course, increases daily, exceeds by many times the total equivalent of the total of all bombs and all shells that came from every plane and every gun in every theatre of war in all the years of the Second World War. A single air group whether afloat or land based, can now deliver to any reachable target a destructive cargo exceeding in power all the bombs that fell on Britain in all the Second World War.

...

If at one time the United States possessed what might have been called a monopoly of atomic power, that monopoly ceased to exist several years ago. Therefore, although our earlier start has permitted us to accumulate what is today a great quantitative advantage, the atomic realities of today comprehend two facts of even greater significance. First, the knowledge now possessed by several nations will eventually be shared by others, possibly all others.

Second, even a vast superiority in numbers of weapons, and a consequent capability of devastating retaliation, is no preventive, of itself, against the fearful material damage and toll of human lives that would be inflicted by surprise aggression.

... To pause there would be to confirm the hopeless finality of a belief that two atomic colossi are doomed malevolently to eye each other indefinitely across a trembling world. To

stop there would be to accept helplessly the probability of civilization destroyed, the annihilation of the irreplaceable heritage of mankind handed down to us from generation to generation, and the condemnation of mankind to begin all over again the age-old struggle upward from savagery towards decency, and right, and justice. Surely no sane member of the human race could discover victory in such desolation. Could anyone wish his name to be coupled by history with such human degradation and destruction? Occasional pages of history do record the faces of the "great destroyers", but the whole book of history reveals mankind's never-ending quest for peace and mankind's God-given capacity to build.

It is with the book of history, and not with isolated pages, that the United States will ever wish to be identified. My country wants to be constructive, not destructive. It wants agreements, not wars, among nations. It wants itself to live in freedom and in the confidence that the peoples of every other nation enjoy equally the right of choosing their own way of life.

So my country's purpose is to help us to move out of the dark chamber of horrors into the light, to find a way by which the minds of men, the hopes of men, the souls of men everywhere, can move forward towards peace and happiness and well-being.

... The gravity of the time is such that every new avenue of peace, no matter how dimly discernible, should be explored.

... The United States, heeding the suggestion of the General Assembly of the United Nations, is instantly prepared to meet privately with such other countries as may be "principally involved", to seek "an acceptable solution" to the atomic armaments race which overshadows not only the peace, but the very life, of the world.

We shall carry into these private or diplomatic talks a new conception. The United States would seek more than the mere reduction or elimination of atomic materials for military purposes. It is not enough to take this weapon out of the hands of the soldiers. It must be put into the hands of those who will know how to strip its military casing and adapt it to the arts of peace.

The United States knows that if the fearful trend of atomic military build-up can be reversed, this greatest of destructive forces can be developed into a great boon, for the benefit of all mankind. The United States knows that peaceful power from atomic energy is no dream of the future. The capability, already proved, is here today. Who can doubt that, if the entire body of the world's scientists and engineers had adequate amounts of fissionable material with which to test and develop their ideas, this capability would rapidly be transformed into universal, efficient and economic usage?

To hasten the day when fear of the atom will begin to disappear from the minds the people and the governments of the East and West, there are certain steps that can be taken now.

...

I would be prepared to submit to the Congress of the United States, and with every expectation of approval, any such plan that would, first, encourage world-wide investigation into the most effective peacetime uses of fissionable material, and with the certainty that the investigators had all the material needed for the conducting of all experiments that were appropriate; second, begin to diminish the potential destructive power of the world's atomic stockpiles; third, allow all peoples of all nations to see that, in this enlightened age, the great Powers of the earth, both of the East and of the West, are interested in human aspirations first rather than in building up the armaments of war; fourth, open up a new channel for peaceful discussion and initiative at least a new approach to the many difficult problems that must be solved in both private and public conversations if the world is to shake off the inertia imposed by fear and is to make positive progress towards peace.

Against the dark background of the atomic bomb, the United States does not wish merely to present strength, but also the desire and the hope for peace. The coming months will be fraught with fateful decisions. In this Assembly, in the capitals and military headquarters of the world, in the hearts of men everywhere, be they governed or governors, may they be the decisions which will lead this world out of fear and into peace.

To the making of these fateful decisions, the United States pledges before you, and therefore before the world, its determination to help solve the fearful atomic dilemma – to devote its entire heart and mind to finding the way by which the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death, but consecrated to his life.

[Source: Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Atoms for Peace," Speech before the United Nations General Assembly, New York City, New York (December 8, 1953). Available online via Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/atoms_for_peace/Binder13.pdf).]

Senator Margaret Chase Smith's "Declaration of Conscience" (1950)

Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine condemned the tactics of Senator Joseph McCarthy in a congressional speech on June 1, 1950. She attacked McCarthy's conspiratorial charges and broken lives left in their wake. She blamed political leaders of both parties for failing to corral McCarthy's wild attacks.

I think that it is high time that we remembered that we have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution. I think that it is high time that we remembered that the Constitution, as amended, speaks not only of the freedom of speech, but also of trial by jury instead of trial by accusation.

Whether it be a criminal prosecution in court or a character prosecution in the Senate, there is little practical distinction when the life of a person has been ruined.

Those of us who shout the loudest about Americanism in making character assassinations are all too frequently those who, by our own words and acts, ignore some of the basic principles of Americanism—

The right to criticize;

The right to hold unpopular beliefs;

The right to protest;

The right of independent thought.

The exercise of these rights should not cost one single American citizen his reputation or his right to a livelihood nor should he be in danger of losing his reputation or livelihood merely because he happens to know someone who holds unpopular beliefs. Who of us doesn't? Otherwise none of us could call our souls our own. Otherwise thought control would have set in.

The American people are sick and tired of being afraid to speak their minds lest they be politically smeared as "Communists" or "Fascists" by their opponents. Freedom of speech is not what it used to be in America. It has been so abused by some that it is not exercised by others.

The American people are sick and tired of seeing innocent people smeared and guilty people whitewashed. But there have been enough proved cases, such as the Amerasia case, the Hiss case, the Coplon case, the Gold case, to cause Nation-wide distrust and strong suspicion that there may be something to the unproved, sensational accusations.

As a Republican, I say to my colleagues on this side of the aisle that the Republican Party faces a challenge today that is not unlike the challenge that it faced back in Lincoln's day. The Republican Party so successfully met that challenge that it emerged from the Civil War

as the champion of a united nation—in addition to being a party that unrelentingly fought loose spending and loose programs.

Today our country is being psychologically divided by the confusion and the suspicions that are bred in the United States Senate to spread like cancerous tentacles of “know nothing, suspect everything” attitudes. ...

... Surely it is clear that this nation will continue to suffer as long as it is governed by the present ineffective Democratic administration. ... Yet to displace it with a Republican regime embracing a philosophy that lacks political integrity or intellectual honesty would prove equally disastrous to this Nation. The Nation sorely needs a Republican victory. But I don't want to see the Republican Party ride to political victory on the four horsemen of calumny—fear, ignorance, bigotry and smear.

I doubt if the Republican Party could—simply because I don't believe the American people will uphold any political party that puts political exploitation above national interest. Surely we Republicans aren't that desperate for victory.

I don't want to see the Republican Party win that way. While it might be a fleeting victory for the Republican Party, it would be a more lasting defeat for the American people. Surely it would ultimately be suicide for the Republican Party and the two-party system that has protected our American liberties from the dictatorship of a one-party system.

As members of the minority party, we do not have the primary authority to formulate the policy of our Government. But we do have the responsibility of rendering constructive criticism, of clarifying issues, of allaying fears by acting as responsible citizens.

As a woman, I wonder how the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters feel about the way in which members of their families have been politically mangled in Senate debate—and I use the word “debate” advisedly.

As a United States Senator, I am not proud of the way in which the Senate has been made a publicity platform for irresponsible sensationalism. I am not proud of the reckless abandon in which unproved charges have been hurled from this side of the aisle. I am not proud of the obviously staged, undignified countercharges that have been attempted in retaliation from the other side of the aisle.

I don't like the way the Senate has been made a rendezvous for vilification, for selfish political gain at the sacrifice of individual reputations and national unity. I am not proud of the way we smear outsiders from the floor of the Senate and hide behind the cloak of congressional immunity and still place ourselves beyond criticism on the floor of the Senate.

...

It is with these thoughts I have drafted what I call a Declaration of Conscience. I am gratified that Senator Tobey, Senator Aiken, Senator Morse, Senator Ives, Senator Thye and

Senator Hendrickson, have concurred in that declaration and have authorized me to announce their concurrence.

Statement of Seven Republican Senators

1. We are Republicans. But we are Americans first. It is as Americans that we express our concern with the growing confusion that threatens the security and stability of our country. Democrats and Republicans alike have contributed to that confusion.
2. The Democratic administration has initially created the confusion by its lack of effective leadership, by its contradictory grave warnings and optimistic assurances, by its complacency to the threat of communism here at home, by its oversensitiveness to rightful criticism, by its petty bitterness against its critics.
3. Certain elements of the Republican Party have materially added to this confusion in the hopes of riding the Republican party to victory through the selfish political exploitation of fear, bigotry, ignorance, and intolerance. There are enough mistakes of the Democrats for Republicans to criticize constructively without resorting to political smears.
4. To this extent, Democrats and Republicans alike have unwittingly, but undeniably, played directly into the Communist design of “confuse, divide and conquer.”
5. It is high time that we stopped thinking politically as Republicans and Democrats about elections and started thinking patriotically as Americans about national security based on individual freedom. It is high time that we all stopped being tools and victims of totalitarian techniques—techniques that, if continued here unchecked, will surely end what we have come to cherish as the American way of life.

Source: Source: “Declaration of Conscience” by Senator Margaret Chase Smith and Statement of Seven Senators, June 1, 1950, *Congressional Record*, 82nd Congress. 2nd Session, 7894-95.

Available online via the United States Senate

(https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/Speeches_Smith_Declaration.htm).

Lillian Hellman Refuses to Name Names (1952)

The House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) held hearings in 1947 on Communist activity in Hollywood. Many were called to testify and some, like playwright and screenwriter Lillian Hellman, refused to “name names”—to inform on others. Hellman invoked the Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination. Her decision landed her on the Hollywood “blacklist” and film companies refused to hire her. In the following letter to HUAC’s chairman, Hellman offered to testify as to her own activities if she would not be forced to inform on others.

Lillian Hellman, Letter to HUAC, May 19, 1952

Dear Mr. Wood:

As you know, I am under subpoena to appear before your committee on May 21, 1952.

I am most willing to answer all questions about myself. I have nothing to hide from your committee and there is nothing in my life of which I am ashamed. I have been advised by counsel that under the fifth amendment I have a constitutional privilege to decline to answer any questions about my political opinions, activities, and associations, on the grounds of self-incrimination. I do not wish to claim this privilege. I am ready and willing to testify before the representatives of our Government as to my own opinions and my own actions, regardless of any risks or consequences to myself.

But I am advised by counsel that if I answer the committee’s questions about myself, I must also answer questions about other people and that if I refuse to do so, I can be cited for contempt. My counsel tells me that if I answer questions about myself, I will have waived my rights under the fifth amendment and could be forced legally to answer questions about others. This is very difficult for a layman to understand. But there is one principle that I do understand: I am not willing, now or in the future, to bring bad trouble to people who, in my past association with them, were completely innocent of any talk or any action that was disloyal or subversive. I do not like subversion or disloyalty in any form and if I had ever seen any I would have considered it my duty to have reported it to the proper authorities. But to hurt innocent people whom I knew many years ago in order to save myself is, to me, inhuman and indecent and dishonorable. I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year’s fashions, even though I long ago came to the conclusion that I was not a political person and could have no comfortable place in any political group.

I was raised in an old-fashioned American tradition and there were certain homely things that were taught to me: To try to tell the truth, not to bear false witness, not to harm my neighbor, to be loyal to my country, and so on. In general, I respected these ideals of Christian honor and did as well with them as I knew how. It is my belief that you will agree with these simple rules of human decency and will not expect me to violate the good American tradition from which they spring. I would, therefore, like to come before you and speak of myself.

I am prepared to waive the privilege against self-incrimination and to tell you everything you wish to know about my views or actions if your committee will agree to refrain from asking me to name other people. If the committee is unwilling to give me this assurance, I will be forced to plead the privilege of the fifth amendment at the hearing.

A reply to this letter would be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Lillian Hellman

Source: Letter to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) from Lillian Hellman regarding testimony, May 19, 1952; Investigative name files, series 1, House Un-American Activities Committee; Records of the United States House of Representatives, Record Group 233; National Archives Building, Washington, DC. Available online via National Archives (<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/24200384>).

Paul Robeson's Appearance Before the House Un-American Activities Committee (1956)

Paul Robeson was a popular performer and African American political activist. He attacked racism and imperialism and advocated for African decolonization. He appeared before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1956. He invoked the Fifth Amendment and refused to cooperate.

Mr. ARENS: Are you now a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. ROBESON: Oh please, please, please.

Mr. SCHERER: Please answer, will you, Mr. Robeson?

Mr. ROBESON: What is the Communist Party? What do you mean by that?

Mr. SCHERER: I ask that you direct the witness to answer the question.

Mr. ROBESON: What do you mean by the Communist Party? As far as I know it is a legal party like the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. Do you mean a party of people who have sacrificed for my people, and for all Americans and workers, that they can live in dignity? Do you mean that party?

Mr. ARENS: Are you now a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. ROBESON: Would you like to come to the ballot box when I vote and take out the ballot and see?

...

Mr. ROBESON: Gentlemen, in the first place, wherever I have been in the world, Scandinavia, England, and many places, the first to die in the struggle against Fascism were the Communists and I laid many wreaths upon graves of Communists. It is not criminal, and the Fifth Amendment has nothing to do with criminality. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Warren, has been very clear on that in many speeches, that the Fifth Amendment does not have anything to do with the inference of criminality. I invoke the Fifth Amendment.

...

Mr. ROBESON: Could I say that the reason that I am here today, you know, from the mouth of the State Department itself, is: I should not be allowed to travel because I have struggled for years for the independence of the colonial peoples of Africa. For many years I have so labored and I can say modestly that my name is very much honored all over Africa, in my struggles for their independence. That is the kind of independence like Sukarno got in Indonesia. Unless we are double-talking, then these efforts in the interest of Africa would be in the same context. The other reason that I am here today, again from the State Department and from the court record of the court of appeals, is that when I am abroad I speak out

against the injustices against the Negro people of this land. I sent a message to the Bandung Conference and so forth. That is why I am here. This is the basis, and I am not being tried for whether I am a Communist, I am being tried for fighting for the rights of my people, who are still second-class citizens in this United States of America. My mother was born in your state, Mr. Walter, and my mother was a Quaker, and my ancestors in the time of Washington baked bread for George Washington's troops when they crossed the Delaware, and my own father was a slave. I stand here struggling for the rights of my people to be full citizens in this country. And they are not. They are not in Mississippi. And they are not in Montgomery, Alabama. And they are not in Washington. They are nowhere, and that is why I am here today. You want to shut up every Negro who has the courage to stand up and fight for the rights of his people, for the rights of workers, and I have been on many a picket line for the steelworkers too. And that is why I am here today. ...

...

Mr. ROBESON: In Russia I felt for the first time like a full human being. No color prejudice like in Mississippi, no color prejudice like in Washington. It was the first time I felt like a human being. Where I did not feel the pressure of color as I feel [it] in this Committee today.

Mr. SCHERER: Why do you not stay in Russia?

Mr. ROBESON: Because my father was a slave, and my people died to build this country, and I am going to stay here, and have a part of it just like you. And no Fascist-minded people will drive me from it. Is that clear? I am for peace with the Soviet Union, and I am for peace with China, and I am not for peace or friendship with the Fascist Franco, and I am not for peace with Fascist Nazi Germans. I am for peace with decent people.

Mr. SCHERER: You are here because you are promoting the Communist cause.

Mr. ROBESON: I am here because I am opposing the neo-Fascist cause which I see arising in these committees. You are like the Alien [and] Sedition Act, and Jefferson could be sitting here, and Frederick Douglass could be sitting here, and Eugene Debs could be here.

...

Mr. ARENS: Now I would invite your attention, if you please, to the *Daily Worker* of June 29, 1949, with reference to a get-together with you and Ben Davis. Do you know Ben Davis?

Mr. ROBESON: One of my dearest friends, one of the finest Americans you can imagine, born of a fine family, who went to Amherst and was a great man.

THE CHAIRMAN: The answer is yes?

Mr. ROBESON: Nothing could make me prouder than to know him.

THE CHAIRMAN: That answers the question.

Mr. ARENS: Did I understand you to laud his patriotism?

Mr. ROBESON: I say that he is as patriotic an American as there can be, and you gentlemen belong with the Alien and Sedition Acts, and you are the nonpatriots, and you are the un-Americans, and you ought to be ashamed of yourselves.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just a minute, the hearing is now adjourned.

Mr. ROBESON: I should think it would be.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have endured all of this that I can.

Mr. ROBESON: Can I read my statement?

THE CHAIRMAN: No, you cannot read it. The meeting is adjourned.

Mr. ROBESON: I think it should be, and you should adjourn this forever, that is what I would say.

Source: Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of the Unauthorized Use of U.S. Passports* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1956), 4492-4509. Available online via Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/details/investigationofu0304unit>).

Atomic Energy Lab 1951-1952



This toy laboratory set was intended to let young people perform small scale experiments with radioactive materials in their own home. Equipped with a small working Geiger Counter, a “cloud chamber,” and samples of radioactive ore, the set’s creator claimed that the government supported its production to help Americans become more comfortable with nuclear energy. A.C. Gilbert Company, “U-238 Atomic Energy Lab” (1950-51), via [Wikipedia](#).

Duck and Cover (1951)

[FILM AVAILABLE AT <http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/25-the-cold-war/>]

In 1951, Archer Productions created "Duck and Cover," a civil defense film funded by the U.S. Federal Civil Defense Administration. The short film, starring Bert the Turtle and shown to Cold War school children, demonstrates "duck and cover"—a physical position designed to mitigate the effects of a nuclear blast.

26. The Affluent Society

Introduction

In the almost two decades after the end of World War II, the American economy witnessed a massive and sustained growth that reshaped American culture through its abundance of consumer goods. Standards of living climbed to unparalleled heights. All income levels shared and inequality plummeted in what some economists have called “the Great Compression.” And yet, American economic progress contained fundamental flaws. The new consumer economy that lifted millions of Americans into its burgeoning middle class also produced inequality. Women struggled to claim equal rights as full participants in American society. The poor struggled to win access to good schools, good healthcare, and good jobs. The same suburbs that gave middle class Americans new space left cities withering in spirals of poverty and crime. The Jim Crow South tenaciously defended segregation. Black Americans and other minorities suffered discrimination all across the country. As the following sources suggest, the contradictions of the Affluent Society defined the decade: unrivaled prosperity alongside crippling poverty, expanded opportunity alongside entrenched discrimination, and new liberating lifestyles alongside a stifling conformity.

Juanita Garcia on Migrant Labor (1952)

During the labor shortages of World War II, the United States' launched the Bracero ("laborer") program to bring Mexican laborers into the United States. The program continued into the 1960s and brought more than a million workers into the United States on short-term contracts. Undocumented immigration continued, however. Congress held hearings and, in the selection below, a migrant worker named Juanita Garcia testifies to Congress about the state of affairs in California's Imperial Valley. Beginning in 1954, Dwight Eisenhower's administration oversaw, with the cooperation of the Mexican government, "Operation Wetback," which empowered the Border Patrol to crack down upon illegal immigration.

I work in the field and in the packing sheds. I lost my job in a packing shed about two weeks ago. I was fired because I belonged to the National Farm Labor Union. Every summer our family goes north to work. We pick figs and cotton. My father, my brothers and sisters also work on farms. For poor people like us who are field laborers, making a living has always been hard. Why? Because the ranchers and companies have always taken over.

When I was a small kid my dad had a small farm but he lost it. All of us used to help him. But dad got older and worn out with worries every day. Lots of us kids could not go to school much. Our parents could not afford the expenses. This happened to all kids like us. Difficulties appear here and there every day. Taxes, food, clothing, and everything go up. We all have to eat. Sometimes we sleep under a leaky roof. We have to cover up and keep warm the best way we can in the cold weather.

In the Imperial Valley we have a hard time. It so happens that the local people who are American citizens cannot get work. Many days we don't work. Some days we work 1 hour. The wetbacks and nationals from Mexico have the whole Imperial Valley. They have invaded not only the Imperial Valley but all the United States. The nationals and wetbacks take any wages the ranchers offer to pay them. The wages get worse every year. Last year most local people got little work. Sometimes they make only \$5 a week. That is not enough to live on, so many people cannot send their children to school.

Many people have lost their homes since 1942 when the nationals and wetbacks started coming. Local people work better but wetbacks and nationals are hired anyway.

Last year they fired some people from the shed because they had nationals to take their jobs. There was a strike. We got all the strikers out at 4:30 in the morning. The cops were on the streets escorting the nationals and wetbacks to the fields. The cops had guns. The ranchers had guns, too. They took the wetbacks in their brand-new cars through our picket line. They took the nationals from the camps to break our strike. They had 5,000 scabs that were nationals. We told the Mexican consul about this. We told the Labor Department. They were supposed to take the nationals out of the strike. They never did take them away.

It looks like the big companies in agriculture are running the United States. All of us local people went on strike. The whole valley was hungry because nobody worked at all. The melons rotted in the fields. We went out and arrested the wetbacks who were living in caves

and on the ditches and we took them to the border patrol. But the national scabs kept working. Isn't the Government supposed to help us poor people? Can't it act fast in cases like this?

[Source: Subcommittee on Labor and Labor-Management Relations, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate, *Migratory Labor: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Labor and Labor-Management Relations of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate, Eighty-Second Congress* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952). Available online via *Digital History* (http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=595).]

Hernandez v. Texas (1954)

Pete Hernandez, a migrant worker, was tried for the murder of his employer, Joe Espinosa, in Edna, Texas, in 1950. Hernandez was convicted by an all-white jury. His lawyers appealed. They argued that Hernandez was entitled to a jury “of his peers” and that systematic exclusion of Mexican Americans violated constitutional law. In a unanimous decision, the United States Supreme Court ruled that Mexican Americans—and all “classes”—were entitled to the “equal protection” articulated in the Fourteenth Amendment.

The petitioner, Pete Hernandez, was indicted for the murder of one Joe Espinosa by a grand jury in Jackson County, Texas. He was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed the judgment of the trial court. Prior to the trial, the petitioner, by his counsel, offered timely motions to quash the indictment and the jury panel. He alleged that persons of Mexican descent were systematically excluded from service as jury commissioners, grand jurors, and petit jurors, although there were such persons fully qualified to serve residing in Jackson County. The petitioner asserted that exclusion of this class deprived him, as a member of the class, of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution. . . .

In numerous decisions, this Court has held that it is a denial of the equal protection of the laws to try a defendant of a particular race or color under an indictment issued by a grand jury, or before a petit jury, from which all persons of his race or color have, solely because of that race or color, been excluded by the State, whether acting through its legislature, its courts, or its executive or administrative officers. Although the Court has had little occasion to rule on the question directly, it has been recognized since *Strader v. State of West Virginia*, that the exclusion of a class of persons from jury service on grounds other than race or color may also deprive a defendant who is a member of that class of the constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the laws. The State of Texas would have us hold that there are only two classes—white and Negro—within the contemplation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The decisions of this Court do not support that view. And, except where the question presented involves the exclusion of persons of Mexican descent from juries, Texas courts have taken a broader view of the scope of the equal protection clause.

Throughout our history differences in race and color have defined easily identifiable groups which have at times required the aid of the courts in securing equal treatment under the laws. But community prejudices are not static, and from time to time other differences from the community norm may define other groups which need the same protection. Whether such a group exists within a community is a question of fact. When the existence of a distinct class is demonstrated, and it is further shown that the laws, as written or as applied, single out that class for different treatment not based on some reasonable classification, the guarantees of the Constitution have been violated. The Fourteenth Amendment is not directed solely against discrimination due to a “two-class theory”—that is, based upon differences between “white” and Negro.

... The exclusion of otherwise eligible persons from jury service solely because of their ancestry or national origin is discrimination prohibited by the Fourteenth Amendment. ...

The petitioner's initial burden in substantiating his charge of group discrimination was to prove that persons of Mexican descent constitute a separate class in Jackson County, distinct from "whites." One method by which this may be demonstrated is by showing the attitude of the community. Here the testimony of responsible officials and citizens contained the admission that residents of the community distinguished between "white" and "Mexican." The participation of persons of Mexican descent in business and community groups was shown to be slight. Until very recent times, children of Mexican descent were required to attend a segregated school for the first four grades. At least one restaurant in town prominently displayed a sign announcing "No Mexicans Served." On the courthouse grounds at the time of the hearing, there were two men's toilets, one unmarked, and the other marked "Colored Men" and "Hombres Aqui" ("Men Here"). ...

Having established the existence of a class, petitioner was then charged with the burden of proving discrimination. To do so, he relied on the pattern of proof established by *Norris v. State of Alabama*. In that case, proof that Negroes constituted a substantial segment of the population of the jurisdiction, that some Negroes were qualified to serve as jurors, and that none had been called for jury service over an extended period of time, was held to constitute prima facie proof of the systematic exclusion of Negroes from jury service. This holding, sometimes called the "rule of exclusion," has been applied in other cases, and it is available in supplying proof of discrimination against any delineated class.

The petitioner established that 14% of the population of Jackson County were persons with Mexican or Latin American surnames, and that 11% of the males over 21 bore such names. The County Tax Assessor testified that 6 or 7 percent of the freeholders on the tax rolls of the County were persons of Mexican descent. The State of Texas stipulated that "for the last twenty-five years there is no record of any person with a Mexican or Latin American name having served on a jury commission, grand jury or petit jury in Jackson County." The parties also stipulated that "there are some male persons of Mexican or Latin American descent in Jackson County who, by virtue of being citizens, freeholders, and having all other legal prerequisites to jury service, are eligible to serve as members of a jury commission, grand jury and/or petit jury."

...

To say that this decision revives the rejected contention that the Fourteenth Amendment requires proportional representation of all the component ethnic groups of the community on every jury ignores the facts. The petitioner did not seek proportional representation, nor did he claim a right to have persons of Mexican descent sit on the particular juries which he faced. His only claim is the right to be indicted and tried by juries from which all members of his class are not systematically excluded—juries selected from among all qualified persons regardless of national origin or descent. To this much, he is entitled by the Constitution.

[Source: *Hernandez v. Texas*, 347 U.S. 475 (1954).]

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)

In 1896, the United States Supreme Court declared in Plessy v. Ferguson that the doctrine of “separate but equal” was constitutional. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court overturned that decision and ruled unanimously against school segregation.

These cases come to us from the state of Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware. They are premised on different facts and different local conditions, but a common legal question justifies their consideration together in this consolidated opinion.

In each of the cases, minors of the Negro race, through their legal representatives, seek the aid of the courts in obtaining admission to the public schools of their community on a nonsegregated basis. In each instance, they had been denied admission to schools attended by white children under laws requiring or permitting segregation according to race. This segregation was alleged to deprive the plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment. In each of the cases other than the Delaware case, a three-judge federal district court denied relief to the plaintiffs on the so-called “separate but equal” doctrine announced by this court in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537. Under that doctrine, equality of treatment is accorded when the races are provided substantially equal facilities, even though these facilities be separate. ...

The plaintiffs contend that segregated public schools are not “equal” and cannot be made “equal,” and that hence they are deprived of the equal protection of the laws. Because of the obvious importance of the question presented, the court took jurisdiction. Argument was heard in the 1952 term, and reargument was heard this term on certain questions propounded by the court.

...

Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does.

In *Sweatt v. Painter*, supra, in finding that a segregated law school for Negroes could not provide them equal educational opportunities, this court relied in large part on “those qualities which are incapable of objective measurement but which make for greatness in a law school.” In *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*, supra, the court, in requiring that a Negro admitted to a white graduate school be treated like all other students, again resorted to intangible considerations: “... His ability to study, to engage in discussions and exchange views with other students, and, in general, to learn his profession.” Such considerations apply with added force to children in grade and high schools. To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. The effect of this separation on their educational opportunities was well stated by the finding in the Kansas case by a court which nevertheless felt compelled to rule against the Negro plaintiffs:

“Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of Negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racially integrated school system.”

Whatever may have been the extent of psychological knowledge at the time of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, this finding is amply supported by modern authority. Any language in *Plessy v. Ferguson* contrary to this finding is rejected.

We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of “separate but equal” has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. ...

Because these are class actions, because of the wide applicability of this decision, and because of the great variety of local conditions, the formulation of decrees in these cases presents problems of considerable complexity. On reargument, the consideration of appropriate relief was necessarily subordinated to the primary question — the constitutionality of segregation in public education. We have now announced that such segregation is a denial of the equal protection of the laws. ...

[Source: *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). Available online via *National Archives* (<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=87&page=transcript>).]

Richard Nixon on the American Standard of Living (1959)

As Cold War tensions eased, exhibitions allowed for Americans and Soviets to survey the other's culture and way of life. In 1959, the Russians held an exhibition in New York, and the Americans in Moscow. A videotaped discussion between Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, the so-called "Kitchen Debate," won Richard Nixon acclaim at home for his articulate defense of the American standard of living. In the following extract from July 24, 1959, Nixon opened the American Exhibition in Moscow.

I am honored on behalf of President Eisenhower to open this American Exhibition in Moscow. ... Among the questions which some might raise with regard to our Exhibition are these: To what extent does this Exhibition accurately present life in the United States as it really is? Can only the wealthy people afford the things exhibited here? What about the inequality, the injustice, the other weaknesses which are supposed to be inevitable in a Capitalist society?

...

Let us start with some of the things in this Exhibit. You will see a house, a car, a television set — each the newest and most modern of its type we can produce. But can only the rich in the United States afford such things? If this were the case we would have to include in our definition of rich the millions of America's wage earners.

Let us take, for example, our 16 million factory workers. The average weekly wage of a factory worker in America is \$90.54. With this income he can buy and afford to own a house, a television set, and a car in the price range of those you will see in this Exhibit. What is more, the great majority of American wage earners have done exactly that.

Putting it another way, there are 44 million families in the United States. Twenty-five million of these families live in houses or apartments that have as much or more floor space than the one you see in this Exhibit. Thirty-one million families own their own homes and the land on which they are built. America's 44 million families own a total of 56 million cars, 50 million television sets and 143 million radio sets. And they buy an average of 9 dresses and suits and 14 pairs of shoes per family per year.

Why do I cite these figures? ... [W]hat these statistics do dramatically demonstrate is this: That the United States, the world's largest capitalist country, has from the standpoint of distribution of wealth come closest to the ideal of prosperity for all in a classless society.

As our revered Abraham Lincoln said "...We do not propose any war upon capital; we do wish to allow the humblest man an equal chance to get rich with everybody else."

The 67 million American wage earners are not the down-trodden masses depicted by the critics of capitalism in the latter part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth

centuries. They hold their heads high as they proudly enjoy the highest standard of living of any people in the world's history.

The caricature of capitalism as a predatory, monopolist dominated society, is as hopelessly out of date, as far as the United States is concerned, as a wooden plow.

This does not mean that we have solved all of our problems. Many of you have heard about the problem of unemployment in the United States. What is not so well known is that the average period that these unemployed were out of work even during our recent recession was less than three months. And during that period the unemployed had an average income from unemployment insurance funds of \$131.49 per month. The day has passed in the United States when the unemployed were left to shift for themselves.

The same can be said for the aged, the sick, and others who are unable to earn enough to provide an adequate standard of living. An expanded program of Social Security combined with other government and private programs provides aid and assistance for those who are unable to care for themselves. For example, the average retired couple on Social Security in the United States receives an income of \$116 per month apart from the additional amounts they receive from private pensions and savings accounts.

What about the strikes which take place in our economy the latest example of which is the steel strike which is going on? The answer is that here we have a firsthand example of how a free economy works. The workers right to join with other workers in a union and to bargain collectively with management is recognized and protected by law. No man or woman in the United States can be forced to work for wages he considers to be inadequate or under conditions he believes are unsatisfactory.

Another problem which causes us concern is that of racial discrimination in our country. We are making great progress in solving this problem but we shall never be satisfied until we make the American ideal of equality of opportunity a reality for every citizen regardless of his race, creed or color.

We have other problems in our society but we are confident that for us our system of government provides the best means for solving them.

...

The Soviet Exhibition in New York and the American Exhibition which we open tonight are dramatic examples of what a great future lies in store for all of us if we can devote the tremendous energies of our peoples and the resources of our countries to the ways of peace rather than the ways of war.

The last half of the twentieth century can be the darkest or the brightest page in the history of civilization. The decision is in our hands to make. The genius of the men who produced the magnificent achievements represented by these two Exhibitions can be directed either to the destruction of civilization or to the creation of the best life that men have ever enjoyed on this earth.

[Source: *Bulletin* (The Department of State) XLI (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office: August 17, 1959), 227-236. Available online via *The Internet Archive* (https://archive.org/details/departmentofstat411959unit_0).]

John F. Kennedy on the Separation of Church and State (1960)

American Anti-Catholicism had softened in the aftermath of World War II, but no Catholic had ever been elected president and Protestant Americans had long been suspicious of Catholic politicians when John F. Kennedy ran for the presidency in 1960. (Al Smith, the first Catholic presidential candidate, was roundly defeated in 1928 owing in large part to popular anti-Catholic prejudice). On September 12, 1960, Kennedy addressed the Greater Houston Ministerial Association and he not only allayed popular fears of his Catholic faith, he delivered a seminal statement on the separation of church and state

... Because I am a Catholic, and no Catholic has ever been elected President, the real issues in this campaign have been obscured—perhaps deliberately, in some quarters less responsible than this. So it is apparently necessary for me to state once again—not what kind of church I believe in, for that should be important only to me—but what kind of America I believe in.

I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute—where no Catholic prelate would tell the President (should he be Catholic) how to act, and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote—where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference—and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him or the people who might elect him.

I believe in an America that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jewish—where no public official either requests or accepts instructions on public policy from the Pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source—where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials—and where religious liberty is so indivisible that an act against one church is treated as an act against all.

For while this year it may be a Catholic against whom the finger of suspicion is pointed, in other years it has been, and may someday be again, a Jew—or a Quaker—or a Unitarian—or a Baptist. It was Virginia's harassment of Baptist preachers, for example, that helped lead to Jefferson's statute of religious freedom. Today I may be the victim—but tomorrow it may be you—until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped at a time of great national peril.

Finally, I believe in an America where religious intolerance will someday end—where all men and all churches are treated as equal—where every man has the same right to attend or not attend the church of his choice—where there is no Catholic vote, no anti-Catholic vote, no bloc voting of any kind—and where Catholics, Protestants and Jews, at both the lay and pastoral level, will refrain from those attitudes of disdain and division which have so often marred their works in the past, and promote instead the American ideal of brotherhood.

That is the kind of America in which I believe. And it represents the kind of Presidency in which I believe—a great office that must neither be humbled by making it the instrument of any one religious group nor tarnished by arbitrarily withholding its occupancy from the members of any one religious group. I believe in a President whose religious views are his own private affair, neither imposed by him upon the Nation or imposed by the Nation upon him as a condition to holding that office.

[Source: John F. Kennedy, “Address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association” (September 12, 1960). Available online via The Miller Center (<http://millercenter.org/president/kennedy/speeches/speech-3363>).]

Congressman Arthur L. Miller Gives “the Putrid Facts” About Homosexuality” (1950)

In 1950, Representative Arthur L. Miller, a Nebraska Republican, offered an amendment to a bill requiring background checks for employees of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA). Miller proposed to bar homosexuals from working with the ECA. Although his amendment was rejected, his views of homosexuality revealed much about postwar American views.

Mr. Chairman, I realize that I am discussing a very delicate subject I cannot lay the bones bare like I could before medical colleagues. I would like to strip the fetid, stinking flesh off of this skeleton of homosexuality and tell my colleagues of the House some of the facts of nature. I cannot expose all the putrid facts as it would offend the sensibilities of some of you. It will be necessary to skirt some of the edges, and I use certain Latin terms to describe some of these individuals. Make no mistake several thousand, according to police records, are now employed by the Federal Government.

... Recently the spotlight of publicity has been focused not only upon the State Department but upon the Department of Commerce because of homosexuals being employed in these and other departments of Government. Recently Mr. Peurifoy, of the State Department, said he had allowed 91 individuals in the State Department to resign because they were homosexuals. Now they are like birds of a feather, they flock together. Where did they go?

You must know what a homosexual is. It is amazing that in the Capital City of Washington we are plagued with such a large group of those individuals. Washington attracts many lovely folks. The sex crimes in the city are many.

In the Eightieth Congress I was the author of the sex pervert bill that passed this Congress and is now a law in the District of Columbia. It can confine some of these people in St. Elizabeth's Hospital for treatment. They are the sex perverts. Some of them are more to be pitied than condemned, because in many it is a pathological condition, very much like the kleptomaniac who must go out and steal, he has that urge; or like the pyromaniac, who goes to bed and wakes up in the middle of the night with an urge to go out and set a fire. He does that. Some of these homosexuals are in that class. Remember there were 91 of them dismissed in the State Department. That is a small percentage of those employed in Government. We learned 2 years ago that there were around 4,000 homosexuals in the District. The Police Department the other day said there were between five and six thousand in Washington who are active and that 75 percent were in Government employment. There are places in Washington where they gather for the purpose of sex orgies, where they worship at the cesspool and flesh pots of iniquity. There is a restaurant downtown where you will find male prostitutes. They solicit business for other male customers. They are pimps and undesirable characters. You will find odd words in the vocabulary of the homosexual. There are many types such as the necrophilia, fetishism, pygmalionism, fellatio, cunnilinguist, sodomatic, pederasty, saphism, sadism, and masochist. Indeed, there are many methods of practices among the homosexuals. You will find those people using the

words as, "He is a fish. He is a bull-dicker. He is mamma and he is papa, and punk, and pimp." Yes; in one of our prominent restaurants rug parties and sex orgies go on. Some of those people have been in the State Department, and I understand some of them are now in the other departments. The 91 who were permitted to resign have gone some place, and, like birds of a feather, they flock together. Those people like to be known to each other. They have signs used on streetcars and in public places to call attention to others of like mind. Their rug and fairy parties are elaborate.

So I offer this amendment, and when the time comes for voting upon it, I hope that no one will object. I sometimes wonder how many of these homosexuals have had a part in shaping our foreign policy. How many have been in sensitive positions and subject to blackmail. It is a known fact that homosexuality goes back to the Orientals, long before the time of Confucius; that the Russians are strong believers in homosexuality, and that those same people are able to get into the State Department and get somebody in their embrace, and once they are in their embrace, fearing blackmail, will make them go to any extent. ...

I realize that there is some physical danger to anyone exposing all of the details and nastiness of homosexuality, because some of these people are dangerous. They will go to any limit. These homosexuals have strong emotions. They are not to be trusted and when blackmail threatens they are a dangerous group.

The Army at one time gave these individuals a dishonorable discharge and later changed the type of discharge. They are not knowingly kept in Army service. They should not be employed in Government. I trust both sides of the aisle will support the amendment. Source: *Congressional Record vol. 96 pt. 4, 81st Congress 2nd Session*, March 29-April 24, 1950, 4527-4528.

Rosa Parks on Life in Montgomery, Alabama (1956-1958)

In this unfinished correspondence and undated personal notes, Rosa Parks recounted living under segregation in Montgomery, Alabama, explained why she refused to surrender her seat on a city bus, and lamented the psychological toll exacted by Jim Crow.

City Bus lines. Front section reserved for white passengers ... seating space for 10 persons left vacant whether or not they board the bus enroute to town. The bus driver often passes colored passengers, with these empty seats, when he thinks enough are standing in the aisles. This means a larger number will be waiting for the next bus. The next bus driver may also not stop for colored passengers. Sometimes colored passengers have to pay their fare at the front of the bus and then go to the rear door for entrance, which is already overcrowded. It is not uncommon for a bus driver to order a colored woman to vacate a seat for a white man to be seated in the same space. Such practices and many other unjust things are regular routine.

On reaching my job, which is at Montg's largest Dept. Store, Montgy Fair, there are the drinking fountains throughout the store, plainly marked. Whites Only – on one and Colored on the other. The Women employee restroom is for white. The ladies lounge for public is known to be for white only without the sign. The white and Colored women employees and colored women shoppers use the same lounge. The Colored women employees eat their lunch in a little room next to the restroom. The doors between the toilet and the dining area can not be closed tightly enough to stay shut.

There is a luncheonette counter where some colored help is employed as cooks, dishwashers, etc., but Colored people are not served at the counter. They may buy the food and take it away and eat it.

Colored people are employed at this store as maids, porters, elevator operators, truck drivers except that I work in the tailor shop doing men's clothing alterations as a helper of the tailor who is colored. One colored man is the window dresser. I don't know what else he does.

There is a large number of Negroes shopping in this store most of the time. This thing called segregation here is a complete and solid pattern as a way of life. We are conditioned to it and make the best of a bad situation.

At the Public Library, located near the downtown shopping section, a Colored person will not be permitted to come in and read a book or be given one to take out. The requested book will be sent to the colored branch library on the east side of town, if it is not already available there. Last year some NAACP Youth Council Members who are students went to this downtown library for reference books to use in school. They were told the books were there but they would be sent to the branch library to be issued to them there, even though the young people lived on the west side of town.

So you see my dear, it seems endless. I could go on and on and there would still be some more to tell.

The schools are all segregated and of course unequal. The churches are also segregated. White people sometimes visit the colored churches but I don't know if any colored people go to white churches except as nurses to look after small children. I don't know of any going as guests.

I don't know how helpful this is to you, but I hope it may enlighten you a little about the way of life in the South.

You may write again and let me know of something in particular that you want to do research work on. Employment, housing, voting, education and social aspects are all fertile fields for research based on racial discrimination.

I am sure you read of the lynch-murder of young Emmett Till of Chicago. This case could be multiplied many times in the South, not only Miss., but Ala., Georgia, Fla.

In my lifetime, I have known Negroes who were killed by whites without any arrests or investigations and with little or no publicity. It is the custom to keep such things covered up in order not to disturb what is called [letter left incomplete.]

...

I had been pushed around all my life and felt at this moment [her refusal to surrender her seat on a Montgomery City Bus] that I couldn't take it anymore. When I asked the policeman why we had to be pushed around? He said he didn't know. "The law is the law. You are under arrest." I didn't resist.

...

I want to feel the nearness of something secure. It is such a lonely feeling that I am cut off from life. I am nothing, I belong nowhere and to no one.

There is just so much hurt, disappointment and oppression one can take. The bubble of life grows larger. The line between reason and madness grows thinner. The reopening of old wounds are unthinkably painful. Time begins the healing process of wounds cut deeply by oppression. We soothe ourselves with the salve of attempted indifference, accepting the false pattern set up by the horrible restrictions of Jim Crow laws.

Let us look at Jim Crow for the criminal he is and what he had done to one life multiplied millions of times over these United States and the world.

He walks us on a tight rope from birth to the end of life's span, whether it be long or of brief duration. Little children are so conditioned early to learn their places in the segregated pattern as they take their first toddling steps and are weened from their mother's breast.

Source: Rosa Parks. Writings, Notes, and Statements, 1956 to 1998; Drafts of early writings; Accounts of her arrest and the subsequent boycott, as well as general reflections on race relations in the South. Rosa Parks Papers. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Available online via Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/item/mss859430226/>).

1959 Little Rock Rally



In 1959, photographer John Bledsoe captured this image of the crowd on the steps of the Arkansas state capitol building, protesting the federally mandated integration of Little Rock's Central High School. This image shows how worries about desegregation were bound up with other concerns, such as the reach of communism and government power. John T. Bledsoe, "Little Rock, 1959. Rally at State Capitol" (Aug 20, 1959). Via [Library of Congress](#).

“In the Suburbs” (1957)

[FILM AVAILABLE AT <http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/26-the-affluent-society/>]

Redbook made this film to convince advertisers that the magazine would help them attract the white suburban consumers they desired. The “happy go spending, buy it now, young adults of today” are depicted by the film as flocking to the suburbs to escape global and urban turmoil. Redbook Magazine, “In The Suburbs” (1957). Via [The Internet Archive](#).

27. The Sixties

Introduction

Perhaps no decade is so immortalized in American memory as the 1960s. Couched in the colorful rhetoric of peace and love, complemented by stirring images of the civil rights movement, and fondly remembered for its music, art, and activism, for many the decade brought hopes for a more inclusive, forward-thinking nation. But the decade was also plagued by strife, tragedy, and chaos. It was the decade of the Vietnam War, of inner-city riots, and assassinations that seemed to symbolize the crushing of a new generation's idealism. A decade of struggle and disillusionment rocked by social, cultural, and political upheaval, the 1960s are remembered because so much changed, and because so much did not. The following sources offer insight into the decade's impactful history.

Barry Goldwater, Republican Nomination Acceptance Speech (1964)

In 1964, Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona accepted the Republican Party's nomination for the presidency. In his speech, Goldwater refused to apologize for his strict conservative politics. "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice," he said, and "moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."

... The good Lord raised this mighty Republic to be a home for the brave and to flourish as the land of the free—not to stagnate in the swampland of collectivism, not to cringe before the bully of communism.

Now, my fellow Americans, the tide has been running against freedom. Our people have followed false prophets. We must, and we shall, return to proven ways— not because they are old, but because they are true. We must, and we shall, set the tide running again in the cause of freedom. And this party, with its every action, every word, every breath, and every heartbeat, has but a single resolve, and that is freedom – freedom made orderly for this nation by our constitutional government; freedom under a government limited by laws of nature and of nature's God; freedom – balanced so that liberty lacking order will not become the slavery of the prison cell; balanced so that liberty lacking order will not become the license of the mob and of the jungle.

Now, we Americans understand freedom. We have earned it, we have lived for it, and we have died for it. This Nation and its people are freedom's model in a searching world. We can be freedom's missionaries in a doubting world. But, ladies and gentlemen, first we must renew freedom's mission in our own hearts and in our own homes.

During four futile years, the administration which we shall replace has distorted and lost that faith. It has talked and talked and talked and talked the words of freedom. Now, failures cement the wall of shame in Berlin. Failures blot the sands of shame at the Bay of Pigs. Failures mark the slow death of freedom in Laos. Failures infest the jungles of Vietnam. And failures haunt the houses of our once great alliances and undermine the greatest bulwark ever erected by free nations – the NATO community. Failures proclaim lost leadership, obscure purpose, weakening wills, and the risk of inciting our sworn enemies to new aggressions and to new excesses. Because of this administration we are tonight a world divided – we are a Nation becalmed. We have lost the brisk pace of diversity and the genius of individual creativity. We are plodding at a pace set by centralized planning, red tape, rules without responsibility, and regimentation without recourse.

Rather than useful jobs in our country, people have been offered bureaucratic "make work," rather than moral leadership, they have been given bread and circuses, spectacles, and, yes, they have even been given scandals. Tonight there is violence in our streets, corruption in our highest offices, aimlessness among our youth, anxiety among our elders and there is a virtual despair among the many who look beyond material success for the inner meaning of their lives. Where examples of morality should be set, the opposite is seen. Small men,

seeking great wealth or power, have too often and too long turned even the highest levels of public service into mere personal opportunity.

Now, certainly, simple honesty is not too much to demand of men in government. We find it in most. Republicans demand it from everyone. They demand it from everyone no matter how exalted or protected his position might be. The growing menace in our country tonight, to personal safety, to life, to limb and property, in homes, in churches, on the playgrounds, and places of business, particularly in our great cities, is the mounting concern, or should be, of every thoughtful citizen in the United States.

Security from domestic violence, no less than from foreign aggression, is the most elementary and fundamental purpose of any government, and a government that cannot fulfill that purpose is one that cannot long command the loyalty of its citizens. History shows us – demonstrates that nothing – nothing prepares the way for tyranny more than the failure of public officials to keep the streets from bullies and marauders.

...

Today, as then, but more urgently and more broadly than then, the task of preserving and enlarging freedom at home and safeguarding it from the forces of tyranny abroad is great enough to challenge all our resources and to require all our strength. Anyone who joins us in all sincerity, we welcome. Those who do not care for our cause, we don't expect to enter our ranks in any case. And let our Republicanism, so focused and so dedicated, not be made fuzzy and futile by unthinking and stupid labels.

I would remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.

[Source: Barry Goldwater, "Republican Nomination Acceptance Speech" (July 16, 1964). Available online via *The American Presidency Project* (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25973>).]

Lyndon Johnson on Voting Rights and the American Promise (1965)

On March 15, 1965, Lyndon Baines Johnson addressed a joint session of Congress to push for the Voting Rights Act. In his speech, Johnson not only advocated policy, he borrowed the language of the civil rights movement and tied the movement to American history.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the Congress:

I speak tonight for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy.

...

At times history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama.

There, long-suffering men and women peacefully protested the denial of their rights as Americans. Many were brutally assaulted. One good man, a man of God, was killed.

There is no cause for pride in what has happened in Selma. There is no cause for self-satisfaction in the long denial of equal rights of millions of Americans. But there is cause for hope and for faith in our democracy in what is happening here tonight.

For the cries of pain and the hymns and protests of oppressed people have summoned into convocation all the majesty of this great Government—the Government of the greatest Nation on earth.

Our mission is at once the oldest and the most basic of this country: to right wrong, to do justice, to serve man.

In our time we have come to live with moments of great crisis. Our lives have been marked with debate about great issues; issues of war and peace, issues of prosperity and depression. But rarely in any time does an issue lay bare the secret heart of America itself. Rarely are we met with a challenge, not to our growth or abundance, our welfare or our security, but rather to the values and the purposes and the meaning of our beloved Nation.

The issue of equal rights for American Negroes is such an issue. And should we defeat every enemy, should we double our wealth and conquer the stars, and still be unequal to this issue, then we will have failed as a people and as a nation.

...

This was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded with a purpose. The great phrases of that purpose still sound in every American heart, North and South: “All men are created equal”—“government by consent of the governed”—“give me liberty or give me death.” Well, those are not just clever words, or those are not just empty theories. In their

name Americans have fought and died for two centuries, and tonight around the world they stand there as guardians of our liberty, risking their lives.

Those words are a promise to every citizen that he shall share in the dignity of man. This dignity cannot be found in a man's possessions; it cannot be found in his power, or in his position. It really rests on his right to be treated as a man equal in opportunity to all others. It says that he shall share in freedom, he shall choose his leaders, educate his children, and provide for his family according to his ability and his merits as a human being.

To apply any other test—to deny a man his hopes because of his color or race, his religion or the place of his birth—is not only to do injustice, it is to deny America and to dishonor the dead who gave their lives for American freedom.

...

To those who seek to avoid action by their National Government in their own communities; who want to and who seek to maintain purely local control over elections, the answer is simple:

Open your polling places to all your people.

Allow men and women to register and vote whatever the color of their skin.

Extend the rights of citizenship to every citizen of this land.

...

So I ask you to join me in working long hours—nights and weekends, if necessary—to pass this bill. And I don't make that request lightly. For from the window where I sit with the problems of our country I recognize that outside this chamber is the outraged conscience of a nation, the grave concern of many nations, and the harsh judgment of history on our acts.

But even if we pass this bill, the battle will not be over. What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement which reaches into every section and State of America. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life.

Their cause must be our cause too. Because it is not just Negroes, but really it is all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice.

And we shall overcome.

...

My first job after college was as a teacher in Cotulla, Texas, in a small Mexican-American school. Few of them could speak English, and I couldn't speak much Spanish. My students were poor and they often came to class without breakfast, hungry. They knew even in their youth the pain of prejudice. They never seemed to know why people disliked them. But they knew it was so, because I saw it in their eyes. I often walked home late in the afternoon, after the classes were finished, wishing there was more that I could do. But all I knew was to teach

them the little that I knew, hoping that it might help them against the hardships that lay ahead.

Somehow you never forget what poverty and hatred can do when you see its scars on the hopeful face of a young child.

I never thought then, in 1928, that I would be standing here in 1965. It never even occurred to me in my fondest dreams that I might have the chance to help the sons and daughters of those students and to help people like them all over this country.

But now I do have that chance—and I'll let you in on a secret—I mean to use it. And I hope that you will use it with me.

...

[Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965. Volume I, entry 107* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1966), 281-287. Available online via LBJ Library (<http://www.lbjlibrary.org/lyndon-baines-johnson/speeches-films/president-johnsons-special-message-to-the-congress-the-american-promise>).]

Lyndon Johnson, Howard University Commencement Address (1965)

On June 4, 1965, President Johnson delivered the commencement address at Howard University, the nation's most prominent historically black university. In his address, Johnson explained why "opportunity" was not enough to ensure the civil rights of disadvantaged Americans.

...

The voting rights bill will be the latest, and among the most important, in a long series of victories. But this victory—as Winston Churchill said of another triumph for freedom—"is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

That beginning is freedom; and the barriers to that freedom are tumbling down. Freedom is the right to share, share fully and equally, in American society—to vote, to hold a job, to enter a public place, to go to school. It is the right to be treated in every part of our national life as a person equal in dignity and promise to all others.

But freedom is not enough. You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: Now you are free to go where you want, and do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please.

You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, "you are free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.

Thus it is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates.

This is the next and the more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom but opportunity. We seek not just legal equity but human ability, not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result.

...

For what is justice?

It is to fulfill the fair expectations of man.

Thus, American justice is a very special thing. For, from the first, this has been a land of towering expectations. It was to be a nation where each man could be ruled by the common consent of all—enshrined in law, given life by institutions, guided by men themselves subject to its rule. And all—all of every station and origin—would be touched equally in obligation and in liberty.

...

So, it is the glorious opportunity of this generation to end the one huge wrong of the American Nation and, in so doing, to find America for ourselves, with the same immense thrill of discovery which gripped those who first began to realize that here, at last, was a home for freedom.

All it will take is for all of us to understand what this country is and what this country must become.

The Scripture promises: "I shall light a candle of understanding in thine heart, which shall not be put out."

Together, and with millions more, we can light that candle of understanding in the heart of all America.

And, once lit, it will never again go out.

[Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965*. Volume II, entry 301, pp. 635-640. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1966. Available online via LBJ Library (<http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/650604.asp>).]

National Organization for Women, “Statement of Purpose” (1966)

The National Organization for Women was founded in 1966 by prominent American feminists, including Betty Friedan, Shirley Chisholm, and others. The organization’s “statement of purpose” laid out the goals of the organization and the targets of its feminist vision.

We, men and women, who hereby constitute ourselves as the National Organization for Women, believe that the time has come for a new movement toward true equality for all women in America, and toward a fully equal partnership of the sexes, as part of the world-wide revolution of human rights now taking place within and beyond our national borders.

The purpose of NOW is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.

We believe the time has come to move beyond the abstract argument, discussion and symposia over the status and special nature of women which has raged in America in recent years; the time has come to confront, with concrete action, the conditions that now prevent women from enjoying the equality of opportunity and freedom of which is their right, as individual Americans, and as human beings.

NOW is dedicated to the proposition that women, first and foremost, are human beings, who like all other people in our society, must have the chance to develop their fullest human potential. We believe that women can achieve such equality only by accepting to the full the challenges and responsibilities they share with all other people in our society, as part of the decision-making mainstream of American political, economic and social life.

We organize to initiate or support action, nationally, or in any part of this nation, by individuals or organizations, to break through the silken curtain of prejudice and discrimination against women in government, industry, and professions, the churches, the political parties, the judiciary, the labor unions, in education, science, medicine, law, religion and every other field of importance in American society. Enormous changes taking place in our society make it both possible and urgently necessary to advance the unfinished revolution of women toward true equality now. With a life span lengthened to nearly 75 years it is no longer either necessary or possible for women to devote the greatest part of their lives to child-rearing; yet childbearing and rearing which continues to be a most important part of most women’s lives — still is used to justify barring women from equal professional and economic participation and advance.

...

Despite all the talk about the status of American women in recent years, the actual position of women in the United States has declined, and is declining, to an alarming degree throughout the 1950’s and ’60s. Although 46.4% of all American women between the ages

of 18 and 65 now work outside the home, the overwhelming majority — 75% — are in routine clerical, sales, or factory jobs, or they are household workers, cleaning women, hospital attendants. About two-thirds of Negro women workers are in the lowest paid service occupations. Working women are becoming increasingly — not less — concentrated on the bottom of the job ladder. As a consequence, full-time women workers today earn on the average only 60% of what men earn, and that wage gap has been increasing over the past twenty-five years in every major industry group. In 1964, of all women with a yearly income, 89% earned under \$5,000 a year; half of all full-time year round women workers earned less than \$3,690; only 1.4% of full-time year round women workers had an annual income of \$10,000 or more.

Further, with higher education increasingly essential in today's society, too few women are entering and finishing college or going on to graduate or professional school. Today, women earn only one in three of the B.A.'s and M.A.'s granted, and one in ten of the Ph.D.'s.

In all the professions considered of importance to society, and in the executive ranks of industry and government, women are losing ground. Where they are present it is only a token handful. Women comprise less than 1% of federal judges; less than 4% of all lawyers; 7% of doctors. Yet women represent 51% of the U.S. population. And, increasingly men are replacing women in the top positions in secondary and elementary schools, in social work, and in libraries — once thought to be women's fields.

Official pronouncements of the advance in the status of women hide not only the reality of this dangerous decline, but the fact that nothing is being done to stop it. ...

Discrimination in employment on the basis of sex is now prohibited by federal law, in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. ... The Commission has not made clear its intention to enforce the law with the same seriousness on behalf of women as of other victims of discrimination. ... Until now, too few women's organizations and official spokesmen have been willing to speak out against these dangers facing women. Too many women have been restrained by the fear of being called "feminist."

There is no civil rights movement to speak for women, as there has been for Negroes and other victims of discrimination. The National Organization for Women must therefore begin to speak.

We believe that the power of American law, and the protection guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution to the civil rights of all individuals, must be effectively applied and enforced to isolate and remove patterns of sex discrimination, to ensure equality of opportunity in employment and education, and equality of civil and political rights and responsibilities on behalf of women, as well as for Negroes and other deprived groups.

We realize that women's problems are linked to many broader questions of social justice; their solution will require concerted action by many groups. Therefore, convinced that human rights for all are indivisible, we expect to give active support to the common cause of

equal rights for all those who suffer discrimination and deprivation, and we call upon other organizations committed to such goals to support our efforts toward equality for women.

...

We believe that this nation has a capacity at least as great as other nations, to innovate new social institutions which will enable women to enjoy true equality of opportunity and responsibility in society, without conflict with their responsibilities as mothers and homemakers.... Above all, we reject the assumption that these problems are the unique responsibility of each individual woman, rather than a basic social dilemma which society must solve. True equality of opportunity and freedom of choice for women requires such practical, and possible innovations as a nationwide network of child-care center which will make unnecessary for women to retire completely from society until their children are grown, and national programs to provide retraining for women who have chosen the care for their own children full-time.

...

In the interest of the human dignity of women, we will protest, and endeavor to change, the false image of women now prevalent in the mass media, and in the texts, ceremonies, laws, and practices of our major social institutions. Such images perpetuate contempt for women by society and by women for themselves. We are similarly opposed to all policies and practices — in church, state, college, factory, or office which, in the guise of protectiveness, not only deny opportunities but also foster in women self-denigration, dependence, and evasion of responsibility, undermine their confidence in their own abilities and foster contempt for women.

...

We believe that women will do most to create a new image of women by acting now, and by speaking out in behalf of their own equality, freedom, and human dignity — not in pleas for special privilege, nor in enmity toward men, who are also victims of the current, half-equality between the sexes — but in an active, self-respecting partnership with men. By so doing, women will develop confidence in their own ability to determine actively, in partnership with men, the conditions of their life, their choices, their future and their society.

[Source: National Organization for Women, “Statement of Purpose” (October 29, 1966). Available online via *The National Organization for Women* (<http://now.org/about/history/statement-of-purpose/>).]

George M. Garcia, Vietnam Veteran, Oral Interview (1969/2012)

In 2012, George Garcia sat down to be interviewed about his experiences as a corporal in the United States Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. Alternating between English and Spanish, Garcia told of early life in Brownsville, Texas, his time as a U.S. Marine in Vietnam, and his experience coming home from the war.

George M. Garcia:

“When I first arrived, I arrived in Da Nang. And I’ll never forget because I was only 18 years young. I was — you know, I was freshly out of high school. And at that time — I have to tell you this so you can have a picture of it because it wasn’t just cut and dry. Like I told you, coming from the [Rio Grande] Valley, especially for me that I had never been exposed to anything like this ...

... in our particular company, which was Company F, you know, we were always in mission. ... And from that day forward — I arrived there January 3rd of 1969. And from that point until the day I left, we were always on a mission. Always. We all had different missions. ...

...

I don’t know if I should or not, but I can share with you the second month in February, I think I was still 18 maybe going on 19. It was pretty close on my 19th year. We have what we call — you know what — you know what it means friendly fire?

Julia M. Hernandez:

Yes.

George M. Garcia:

Okay. We were — again, we were in a mission. We had received a report to seek and destroy and our jets had — they were ahead of us. They had destroyed this area. Supposedly there were enemies there and they went ahead and destroy — and it was up for us to seek and destroy — to see and make sure there was no enemy left. So — anyway, supposedly the jets had already cleared the area. And so we continued to march. And usually our battalion commander does the calling and the clearing to stop the cease firing. Well, what happened that particular afternoon, our battalion failed to tell one of the pilots to cease fire and that — that pilot came back and they dropped bombs on us.

Julia M. Hernandez:

Oh, no.

George M. Garcia:

It was the most — you know, the most horrible day of my life. I was — (spoke Spanish) — I was either turning just 19 there or I had just turned 19. I don't recall because it's — that happened in 1969 in February. And it was horrible. I mean, I remember — I mean, all the dust flying. It was — there was sand in that area and you could see all the sand flying all over the place. And you could hear the screaming and the yelling. And — (spoke Spanish) — our first platoon got wiped out.

Julia M. Hernandez:

How big — how many men?

George M. Garcia:

We must have lost approximately about 30, 35. And I looked up because I could hear — and then there was a whistling sound. I kept hearing something like a whistling sound. And I didn't know at the time that it was — it was what we call a shrapnel from the bomb. And it hit me right here. It burned me. It cut me right here, but at the time I didn't pay attention. I just took it off, you know, but it was — it was strange because it was coming in real — you could hear woo woo woo and coming real fast. And then I didn't think too much about it until afterwards, but the strange thing about it, it didn't penetrate it.

Julia M. Hernandez:

So it just hit you in your neck area?

George M. Garcia:

Yeah, right here.

Julia M. Hernandez:

But it didn't break the skin?

George M. Garcia:

It did, but it didn't go all the way in. That's what's so strange. And, you know, it just like hit me and it stopped right there. It — you know, it cut me and burned me, but I took it off. But I couldn't understand — at the time I didn't think about it because I was concerned about the men.

Julia M. Hernandez:

Sure.

George M. Garcia:

It was not until after when I found out about it that it was so strange it didn't get — it didn't go all the way because it was coming fast. So, anyway, I got up and I kept moving forward,

you know. And I had a hard time seeing because there was a lot of dust and the sand and all that. And so when I saw the — you know, when I saw all those men that were killed, it was just horrible. And they were, you know, without their limbs and their eyes and at that moment, you know, I — at that moment I — I wanted to lose — it was — I had to make a quick decision. Either I would — (spoke Spanish) — I was about to lose my mind or take it all, you know. And so it was a moment of seconds I decided to take all the pain, what I was seeing inside of me. It's there in front of me. So I just told myself, I'll just take everything that I'm seeing. So that's how I was able to keep my sanity. And I — (spoke Spanish) — I was real young and that was the first trauma that I — that I faced.

Julia M. Hernandez:

How did you survive it?

George M. Garcia:

That's how I survived it.

Julia M. Hernandez:

Luck?

George M. Garcia:

No.

Julia M. Hernandez:

I mean the bombing.

George M. Garcia:

There's no luck.

Julia M. Hernandez:

The bombing.

George M. Garcia:

There's no — there's no luck, because — (spoke Spanish) — there's no luck in war at all. I don't believe there's luck, you know. Just God's grace and those men that were — those men that we lost, I understand it now — I didn't understand then — because I even pleaded with God during my time that I was there — somewhere down the road I did — I yelled out to God because — (spoke Spanish) — I was losing a lot of my friends and I asked God to take me, not to take them. But coming back to February, as I was able to keep my insanity from that — from that day, that's how I survived the war, because it was such a horrible war, Vietnam, that — that's how I was able to save my sanity. And then we had to — then we have to bag the bodies. We had bodies we wouldn't — we couldn't even find because they were so well destroyed, I mean. And to this day I haven't forgotten. That's why they

were going to award me a Purple Heart because of my — when I got hit. And I couldn't accept it. I told them I would not accept because I felt that my wound was nothing compared to what I had seen. I didn't feel worthy of it. So I declined that — I declined that — that Purple Heart. I just felt very unworthy, even today. I always felt that I made the right decision and the right — to this very day.

Julia M. Hernandez:

Right.

George M. Garcia:

Yeah.

[Source: Interview with George M. Garcia (October 6, 2012). Available online via the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress

(<https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.88006/>).]

The Port Huron Statement (1962)

The Port Huron Statement was a 1962 manifesto by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), written primarily by student activist Tom Hayden, that proposed a new form of "participatory democracy" to rescue modern society from destructive militarism and cultural alienation.

We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit.

When we were kids the United States was the wealthiest and strongest country in the world; the only one with the atom bomb, the least scarred by modern war, an initiator of the United Nations that we thought would distribute Western influence throughout the world. Freedom and equality for each individual, government of, by, and for the people—these American values we found good, principles by which we could live as men. Many of us began maturing in complacency.

As we grew, however, our comfort was penetrated by events too troubling to dismiss. First, the permeating and victimizing fact of human degradation, symbolized by the Southern struggle against racial bigotry, compelled most of us from silence to activism. Second, the enclosing fact of the Cold War, symbolized by the presence of the Bomb, brought awareness that we ourselves, and our friends, and millions of abstract "others" we knew more directly because of our common peril, might die at any time. We might deliberately ignore, or avoid, or fail to feel all other human problems, but not these two, for these were too immediate and crushing in their impact, too challenging in the demand that we as individuals take the responsibility for encounter and resolution.

While these and other problems either directly oppressed us or rankled our consciences and became our own subjective concerns, we began to see complicated and disturbing paradoxes in our surrounding America. The declaration "all men are created equal..." rang hollow before the facts of Negro life in the South and the big cities of the North. The proclaimed peaceful intentions of the United States contradicted its economic and military investments in the Cold War status quo.

... We ourselves are imbued with urgency, yet the message of our society is that there is no viable alternative to the present. Beneath the reassuring tones of the politicians, beneath the common opinion that America will "muddle through," beneath the stagnation of those who have closed their minds to the future, is the pervading feeling that there simply are no alternatives, that our times have witnessed the exhaustion not only of Utopias, but of any new departures as well. Feeling the press of complexity upon the emptiness of life, people are fearful of the thought that at any moment things might be thrust out of control. They fear change itself, since change might smash whatever invisible framework seems to hold back chaos for them now. For most Americans, all crusades are suspect, threatening. The fact that each individual sees apathy in his fellows perpetuates the common reluctance to organize for change. The dominant institutions are complex enough to blunt the minds of

their potential critics, and entrenched enough to swiftly dissipate or entirely repel the energies of protest and reform, thus limiting human expectancies.

...

We would replace power rooted in possession, privilege, or circumstance by power and uniqueness rooted in love, reflectiveness, reason, and creativity. As a social system we seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation, governed by two central aims: that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life; that society be organized to encourage independence in men and provide the media for their common participation.

In a participatory democracy, the political life would be based in several root principles: that decision-making of basic social consequence be carried on by public groupings;

that politics be seen positively, as the art of collectively creating an acceptable pattern of social relations;

that politics has the function of bringing people out of isolation and into community, thus being a necessary, though not sufficient, means of finding meaning in personal life;

that the political order should serve to clarify problems in a way instrumental to their solution; it should provide outlets for the expression of personal grievance and aspiration; opposing views should be organized so as to illuminate choices and facilitate the attainment of goals; channels should be commonly available to relate men to knowledge and to power so that private problems—from bad recreation facilities to personal alienation—are formulated as general issues.

The economic sphere would have as its basis the principles:

that work should involve incentives worthier than money or survival. It should be educative, not stultifying; creative, not mechanical; self-directed, not manipulated, encouraging independence, a respect for others, a sense of dignity, and a willingness to accept social responsibility, since it is this experience that has crucial influence on habits, perceptions and individual ethics;

that the economic experience is so personally decisive that the individual must share in its full determination;

that the economy itself is of such social importance that its major resources and means of production should be open to democratic participation and subject to democratic social regulation.

... These are our central values, in skeletal form.

... As students for a democratic society, we are committed to stimulating this kind of social movement, this kind of vision and program in campus and community across the country. If

we appear to seek the unattainable, as it has been said, then let it be known that we do so to avoid the unimaginable.

Source: Students for a Democratic Society, *The Port Huron Statement* (New York: Students for a Democratic Society, 1962). Available online via Wikisource (https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Port_Huron_Statement).

Fannie Lou Hamer: Testimony at the Democratic National Convention 1964

Civil rights activists struggled against the repressive violence of Mississippi's racial regime. State NAACP head Medger Evers was murdered in 1963. Freedom Summer activists tried to register black voters in 1964. Three disappeared and were found murdered. The Mississippi Democratic Party continued to disfranchise the state's African American voters. Civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer co-founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) and traveled to the Democratic National Convention in 1964 to demand that the MFDP's delegates, rather than the all-white Mississippi Democratic Party delegates, be seated in the convention. Although unsuccessful, her moving testimony was broadcast on national television and drew further attention to the plight of African Americans in the South.

Mr. Chairman, and the Credentials Committee, my name is Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, and I live at 626 East Lafayette Street, Ruleville, Mississippi, Sunflower County, the home of Senator James O. Eastland, and Senator Stennis.

It was the 31st of August in 1962 that 18 of us traveled twenty-six miles to the county courthouse in Indianola to try to register to try to become first-class citizens. We was met in Indianola by Mississippi men, highway patrolmen, and they only allowed two of us in to take the literacy test at the time. After we had taken this test and started back to Ruleville, we was held up by the City Police and the State Highway Patrolmen and carried back to Indianola, where the bus driver was charged that day with driving a bus the wrong color.

After we paid the fine among us, we continued on to Ruleville, and Reverend Jeff Sunny carried me four miles in the rural area where I had worked as a timekeeper and sharecropper for eighteen years. I was met there by my children, who told me that the plantation owner was angry because I had gone down to try to register.

After they told me, my husband came, and said that the plantation owner was raising Cain because I had tried to register, and before he quit talking the plantation owner came, and said, "Fannie Lou, do you know—did Pap tell you what I said?"

And I said, "yes, sir."

He said, "I mean that," he said, "If you don't go down and withdraw your registration, you will have to leave," said, "Then if you go down and withdraw," he said, "You will—you might have to go because we are not ready for that in Mississippi."

And I addressed him and told him and said, "I didn't try to register for you. I tried to register for myself." I had to leave that same night.

On the 10th of September, 1962, sixteen bullets was fired into the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tucker for me. That same night two girls were shot in Ruleville, Mississippi. Also Mr. Joe McDonald's house was shot in.

And in June the 9th, 1963, I had attended a voter registration workshop, was returning back to Mississippi. Ten of us was traveling by the Continental Trailway bus. When we got to Winona, Mississippi, which is in Montgomery County, four of the people got off to use the washroom, and two of the people—to use the restaurant—two of the people wanted to use the washroom. The four people that had gone in to use the restaurant was ordered out. During this time I was on the bus. But when I looked through the window and saw they had rushed out, I got off of the bus to see what had happened, and one of the ladies said, “It was a State Highway Patrolman and a chief of police ordered us out.”

I got back on the bus and one of the persons had used the washroom got back on the bus, too. As soon as I was seated on the bus, I saw when they began to get the four people in a highway patrolman’s car. I stepped off of the bus to see what was happening and somebody screamed from the car that the four workers was in and said, “Get that one there,” and when I went to get in the car, when the man told me I was under arrest, he kicked me.

I was carried to the county jail and put in the booking room. They left some of the people in the booking room and began to place us in cells. I was placed in a cell with a young woman called Miss Euvester Simpson. After I was placed in the cell I began to hear the sound of kicks and horrible screams, and I could hear somebody say, “Can you say, yes sir, nigger? Can you say yes, sir?”

And they would say other horrible names. She would say, “Yes, I can say yes, sir.”

“So say it.”

She says, “I don’t know you well enough.”

They beat her, I don’t know how long, and after a while she began to pray, and asked God to have mercy on those people.

And it wasn’t too long before three white men came to my cell. One of these men was a State Highway Patrolman and he asked me where I was from, and I told him Ruleville, he said, “We are going to check this.” And they left my cell and it wasn’t too long before they came back. He said, “You are from Ruleville all right,” and he used a curse word, and he said, “We are going to make you wish you was dead.”

I was carried out of that cell into another cell where they had two Negro prisoners. The State Highway Patrolmen ordered the first Negro to take the blackjack. The first Negro prisoner ordered me, by orders from the State Highway Patrolman for me, to lay down on a bunk bed on my face, and I laid on my face. The first Negro began to beat, and I was beat by the first Negro until he was exhausted, and I was holding my hands behind me at that time on my left side because I suffered from polio when I was six years old. After the first Negro had beat until he was exhausted the State Highway Patrolman ordered the second Negro to take the blackjack.

The second Negro began to beat and I began to work my feet, and the State Highway Patrolman ordered the first Negro who had beat to set on my feet to keep me from working

my feet. I began to scream and one white man got up and began to beat me my head and told me to hush. One white man—my dress had worked up high, he walked over and pulled my dress down—and he pulled my dress back, back up.

I was in jail when Medgar Evers was murdered.

All of this is on account we want to register, to become first-class citizens, and if the freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America, is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave where we have to sleep with our telephones off of the hooks because our lives be threatened daily because we want to live as decent human beings, in America?

Thank you.

Source: Fannie Lou Hamer, Speech at the 1964 Democratic National Convention. August 22, 1964. Available online via Mississippi Department of Archives and History (<https://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Lesson-Five-Mississippi-in-1964-A-Turning-Point.pdf>)

Civil Rights Images (1964, 1965)

[Selma March \(1965\)](#)



From Selma to Montgomery, 1965. [Library of Congress.](#)

Civil rights activists protested against the injustice of segregation in a variety of ways. Here, in 1965, marchers, some carrying American flags, march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to champion African American voting rights.

[LBJ and Civil Rights Leaders \(1964\)](#)



Photograph, January 18, 1964. [Wikimedia](#).

As civil rights demonstrations rocked the American South, civil rights legislation made its way through Washington D.C. Here, President Lyndon B. Johnson sits with civil rights leaders in the White House.

Women's Liberation March (1970)



Warren K. Leffler, *Women's Liberation March from Farragut Square to Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C. 1970*. Via [Library of Congress](#).

American popular feminism accelerated throughout the 1960s. The slogan "Women's Liberation" accompanied a growing women's movement but also alarmed conservative Americans. In this 1970 photograph, women march in Washington D.C. carrying signs reading, "Women Demand Equality," "I'm a Second Class Citizen," and "Women's Liberation."

28. The Unraveling

Introduction

While many Americans in the 1970s continued to celebrate the political and cultural achievements of the previous decade, a more anxious, conservative mood grew across the nation. For some, the United States had not gone nearly far enough to promote greater social equality; for others, the nation had gone too far, unfairly trampling the rights of one group to promote the selfish needs of another. Onto these brewing dissatisfactions the 1970s dumped the divisive remnants of a failed war, the country's greatest political scandal, and an intractable economic crisis. As the following sources lay bare, it seemed as if the nation was ready to unravel.

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968)

Riots rocked American cities in the mid-late sixties. Hundreds died, thousands were injured, and thousands of buildings were destroyed. Many communities never recovered. In 1967, devastating riots, particularly in Detroit, Michigan, and Newark, New Jersey, captivated national television audiences. President Lyndon Johnson appointed an 11-person commission, chaired by Illinois Governor Otto Kerner, to explain the origins of the riots and recommend policies to prevent them in the future.

The summer of 1967 again brought racial disorders to American cities, and with them shock, fear and bewilderment to the nation.

The worst came during a two-week period in July, first in Newark and then in Detroit. Each set off a chain reaction in neighboring communities.

On July 28, 1967, the President of the United States established this Commission and directed us to answer three basic questions:

What happened?

Why did it happen?

What can be done to prevent it from happening again?

To respond to these questions, we have undertaken a broad range of studies and investigations. We have visited the riot cities; we have heard many witnesses; we have sought the counsel of experts across the country.

This is our basic conclusion: Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.

Reaction to last summer's disorders has quickened the movement and deepened the division. Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American.

This deepening racial division is not inevitable. The movement apart can be reversed. Choice is still possible. Our principal task is to define that choice and to press for a national resolution.

To pursue our present course will involve the continuing polarization of the American community and, ultimately, the destruction of basic democratic values.

The alternative is not blind repression or capitulation to lawlessness. It is the realization of common opportunities for all within a single society.

This alternative will require a commitment to national action—compassionate, massive and sustained, backed by the resources of the most powerful and the richest nation on this earth.

From every American it will require new attitudes, new understanding, and, above all, new will.

The vital needs of the nation must be met; hard choices must be made, and, if necessary, new taxes enacted.

Violence cannot build a better society. Disruption and disorder nourish repression, not justice. They strike at the freedom of every citizen. The community cannot—it will not—tolerate coercion and mob rule.

Violence and destruction must be ended—in the streets of the ghetto and in the lives of people.

Segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans.

What white Americans have never fully understood but what the Negro can never forget—is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.

It is time now to turn with all the purpose at our command to the major unfinished business of this nation. It is time to adopt strategies for action that will produce quick and visible progress. It is time to make good the promises of American democracy to all citizens—urban and rural, white and black, Spanish-surname, American Indian, and every minority group.

Our recommendations embrace three basic principles:

* To mount programs on a scale equal to the dimension of the problems:

* To aim these programs for high impact in the immediate future in order to close the gap between promise and performance;

* To undertake new initiatives and experiments that can change the system of failure and frustration that now dominates the ghetto and weakens our society.

These programs will require unprecedented levels of funding and performance, but they neither probe deeper nor demand more than the problems which called them forth. There can be no higher priority for national action and no higher claim on the nation's conscience.

We issue this Report now, four months before the date called for by the President. Much remains that can be learned. Continued study is essential.

As Commissioners we have worked together with a sense of the greatest urgency and have sought to compose whatever differences exist among us. Some differences remain. But the gravity of the problem and the pressing need for action are too clear to allow further delay in the issuance of this Report.

[Source: Kerner Commission, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968).]

Statement by John Kerry of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (1971)

On April 23, 1971, a young Vietnam veteran named John Kerry spoke on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War before the Senate Committee of Foreign Relations. Kerry, later a Massachusetts Senator and 2004 presidential contender, articulated a growing disenchantment with the Vietnam War and delivered a blistering indictment of the reasoning behind its prosecution.

... In our opinion and from our experience, there is nothing in South Vietnam which could happen that realistically threatens the United States of America. And to attempt to justify the loss of one American life in Vietnam, Cambodia or Laos by linking such loss to the preservation of freedom, which those misfits supposedly abuse, is to us the height of criminal hypocrisy, and it is that kind of hypocrisy which we feel has torn this country apart.

We found that not only was it a civil war, an effort by a people who had for years been seeking their liberation from any colonial influence whatsoever, but also we found that the Vietnamese whom we had enthusiastically molded after our own image were hard put to take up the fight against the threat we were supposedly saving them from.

We found most people didn't even know the difference between communism and democracy. They only wanted to work in rice paddies without helicopters strafing them and bombs with napalm burning their villages and tearing their country apart. They wanted everything to do with the war, particularly with this foreign presence of the United States of America, to leave them alone in peace, and they practiced the art of survival by siding with whichever military force was present at a particular time, be it Viet Cong, North Vietnamese or American.

We found also that all too often American men were dying in those rice paddies for want of support from their allies. We saw first hand how monies from American taxes were used for a corrupt dictatorial regime. We saw that many people in this country had a one-sided idea of who was kept free by the flag, and blacks provided the highest percentage of casualties. We saw Vietnam ravaged equally by American bombs and search and destroy missions, as well as by Viet Cong terrorism – and yet we listened while this country tried to blame all of the havoc on the Viet Cong.

We rationalized destroying villages in order to save them. We saw America lose her sense of morality as she accepted very coolly a My Lai and refused to give up the image of American soldiers who hand out chocolate bars and chewing gum.

We learned the meaning of free fire zones, shooting anything that moves, and we watched while America placed a cheapness on the lives of orientals.

We watched the United States falsification of body counts, in fact the glorification of body counts. We listened while month after month we were told the back of the enemy was about to break. We fought using weapons against “oriental human beings.” We fought using

weapons against those people which I do not believe this country would dream of using were we fighting in the European theater. We watched while men charged up hills because a general said that hill has to be taken, and after losing one platoon or two platoons they marched away to leave the hill for reoccupation by the North Vietnamese. We watched pride allow the most unimportant battles to be blown into extravaganzas, because we couldn't lose, and we couldn't retreat, and because it didn't matter how many American bodies were lost to prove that point, and so there were Hamburger Hills and Khe Sanh and Hill 81s and Fire Base 6s, and so many others.

Now we are told that the men who fought there must watch quietly while American lives are lost so that we can exercise the incredible arrogance of Vietnamizing the Vietnamese.

Each day to facilitate the process by which the United States washes her hands of Vietnam someone has to give up his life so that the United States doesn't have to admit something that the entire world already knows, so that we can't say that we have made a mistake. Someone has to die so that President Nixon won't be, and these are his words, "the first President to lose a war."

We are asking Americans to think about that because how do you ask a man to be the last man to die in Vietnam? How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake? But we are trying to do that, and we are doing it with thousands of rationalizations ...

[Source: "Legislative Proposals Relating to the War in Southeast Asia," *Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Ninety-Second Congress, First Session* (April-May 1971), (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971). Available online via *The Sixties Project* (http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Sixties.html).]

Nixon Announcement of China Visit (1971)

Richard Nixon, who built his political career on anti-communism, worked from the first day of his presidency to normalize relations with the communist People's Republic of China. In 1971, Richard Nixon announced that he would make an unprecedented visit there to advance American-Chinese relations. Here, he explains his intentions.

Good evening:

I have requested this television time tonight to announce a major development in our efforts to build a lasting peace in the world.

As I have pointed out on a number of occasions over the past 3 years, there can be no stable and enduring peace without the participation of the People's Republic of China and its 750 million people. That is why I have undertaken initiatives in several areas to open the door for more normal relations between our two countries.

In pursuance of that goal, I sent Dr. Kissinger, my Assistant for National Security Affairs, to Peking during his recent world tour for the purpose of having talks with Premier Chou En-lai.

The announcement I shall now read is being issued simultaneously in Peking and in the United States:

Premier Chou En-lai and Dr. Henry Kissinger, President Nixon's Assistant for National Security Affairs, held talks in Peking from July 9 to 11, 1971. Knowing of President Nixon's expressed desire to visit the People's Republic of China, Premier Chou En-lai, on behalf of the Government of the People's Republic of China, has extended an invitation to President Nixon to visit China at an appropriate date before May 1972. President Nixon has accepted the invitation with pleasure.

The meeting between the leaders of China and the United States is to seek the normalization of relations between the two countries and also to exchange views on questions of concern to the two sides.

In anticipation of the inevitable speculation which will follow this announcement, I want to put our policy in the clearest possible context.

Our action in seeking a new relationship with the People's Republic of China will not be at the expense of our old friends. It is not directed against any other nation. We seek friendly relations with all nations. Any nation can be our friend without being any other nation's enemy.

I have taken this action because of my profound conviction that all nations will gain from a reduction of tensions and a better relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

It is in this spirit that I will undertake what I deeply hope will become a journey for peace, peace not just for our generation but for future generations on this earth we share together.

Thank you and good night.

[Source: Richard Nixon, "Remarks to the Nation Announcing Acceptance of an Invitation To Visit the People's Republic of China," July 15, 1971. Available online via *The American Presidency Project* (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=3079>).]

Barbara Jordan, 1976 Democratic National Convention Keynote Address (1976)

On July 12, 1976, Texas Congresswoman Barbara Jordan delivered the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention. As Americans sensed a fracturing of American life in the 1970s, Jordan called for Americans to commit themselves to a “national community” and the “common good.” Jordan began by noting she was the first black woman to ever deliver a keynote address at a major party convention and that such a thing would have been almost impossible even a decade earlier.

Now that I have this grand distinction, what in the world am I supposed to say? I could easily spend this time praising the accomplishments of this party and attacking the Republicans — but I don’t choose to do that. I could list the many problems which Americans have. I could list the problems which cause people to feel cynical, angry, frustrated: problems which include lack of integrity in government; the feeling that the individual no longer counts; the reality of material and spiritual poverty; the feeling that the grand American experiment is failing or has failed. I could recite these problems, and then I could sit down and offer no solutions. But I don’t choose to do that either. The citizens of America expect more. They deserve and they want more than a recital of problems.

We are a people in a quandary about the present. We are a people in search of our future. We are a people in search of a national community. We are a people trying not only to solve the problems of the present, unemployment, inflation, but we are attempting on a larger scale to fulfill the promise of America. We are attempting to fulfill our national purpose, to create and sustain a society in which all of us are equal.

...

And now we must look to the future. Let us heed the voice of the people and recognize their common sense. If we do not, we not only blaspheme our political heritage, we ignore the common ties that bind all Americans. Many fear the future. Many are distrustful of their leaders, and believe that their voices are never heard. Many seek only to satisfy their private work — wants; to satisfy their private interests. But this is the great danger America faces — that we will cease to be one nation and become instead a collection of interest groups: city against suburb, region against region, individual against individual; each seeking to satisfy private wants. If that happens, who then will speak for America? Who then will speak for the common good?

This is the question which must be answered in 1976: Are we to be one people bound together by common spirit, sharing in a common endeavor; or will we become a divided nation? For all of its uncertainty, we cannot flee the future. We must not become the “New Puritans” and reject our society. We must address and master the future together. It can be done if we restore the belief that we share a sense of national community, that we share a common national endeavor. It can be done.

There is no executive order; there is no law that can require the American people to form a national community. This we must do as individuals, and if we do it as individuals, there is no President of the United States who can veto that decision.

As a first step — As a first step, we must restore our belief in ourselves. We are a generous people, so why can't we be generous with each other? We need to take to heart the words spoken by Thomas Jefferson:

Let us restore the social intercourse — “Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and that affection without which liberty and even life are but dreary things.”

A nation is formed by the willingness of each of us to share in the responsibility for upholding the common good. A government is invigorated when each one of us is willing to participate in shaping the future of this nation. In this election year, we must define the “common good” and begin again to shape a common future. Let each person do his or her part. If one citizen is unwilling to participate, all of us are going to suffer. For the American idea, though it is shared by all of us, is realized in each one of us.

And now, what are those of us who are elected public officials supposed to do? We call ourselves “public servants” but I'll tell you this: We as public servants must set an example for the rest of the nation. It is hypocritical for the public official to admonish and exhort the people to uphold the common good if we are derelict in upholding the common good. More is required — More is required of public officials than slogans and handshakes and press releases. More is required. We must hold ourselves strictly accountable. We must provide the people with a vision of the future.

If we promise as public officials, we must deliver. If — If we as public officials propose, we must produce. If we say to the American people, “It is time for you to be sacrificial” — sacrifice. If the public official says that, we [public officials] must be the first to give. We must be. And again, if we make mistakes, we must be willing to admit them. We have to do that. What we have to do is strike a balance between the idea that government should do everything and the idea, the belief, that government ought to do nothing. Strike a balance.

Let there be no illusions about the difficulty of forming this kind of a national community. It's tough, difficult, not easy. But a spirit of harmony will survive in America only if each of us remembers that we share a common destiny; if each of us remembers, when self-interest and bitterness seem to prevail, that we share a common destiny.

I have confidence that we can form this kind of national community.

[Barbara Jordan, “Keynote Address at the Democratic National Convention” (July 12, 1976). Available online via *American Rhetoric* (<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barbarajordan1976dnc.html>).]

Jimmy Carter, “Crisis of Confidence” (1979)

On July 15, 1979, amid stagnant economic growth, high inflation, and an energy crisis, Jimmy Carter delivered a televised address to the American people. In it, Carter singled out a pervasive “crisis of confidence” preventing the American people from moving the country forward. A year later, Ronald Reagan would frame his optimistic political campaign in stark contrast to the tone of Carter’s speech, which would be remembered, especially by critics, as the “malaise speech.”

... Exactly three years ago, on July 15, 1976, I accepted the nomination of my party to run for president of the United States.

I promised you a president who is not isolated from the people, who feels your pain, and who shares your dreams and who draws his strength and his wisdom from you.

... Ten days ago I had planned to speak to you again about a very important subject — energy. For the fifth time I would have described the urgency of the problem and laid out a series of legislative recommendations to the Congress. But as I was preparing to speak, I began to ask myself the same question that I now know has been troubling many of you. Why have we not been able to get together as a nation to resolve our serious energy problem?

...

I know, of course, being president, that government actions and legislation can be very important. That’s why I’ve worked hard to put my campaign promises into law — and I have to admit, with just mixed success. But after listening to the American people I have been reminded again that all the legislation in the world can’t fix what’s wrong with America. So, I want to speak to you first tonight about a subject even more serious than energy or inflation. I want to talk to you right now about a fundamental threat to American democracy.

I do not mean our political and civil liberties. They will endure. And I do not refer to the outward strength of America, a nation that is at peace tonight everywhere in the world, with unmatched economic power and military might.

The threat is nearly invisible in ordinary ways. It is a crisis of confidence. It is a crisis that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will. We can see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of a unity of purpose for our nation.

The erosion of our confidence in the future is threatening to destroy the social and the political fabric of America.

The confidence that we have always had as a people is not simply some romantic dream or a proverb in a dusty book that we read just on the Fourth of July.

It is the idea which founded our nation and has guided our development as a people. Confidence in the future has supported everything else — public institutions and private enterprise, our own families, and the very Constitution of the United States. Confidence has defined our course and has served as a link between generations. We've always believed in something called progress. We've always had a faith that the days of our children would be better than our own.

Our people are losing that faith, not only in government itself but in the ability as citizens to serve as the ultimate rulers and shapers of our democracy. As a people we know our past and we are proud of it. Our progress has been part of the living history of America, even the world. We always believed that we were part of a great movement of humanity itself called democracy, involved in the search for freedom, and that belief has always strengthened us in our purpose. But just as we are losing our confidence in the future, we are also beginning to close the door on our past.

In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities, and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We've learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose.

The symptoms of this crisis of the American spirit are all around us. For the first time in the history of our country a majority of our people believe that the next five years will be worse than the past five years. Two-thirds of our people do not even vote. The productivity of American workers is actually dropping, and the willingness of Americans to save for the future has fallen below that of all other people in the Western world.

As you know, there is a growing disrespect for government and for churches and for schools, the news media, and other institutions. This is not a message of happiness or reassurance, but it is the truth and it is a warning.

These changes did not happen overnight. They've come upon us gradually over the last generation, years that were filled with shocks and tragedy.

...

These wounds are still very deep. They have never been healed. Looking for a way out of this crisis, our people have turned to the Federal government and found it isolated from the mainstream of our nation's life. Washington, D.C., has become an island. The gap between our citizens and our government has never been so wide. The people are looking for honest answers, not easy answers; clear leadership, not false claims and evasiveness and politics as usual.

What you see too often in Washington and elsewhere around the country is a system of government that seems incapable of action. You see a Congress twisted and pulled in every direction by hundreds of well-financed and powerful special interests. You see every extreme

position defended to the last vote, almost to the last breath by one unyielding group or another. You often see a balanced and a fair approach that demands sacrifice, a little sacrifice from everyone, abandoned like an orphan without support and without friends.

Often you see paralysis and stagnation and drift. You don't like it, and neither do I. What can we do?

...

We are at a turning point in our history. There are two paths to choose. One is a path I've warned about tonight, the path that leads to fragmentation and self-interest. Down that road lies a mistaken idea of freedom, the right to grasp for ourselves some advantage over others. That path would be one of constant conflict between narrow interests ending in chaos and immobility. It is a certain route to failure.

All the traditions of our past, all the lessons of our heritage, all the promises of our future point to another path, the path of common purpose and the restoration of American values. That path leads to true freedom for our nation and ourselves. We can take the first steps down that path as we begin to solve our energy problem.

[Source: Jimmy Carter, "Address to the Nation on Energy and National Goals" (July 15, 1979). Available online via *The American Presidency Project* (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=32596>).]

Gloria Steinem on Equal Rights for Women (1970)

The first Congressional hearing on the equal rights amendment (ERA) was held in 1923, but the push for the amendment stalled until the 1960s, when a revived women's movement thrust it again into the national consciousness. Congress passed and sent to the states for ratification the ERA on March 22, 1972. But it failed, stalling just three states short of the required three-fourths needed for ratification. Despite popular support for the amendment, activists such as Phyllis Schlafly outmaneuvered the amendment's supporters. In 1970, author Gloria Steinem argued that such opposition was rooted in outmoded ideas about gender.

My name is Gloria Steinem. I am a writer and editor, and I am currently a member of the policy council of the Democratic committee. ...

During 12 years of working for a living, I have experienced much of the legal and social discrimination reserved for women in this country. I have been refused service in public restaurants, ordered out of public gathering places, and turned away from apartment rentals; all for the clearly-stated, sole reason that I am a woman. And all without the legal remedies available to blacks and other minorities. I have been excluded from professional groups, writing assignments on so-called "unfeminine" subjects such as politics, full participation in the Democratic Party, jury duty, and even from such small male privileges as discounts on airline fares. Most important to me, I have been denied a society in which women are encouraged, or even allowed to think of themselves as first-class citizens and responsible human beings.

However, after 2 years of researching the status of American women, I have discovered that in reality, I am very, very lucky. Most women, both wage-earners and housewives, routinely suffer more humiliation and injustice than I do.

As a freelance writer, I don't work in the male-dominated hierarchy of an office. (Women, like blacks and other visibly different minorities, do better in individual professions such as the arts, sports, or domestic work; anything in which they don't have authority over white males.) I am not one of the millions of women who must support a family. Therefore, I haven't had to go on welfare because there are no day-care centers for my children while I work, and I haven't had to submit to the humiliating welfare inquiries about my private and sexual life, inquiries from which men are exempt. I haven't had to brave the sex bias of labor unions and employers, only to see my family subsist on a median salary 40 percent less than the male median salary.

I hope this committee will hear the personal, daily injustices suffered by many women—professionals and day laborers, women housebound by welfare as well as by suburbia. We have all been silent for too long. But we won't be silent anymore.

The truth is that all our problems stem from the same sex based myths. We may appear before you as white radicals or the middle-aged middle class or black soul sisters, but we are

all sisters in fighting against these outdated myths. Like racial myths, they have been reflected in our laws. Let me list a few.

That woman are biologically inferior to men. In fact, an equally good case can be made for the reverse. ... However, I don't want to prove the superiority of one sex to another. That would only be repeating a male mistake. English scientists once definitively proved, after all, that the English were descended from the angels, while the Irish were descended from the apes; it was the rationale for England's domination of Ireland for more than a century. The point is that science is used to support current myth and economics almost as much as the church was.

What we do know is that the difference between two races or two sexes is much smaller than the differences to be found within each group. Therefore, in spite of the slide show on female inferiorities that I understand was shown to you yesterday, the law makes much more sense when it treats individuals, not groups bundled together by some condition of birth. ...

Another myth, that women are already treated equally in this society. I am sure there has been ample testimony to prove that equal pay for equal work, equal chance for advancement, and equal training or encouragement is obscenely scarce in every field, even those—like food and fashion industries—that are supposedly “feminine.”

A deeper result of social and legal injustice, however, is what sociologists refer to as “Internalized Aggression.” Victims of aggression absorb the myth of their own inferiority, and come to believe that their group is in fact second class. Even when they themselves realize they are not second class, they may still think their group is, thus the tendency to be the only Jew in the club, the only black woman on the block, the only woman in the office.

Women suffer this second class treatment from the moment they are born. They are expected to be, rather than achieve, to function biologically rather than learn. A brother, whatever his intellect, is more likely to get the family's encouragement and education money, while girls are often pressured to conceal ambition and intelligence, to “Uncle Tom.”

I interviewed a New York public school teacher who told me about a black teenager's desire to be a doctor. With all the barriers in mind, she suggested kindly that he be a veterinarian instead.

The same day, a high school teacher mentioned a girl who wanted to be a doctor. The teacher said, “How about a nurse?”

...

We are 51 percent of the population; we are essentially united on these issues across boundaries of class or race or age; and we may well end by changing this society more than the civil rights movement. That is an apt parallel. We, too, have our right wing and left wing, our separatists, gradualists, and Uncle Toms. But we are changing our own consciousness, and that of the country.

Source: U.S. Senate, *The "Equal Rights" Amendment: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 91st Cong., 2d sess., May 5-7, 1970, 331–35. Available online via History Matters (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/7025/>).

Native Americans Occupy Alcatraz (1969)

In November 1969, Native American activists occupied Alcatraz Island and held it for nineteen months to bring attention to past injustices and contemporary issues confronting Native Americans, as state in this proclamation, drafted largely by Adam Fortunate Eagle of the Ojibwa Nation.

To the Great White Father and All His People:

We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery.

We wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with the Caucasian inhabitants of this land, and hereby offer the following treaty:

We will purchase said Alcatraz Island for twenty-four dollars (\$24) in glass beads and red cloth, a precedent set by the white man's purchase of a similar island about 300 years ago. We know that \$24 in trade goods for these 16 acres is more than was paid when Manhattan Island was sold, but we know that land values have risen over the years. Our offer of \$1.24 per acre is greater than the 47 cents per acre the white men are now paying the California Indians for their land.

We will give to the inhabitants of this island a portion of that land for their own, to be held in trust by the American Indian Government — for as long as the sun shall rise and the rivers go down to the sea — to be administered by the Bureau of Caucasian Affairs (BCA). We will further guide the inhabitants in the proper way of living. We will offer them our religion, our education, our life-ways, in order to help them achieve our level of civilization and thus raise them and all their white brothers up from their savage and unhappy state. We offer this treaty in good faith and wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with all white men.

We feel that this so-called Alcatraz Island is more than suitable for an Indian Reservation, as determined by the white man's own standards. By this we mean that this place resembles most Indian reservations, in that:

1. It is isolated from modern facilities, and without adequate means of transportation.
2. It has no fresh running water.
3. It has inadequate sanitation facilities.
4. There are no oil or mineral rights.
5. There is no industry so unemployment is great.
6. There are no health care facilities.
7. The soil is rocky and non-productive; and the land does not support game.

8. There are no educational facilities.
9. The population has always exceeded the land base.
10. The population has always been held as prisoners and kept dependent upon others.

Further, it would be fitting and symbolic that ships from all over the world, entering the Golden Gate, would first see Indian land, and thus be reminded of the true history of this nation. This tiny island would be a symbol of the great lands once ruled by free and noble Indians.

USE TO BE MADE OF ALCATRAZ ISLAND

What use will be made of this land?

Since the San Francisco Indian Center burned down, there is no place for Indians to assemble and carry on our tribal life here in the white man's city. Therefore, we plan to develop on this island several Indian institutes:

1. A Center for Native American Studies will be developed which will train our young people in the best of our native cultural arts and sciences, as well as educate them to the skills and knowledge relevant to improve the lives and spirits of all Indian peoples. Attached to this center will be traveling universities, managed by Indians, which will go to the Indian Reservations in order to learn the traditional values from the people, which are now absent in the Caucasian higher educational system.
2. An American Indian Spiritual center will be developed which will practice our ancient tribal religious ceremonies and medicine. Our cultural arts will be featured and our young people trained in music, dance, and medicine.
3. An Indian Center of Ecology will be built which will train and support our young people in scientific research and practice in order to restore our lands and waters to their pure and natural state. We will seek to de-pollute the air and the water of the Bay Area. We will seek to restore fish and animal life, and to revitalize sea life which has been threatened by the white man's way. Facilities will be developed to desalt sea water for human use.
4. A Great Indian Training School will be developed to teach our peoples how to make a living in the world, improve our standards of living, and end hunger and unemployment among all our peoples. This training school will include a center for Indian arts and crafts, and an Indian Restaurant serving native foods and training Indians in culinary arts. This center will display Indian arts and offer the Indian foods of all tribes to the public, so they all may know of the beauty and spirit of the traditional Indian ways.
5. Some of the present buildings will be taken over to develop an American Indian Museum, which will depict our native foods and other cultural contributions we have given to all the world. Another part of the Museum will present some of the things the white man has given to the Indians, in return for the land and the life he took: disease, alcohol, poverty, and cultural decimation (as symbolized by old tin cans, barbed wire, rubber tires, plastic

containers, etc.). Part of the museum will remain a dungeon, to symbolize both Indian captives who were incarcerated for challenging white authority, and those who were imprisoned on reservations. The Museum will show the noble and the tragic events of Indian history, including the broken treaties, the documentary of the Trail of Tears, the Massacre of Wounded Knee, as well as the victory over Yellow-Hair Custer and his army.

In the name of all Indians, therefore, we re-claim this island for Indian nations, for all these reasons. We feel this claim is just and proper, and that this land should rightfully be granted to us for as long as the rivers shall run and the sun shall shine.

SIGNED, INDIANS OF ALL TRIBES

November 1969 San Francisco, California

New York City Subway (1973)



Erik Colonius, "Many Subway Cars in New York City Have Been Spray-Painted by Vandals" 1973.
Via National Archives (8464439).

"Urban Decay" confronted Americans of the 1960s and 1970s. As the economy sagged and deindustrialization hit much of the country, many Americans associated major cities with poverty and crime. In this 1973 photo, two subway riders sit amid a graffitied subway car in New York City.

“Stop ERA” Protest (1977)



Warren K. Leffler, *Demonstrators opposed to the ERA in front of the White House, 1977*, via [Library of Congress](#).

In the 1970s, conservative Americans defeated the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). With high approval ratings, the ERA—which declared, “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex”—seemed destined to pass swiftly through state legislatures and become the Twenty-Seventh Amendment, but conservative opposition stopped the Amendment just short of ratification.

29. The Triumph of the Right

Introduction

In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan rode the wave of a powerful political movement often referred to as the “New Right,” to contrast the more moderate brand of conservatism popular prevalent after World War II. By the 1980s, the New Right had evolved into the most influential wing of the Republican Party and could claim significant credit for its electoral successes. Building upon the gradual unraveling of the New Deal political order in the 1960s and 1970s, the conservative movement not only enjoyed the guidance of skilled politicians like Reagan, but drew tremendous energy from a broad range of grassroots activists. Countless ordinary citizens—newly mobilized Christian conservatives, in particular—helped the Republican Party steer the country onto a rightward course. American politics would increasingly be fought on terrain chosen by the New Right. The following sources explore the range of conservative thought and influence in the 1980s and beyond.

First Inaugural Address of Ronald Reagan (1981)

Ronald Reagan, a former actor, corporate spokesperson, and California governor, won the presidency in 1980 with a potent mix of personal charisma and conservative politics. In his first inaugural address, Reagan famously declared that "government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem."

... These United States are confronted with an economic affliction of great proportions. We suffer from the longest and one of the worst sustained inflations in our national history. It distorts our economic decisions, penalizes thrift, and crushes the struggling young and the fixed-income elderly alike. It threatens to shatter the lives of millions of our people.

Idle industries have cast workers into unemployment, causing human misery and personal indignity. Those who do work are denied a fair return for their labor by a tax system which penalizes successful achievement and keeps us from maintaining full productivity.

But great as our tax burden is, it has not kept pace with public spending. For decades, we have piled deficit upon deficit, mortgaging our future and our children's future for the temporary convenience of the present. To continue this long trend is to guarantee tremendous social, cultural, political, and economic upheavals.

You and I, as individuals, can, by borrowing, live beyond our means, but for only a limited period of time. Why, then, should we think that collectively, as a nation, we are not bound by that same limitation?

We must act today in order to preserve tomorrow. And let there be no misunderstanding—we are going to begin to act, beginning today.

The economic ills we suffer have come upon us over several decades. They will not go away in days, weeks, or months, but they will go away. They will go away because we, as Americans, have the capacity now, as we have had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to preserve this last and greatest bastion of freedom.

In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.

From time to time, we have been tempted to believe that society has become too complex to be managed by self-rule, that government by an elite group is superior to government for, by, and of the people. But if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else? All of us together, in and out of government, must bear the burden. The solutions we seek must be equitable, with no one group singled out to pay a higher price.

...

So, as we begin, let us take inventory. We are a nation that has a government—not the other way around. And this makes us special among the nations of the Earth. Our Government has no power except that granted it by the people. It is time to check and reverse the growth of government which shows signs of having grown beyond the consent of the governed.

It is my intention to curb the size and influence of the Federal establishment and to demand recognition of the distinction between the powers granted to the Federal Government and those reserved to the States or to the people. All of us need to be reminded that the Federal Government did not create the States; the States created the Federal Government.

...

If we look to the answer as to why, for so many years, we achieved so much, prospered as no other people on Earth, it was because here, in this land, we unleashed the energy and individual genius of man to a greater extent than has ever been done before. Freedom and the dignity of the individual have been more available and assured here than in any other place on Earth. The price for this freedom at times has been high, but we have never been unwilling to pay that price.

It is no coincidence that our present troubles parallel and are proportionate to the intervention and intrusion in our lives that result from unnecessary and excessive growth of government. It is time for us to realize that we are too great a nation to limit ourselves to small dreams. We are not, as some would have us believe, doomed to an inevitable decline. I do not believe in a fate that will all on us no matter what we do. I do believe in a fate that will fall on us if we do nothing. So, with all the creative energy at our command, let us begin an era of national renewal. Let us renew our determination, our courage, and our strength. And let us renew our faith and our hope.

...

Well, I believe we, the Americans of today, are ready to act worthy of ourselves, ready to do what must be done to ensure happiness and liberty for ourselves, our children and our children's children.

And as we renew ourselves here in our own land, we will be seen as having greater strength throughout the world. We will again be the exemplar of freedom and a beacon of hope for those who do not now have freedom.

[Ronald Reagan: "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1981. Available online via *The Avalon Project* (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/reagan1.asp).]

Jerry Falwell on the “Homosexual Revolution” (1981)

“Letter from Jerry Falwell on his opposition to homosexuality and asking for support in keeping his “Old-Time Gospel Hour” television program on the air. Falwell writes that the Old Time Gospel Hour “is one of the few major ministries in America crying out against militant homosexuals” (p. 1). The letter is printed on what appears to be lined yellow notepad paper.”

I refuse to stop speaking out against the sin of homosexuality.

With God as my witness, I pledge that I’ll continue to expose the sin of homosexuality to the people of this nation. I believe that the massive homosexual revolution is always a symptom of a nation coming under the judgement of God.

Romans 1:24-28, Paul clearly condemns the sin of homosexuality. In verse 28, when a nation refuses to listen to God’s standards of morality, the bible declares, “God gave them over to a reprobate mind.”

Recently 250,000 homosexuals marched in the streets of San Francisco. Several weeks ago 75,000 more were marching in the streets of Los Angeles. [Homosexuals are on the march in this country.](#)

Please remember, that homosexuals do not reproduce! They recruit!

And, many of them are out after my children and your children.

...

And if you will support me with your prayers and offerings, I will continue speaking out—no matter what the opposition says.

You may be sure—militant gays are doing everything they can to silence me!

...

Recently, a homosexual organization came to Lynchburg to demonstrate against me. They held demonstrations outside our offices. They called themselves the “Oral Majority.”

In almost every one of my “I Love America” rallies on the state capitol steps, large groups of homosexuals come and demonstrate against me. They shout obscenities into the air. They lift signs and placards with vulgar words on them.

It sounds a great deal like Sodom and Gomorrah. As I interpret Scripture, when a society becomes like Sodom and Gomorrah, it is not far from destruction.

Some of these people are dangerous.

And they are putting pressure on the networks and local television stations. A recent *TV Guide* told the story of how a homosexual organization censors a great deal of the content of network television programming regarding homosexuality.

Can you believe this? How could the networks grant homosexuals the privilege of censoring what goes on national and prime time television? They certainly do not allow Christian organizations any such privilege. We have never asked for such a privilege.

...

I do not want to frighten the children of America regarding the goals of militant homosexuals in this country. They do demonstrate in the streets. They do have plans to create a unisexual society in this country. They do want to transform America into a modern Sodom and Gomorrah.

...

Will you help me continue to cry out against this sin of homosexuality? ...

...

In Christ,

Jerry Falwell

1. Let me repeat, a massive homosexual revolution can bring the judgement of God upon this nation. Our children must not be recruited to a profane lifestyle.”

[Source: Falwell, Jerry. *[Letter from Jerry Falwell on keeping Old Time Gospel Hour on air]*, Letter, August 13, 1981. Available online via *The Portal to Texas History* (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc177440/>).]

Statements of AIDS Patients (1983)

HIV/AIDS confronted Americans in the 1980s. The disease was first associated with gay men (it was initially called Gay-Related Immune Disease, or GRID) and AIDS sufferers fought for recognition of the disease's magnitude, petitioned for research funds, and battled against popular stigma associated with the disease.

Mrs. BOXER. I wanted to ask the panel, if anyone can address this, if you feel that you are given enough information about the disease, and then the second part, do you think that the gay communities throughout the country, from your knowledge, are being given enough information so that they can perhaps make some changes in their life to try and avoid it ...

Mr. LYON. There is no new information. Every bit of information that has come out has been very widely disseminated. People are hungry for information. The city government, the public health officials, the city of San Francisco have, as far as I am concerned, gone overboard and made information available. Public forums have been held. Many of the health care facilities have asked patients and health care officials to come and explain, "tell us everything you know, give us the information in order that we can dispel many of the fears."

The main problem is there is no new information. It is a rehash over and over and over again of the same information.

Mr. FERRARA. I agree with Mr. Lyon. I believe the problem is more misinformation than lack of information.

I do my best to do as much as I can to dispel misconceptions about the disease. People don't have to be afraid to be in the same room with us, people don't have to be afraid to swim in the same swimming pool. I believe that gay organizations across the country should be given more information concerning guidelines that can be disseminated to the gay community in terms of—in terms of ways that gay men can protect themselves from the disease, rather than causing the paranoia and hysteria that the information that has been disseminated so far caused.

Mrs. BOXER. Do I have time for one last question? Do you find that you have a support system out in your communities to help you get through this experience? . . .

Mr. CALLEN. I cofounded a support group called Gay Men With AIDS, which is run by those of us gay men who have been diagnosed with the syndrome. It has made the difference for me. It is really what relieved some of the fear on a day-to-day basis. I saw other people fighting for their lives. We share information, we talk about doctors, hospitals, and treatments. For me AIDS was another closet, was another coming out.

When I was first diagnosed there wasn't the terrible stigma that is attached to being diagnosed with AIDS now. So it never occurred to me not to identify myself to my friends as having the disease. But since that time, because of a lot of the misinformation and often hysterical coverage in the media, I know a number of people who refuse to identify

themselves to their community, even to their family, as having the syndrome, because there is such tremendous stigma and isolation attached to it. ...

...

Mr. CRAIG. I have a couple of questions, I think reflective of how the gay community is responding. You mentioned earlier, some fears and concerns on your part and the community's part. Has there been, or is there now, because of the fear of this disease, an exodus if you will, from the areas or the communities Mr. McCandless talked about, New York and San Francisco specifically, where the larger number of cases are reported. In places where it seems to be relatively well understood that there are large populations in the gay community—have people left the community out of fear? Are they leaving? . . .

Mr. CALLEN. Many of us go into these specific cities to escape the prejudice that we experience as gay and lesbian people. So where else are we going to go? Also, as was mentioned, our support systems are in these cities—our jobs, where we will get our insurance. For most people there is not the option to go anywhere else. If you are an openly gay person—you have to—most gay people I know tend to congregate in large urban centers, because there is perceived to be greater tolerance. ...

...

Mr. WEISS. ... If there is anything that you want this committee or the Congress or the American people to know about AIDS generally or a particular situation, now is the time to do it. Any and all of you are welcome at this point to make closing comments. Mr. Lyon?

Mr. LYON. I came here today with the hope that this subcommittee would be able to do everything possible to halt the spread of this disease. AIDS has been called the number one health priority of the Nation. It certainly is my No. 1 priority.

I came here today with the hope that this administration would do everything possible, make every resource available—there is no reason this disease cannot be conquered. We do not need infighting, this is not a political issue. This is a health issue. This is not a gay issue. This is a human issue. And I do not intend to be defeated by it. I came here today in the hope that my epitaph would not read that I died of red tape.

...

Mr. CALLEN. Well, as a person with AIDS, I suffer in two basic ways. I suffer from the disease itself, and I suffer from the stigma attached to being diagnosed with this disease. The end to both aspects of this suffering will come only if the vast resources of the Federal Government are turned on this problem.

We need answers to the pressing questions of cause, cure, and contagion. And so the bottom line is, as it almost always is, money. But in order to make that money accomplish something, it has to be well spent. ... I have yet to see a comprehensive plan of attack emerge from the Government. What do they plan to do, in what order? Is there a master

plan for research which is guiding their funding requests? Are they developing an animal model? What treatment options are being pursued? Which have been discarded? Why? ...

...

[Source: Congress, House, Committee on Government Operations, *Federal Response to AIDS: Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives, 98th Cong., 1st Sess., August 1 and 2, 1983* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983). Available online via *History Matters* (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6894/>).]

Statements from The Parents Music Resource Center (1985)

In 1985, the Senate held hearings on explicit music. The Parents Music Resource Center (1985), founded by the wives of prominent politicians in Washington D.C., publicly denounced lyrics, album covers, and music videos dealing with sex, violence, and drug use. The PRMC pressured music publishers and retailers and singled out artists such as Judas Priest, Prince, AC/DC, Madonna, and Black Sabbath, and Cyndi Lauper. The following is extracted from statements by Susan Baker, the wife of then-Treasury Secretary James Baker, and Tipper Gore, wife of Senator and later Vice President Al Gore, in support of warning labels on music packaging.

Mrs. BAKER. The Parents Music Resource Center was organized in May of this year by mothers of young children who are very concerned by the growing trend in music toward lyrics that are sexually explicit, excessively violent, or glorify the use of drugs and alcohol.

Our primary purpose is to educate and inform parents about this alarming trend as well as to ask the industry to exercise self-restraint.

It is no secret that today's rock music is a very important part of adolescence and teenagers' lives. It always has been, and we don't question their right to have their own music. We think that is important. They use it to identify and give expression to their feelings, their problems, their joys, sorrows, loves, and values. It wakes them up in the morning and it is in the background as they get dressed for school. It is played on the bus. It is listened to in the cafeteria during lunch. It is played as they do their homework. They even watch it on MTV now. It is danced to at parties, and puts them to sleep at night.

Because anything that we are exposed to that much has some influence on us, we believe that the music industry has a special responsibility as the message of songs goes from the suggestive to the blatantly explicit.

... While a few outrageous recordings have always existed in the past, the proliferation of songs glorifying rape, sadomasochism, incest, the occult, and suicide by a growing number of bands illustrates this escalating trend that is alarming.

Some have suggested that the records in question are only a minute element in this music. However, these records are not few, and have sold millions of copies, like Prince's "Darling Nikki," about masturbation, sold over 10 million copies. Judas Priest, the one about forced oral sex at gunpoint, has sold over 2 million copies. Quiet Riot, "Metal Health," has songs about explicit sex, over 5 million copies. Motley Crue, "Shout at the Devil," which contains violence and brutality to women, over 2 million copies.

Some say there is no cause for concern. We believe there is. Teen pregnancies and teenage suicide rates are at epidemic proportions today. The Noedecker Report states that in the United States of America we have the highest teen pregnancy rate of any developed country: 96 out of 1,000 teenage girls become pregnant.

Rape is up 7 percent in the latest statistics, and the suicide rates of youth between 16 and 24 has gone up 300 percent in the last three decades while the adult level has remained the same.

There certainly are many causes for these ills in our society, but it is our contention that the pervasive messages aimed at children which promote and glorify suicide, rape, sadomasochism, and so on, have to be numbered among the contributing factors.

Some rock artists actually seem to encourage teen suicide. Ozzie [sic] Osbourne sings "Suicide Solution." Blue Oyster Cult sings "Don't Fear the Reaper." AC/DC sings "Shoot to Thrill." Just last week in Centerpoint, a small Texas town, a young man took his life while listening to the music of AC/DC. He was not the first.

...

Mrs. GORE. We are asking the recording industry to voluntarily assist parents who are concerned by placing a warning label on music products inappropriate for younger children due to explicit sexual or violent lyrics.

The Parents Music Resource Center originally proposed a categorical rating system for explicit material. After many discussions with the record industry, we recognize some of the logistical and economic problems, and have adjusted our original suggestions accordingly. We now propose one generic warning label to inform consumers in the marketplace about lyric content. The labels would apply to all music.

We have asked the record companies to voluntarily label their own products and assume responsibility for making those judgments. We ask the record industry to appoint a one-time panel to recommend a uniform set of criteria which could serve as a policy guide for the individual companies. Those individual recording companies would then in good faith agree to adhere to this standard, and make decisions internally about which records should be labeled according to the industry criteria.

...

The issue here is larger than violent and sexually explicit lyrics. It is one of ideas and ideal freedoms and responsibility in our society. Clearly, there is a tension here, and in a free society there always will be. We are simply asking that these corporate and artistic rights be exercised with responsibility, with sensitivity, and some measure of self-restraint, especially since young minds are at stake. We are talking about preteenagers and young teenagers having access to this material. That is our point of departure and our concern.

[Source: Hearing Before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, *Contents of Music and the Lyrics of Records*, 99th Congress, First Session, September 19, 1985, 10-14.]

Pat Buchanan on the Culture War (1992)

Pat Buchanan was a conservative journalist who worked in the Nixon and Reagan administrations before running for the Republican presidential nomination in 1992. Although he lost the nomination to George H.W. Bush, he was invited to speak at that year's Republican National Convention, where he delivered a fiery address criticizing liberals and declaring a "culture war" at the heart of American life.

My friends, like many of you, last month I watched that giant masquerade ball up at Madison Square Garden, where 20,000 liberals and radicals came dressed up as moderates and centrists in the greatest single exhibition of cross-dressing in American political history.

You know, one by one the prophets of doom appeared at the podium. The Reagan decade, they moaned, was a terrible time in America, and they said the only way to prevent worse times is to turn our country's fate and our country's future over to the Party that gave us McGovern, Mondale, Carter, and Michael Dukakis. Where do they find these leaders? No way, my friends. The American people are not going to go back to the discredited liberalism of the 1960s and the failed liberalism of the 1970s, no matter how slick the package in 1992.

...

The presidency, my friends, is also an office that Theodore Roosevelt called America's "bully pulpit." Harry Truman said it was "preeminently a place of moral leadership." George Bush is a defender of right-to-life, and a champion of the Judeo-Christian values and beliefs upon which America was founded.

Mr. Clinton however, has a different agenda. At its top is unrestricted abortion on demand. When the Irish-Catholic Governor of Pennsylvania, Robert Casey, asked to say a few words on behalf of the 25 million unborn children destroyed since *Roe v Wade*, Bob Casey was told there was no room for him at the podium at Bill Clinton's convention, and no room at the inn. Yet a militant leader of the homosexual rights movement could rise at that same convention and say: "Bill Clinton and Al Gore represent the most pro-lesbian and pro-gay ticket in history." And so they do. Bill Clinton says he supports "school choice"—but only for state-run schools. Parents who send their children to Christian schools, or private schools, or Jewish schools, or Catholic schools, need not apply.

Elect me, and you get "two for the price of one," Mr. Clinton says of his lawyer-spouse. And what does Hillary believe? Well, Hillary believes that 12-year-olds should have the right to sue their parents. And Hillary has compared marriage and the family, as institutions, to slavery and life on an Indian reservation. Well, speak for yourself, Hillary.

This, my friends, is radical feminism. The agenda that Clinton & Clinton would impose on America: abortion on demand, a litmus test for the Supreme Court, homosexual rights, discrimination against religious schools, women in combat units. That's change, all right. But that's not the kind of change America needs. It's not the kind of change America wants. And it's not the kind of change we can abide in a nation we still call "God's country."

...

One year ago I could not have dreamt I would be here tonight. I was just one of many panelists on what President Bush calls “those crazy Sunday talk shows.” But I disagreed with the President and so we challenged the President in the Republican primaries, and we fought as best we could. ... Yes, we disagreed with President Bush, but we stand with him for the freedom to choose religious schools, and we stand with him against the amoral idea that gay and lesbian couples should have the same standing in law as married men and women. We stand with President Bush for right-to-life and for voluntary prayer in the public schools. And we stand against putting our wives and daughters and sisters into combat units of the United States Army. And we also stand with President Bush in favor of the right of small towns and communities to control the raw sewage of pornography that so terribly pollutes our popular culture. We stand with President Bush in favor of federal judges who interpret the law as written, and against would-be Supreme Court justices like Mario Cuomo who think they have a mandate to rewrite the Constitution.

Friends, this election is about more than who gets what. It is about who we are. It is about what we believe and what we stand for as Americans. There is a religious war going on in this country. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we shall be as the Cold War itself. For this war is for the soul of America. And in that struggle for the soul of America, Clinton & Clinton are on the other side, and George Bush is on our side. And so to the Buchanan Brigades out there, we have to come home and stand beside George Bush.

...

Friends, in these wonderful 25 weeks of our campaign, the saddest days were the days of that riot in L.A., the worst riot in American history. But out of that awful tragedy can come a message of hope. Hours after that riot ended, I went down to the Army compound in South Los Angeles, where I met the troopers of the 18th Cavalry who had come to save the city of Los Angeles. An officer of the 18th Cav said, “Mr. Buchanan, I want you to talk to a couple of our troopers. And I went over and I met these young fellows. They couldn’t have been 20 years old. They could not have been 20 years old. And they recounted their story.

They had come into Los Angeles late in the evening of the second day, and the rioting was still going on. And two of them walked up a dark street, where the mob had burned and looted every single building on the block but one, a convalescent home for the aged. And the mob was headed in, to ransack and loot the apartments of the terrified old men and women inside. The troopers came up the street, M-16s at the ready. And the mob threatened and cursed, but the mob retreated because it had met the one thing that could stop it: force, rooted in justice, and backed by moral courage.

Now, “Greater love than this hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friend.”¹ Here were 19-year-old boys ready to lay down their lives to stop a mob from molesting old people they did not even know. And as those boys took back the streets of Los Angeles, block by block, my friends, we must take back our cities, and take back our culture, and take back our country.

God bless you, and God bless America.

[Source: *Buchanan, Patrick J. "Address to the Republican National Convention." August 17, 1992. Houston, TX.* Available online via Buchanan.org, <http://buchanan.org/blog/1992-republican-national-convention-speech-148>.]

Phyllis Schlafly on Women's Responsibility for Sexual Harassment (1981)

Conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly fought against feminism and other liberal cultural trends for decades. Perhaps most notably, she led the campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment, turning what had seemed an inevitability into a failed effort. Here, she testified before Congress about what she saw as the largely imagined problem of sexual harassment.

My name is Phyllis Schlafly of Alton, Illinois. I am a lawyer, journalist, author, wife and mother of six children, and am appearing here as the volunteer president of EAGLE FORUM, the national organization which has been leading the pro-family movement since 1972. I live in Alton, Illinois. My testimony concerns sexual harassment, the subject of this hearing.

First, let me say that I am excluding from my discussion any reference to criminal acts. Sexual crimes should be punished to the full extent of the law. I rejoice that the U.S. Supreme Court recently upheld a state law against statutory rape, handing down a decision which reaffirms society's right to treat men and women differently. However, crime is not our subject today.

Non-criminal sexual harassment on the job is not a problem for the virtuous woman except in the rarest of cases. When a woman walks across the room, she speaks with a universal body language that most men intuitively understand. Men hardly ever ask sexual favors of women from whom the certain answer is "no."

The former Prime Minister of Israel, Golda Meir, once spoke frankly about the relationship of men and women. She spent a lifetime working alongside of men, but she said no man ever told a dirty story in her presence. My experience has been similar to hers. Virtuous women are seldom accosted by unwelcome sexual propositions or familiarities, obscene talk, or profane language.

In those rare cases where a virtuous woman finds that sexual harassment is a condition of her employment, the social injustice is real, but as a subject for Congressional concern it is totally dwarfed by the injustice of sexual harassment or intimidation of women in the Armed Services who do not have the freedom to resign. Yet, many of the same people complaining about sexual harassment in the workplace are at the same time promoting the drafting of women alongside of men.

Let's put this issue in focus. Anyone who is trying to make a "federal case" out of the problem of bosses pinching secretaries, and who at the same time is promoting the drafting of women along with men and/or the full sex-integration of combat assignments in the armed services, is playing political games with the term "sexual harassment." Nothing in the world would create more sexual harassment than the drafting of 18- to 20-year-old girls into the army. Military policies which force volunteer servicewomen into "nontraditional" assignments have already created a major problem of sexual harassment. Attached to my

testimony is a letter from Army Times of May 1979, telling what it is really like in the sex-integrated U.S. Army. The high rate of rape among American troops stationed in Europe is already shocking. (Stars and Stripes said there were 220 rape cases in 1980 involving American GIs stationed in Europe.)

...

The biggest problem of sex in the workplace is not harassment at all but simply the chemistry that naturally occurs when women and men are put in close proximity day after day, especially if the jobs have other tensions. That chemistry has always been present; what's different today is that (a) there are many more women in the workplace, and (b) some women have abandoned the Commandments against adultery and fornication, and accepted the new notions that any sexual activity in or out of marriage is morally and socially acceptable. Attached to my testimony is a front-page article from the Wall Street Journal of April 14, 1981, entitled "Some Men Find the Office is a Little Too Exciting," which describes some of the sexual tensions created by women in the workplace.

Andrew Hacker, a professor at Queens College in New York City, in an article in Harper's magazine in September 1980, wrote: "Now husbands are increasingly apt to have as colleagues high-powered younger women who understand their professional problems in ways a wife never can. These affinities can emerge as easily in a patrol car as in planning a marketing campaign. Shared work, particularly under pressure, has aphrodisiac effects."

Sexual harassment can be the mischievous label applied in hate or revenge when one party wants out of an extra-marital liaison between consenting adults. Neither Congress nor EEOC has the competence to sit in judgment on the unwitnessed events and decide who was harassing whom.

Sexual harassment can also occur when a non-virtuous woman gives off body language which invites sexual advances, but she chooses to give her favors to Man A but not to Man B, and he tries to get his share, too....

Senators and Congressmen should heed the oft-quoted prayer, "Lord, help me to change the things I can change, to accept the things I cannot change, and give me the wisdom to know the difference." Congress cannot prevent or police the sexual attraction men and women have for each other. But Congress can:

- (a) Stop the government-induced inflation which forces more and more women to join the labor force even though so many of them would prefer to be in the home.
- (b) Keep women out of places where they don't belong, such as on ships of the U.S. Navy, and in military academy dormitories, and in military barracks where there is nothing between sleeping servicemen and servicewomen except maybe a curtain.
- (c) Stop the Affirmative Action for women which forces women into jobs where the predictable effect is sex on the job and broken marriages.

Source: Committee on Labor and Human Resources, *Sex Discrimination in the Workplace, 1981: Hearings Before the Committee on Labor and Human Resources* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 400-402. Available via Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/details/sexdiscriminatio00unit>).

Jesse Jackson on the Rainbow Coalition (1984)

After a groundbreaking yet unsuccessful campaign to capture the Democratic Party's nomination for president, Jesse Jackson delivered the keynote speech at the 1984 Democratic National Convention in San Francisco. He had campaigned on the idea of a "rainbow coalition," a political movement that drew upon the nation's racial, religious, and economic diversity. He echoed that theme in his convention speech.

... This is not a perfect party. We are not a perfect people. Yet, we are called to a perfect mission. Our mission: to feed the hungry; to clothe the naked; to house the homeless; to teach the illiterate; to provide jobs for the jobless; and to choose the human race over the nuclear race.

We are gathered here this week to nominate a candidate and adopt a platform which will expand, unify, direct, and inspire our Party and the nation to fulfill this mission. My constituency is the desperate, the damned, the disinherited, the disrespected, and the despised. They are restless and seek relief. They have voted in record numbers. They have invested the faith, hope, and trust that they have in us. The Democratic Party must send them a signal that we care. I pledge my best not to let them down.

...

If, in my low moments, in word, deed or attitude, through some error of temper, taste, or tone, I have caused anyone discomfort, created pain, or revived someone's fears, that was not my truest self. If there were occasions when my grape turned into a raisin and my joy bell lost its resonance, please forgive me. Charge it to my head and not to my heart. My head — so limited in its finitude; my heart, which is boundless in its love for the human family. I am not a perfect servant. I am a public servant doing my best against the odds. As I develop and serve, be patient: God is not finished with me yet.

...

Our party is emerging from one of its most hard fought battles for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination in our history. But our healthy competition should make us better, not bitter. We must use the insight, wisdom, and experience of the late Hubert Humphrey as a balm for the wounds in our Party, this nation, and the world. We must forgive each other, redeem each other, regroup, and move one. Our flag is red, white and blue, but our nation is a rainbow — red, yellow, brown, black and white — and we're all precious in God's sight.

America is not like a blanket — one piece of unbroken cloth, the same color, the same texture, the same size. America is more like a quilt: many patches, many pieces, many colors, many sizes, all woven and held together by a common thread. The white, the Hispanic, the black, the Arab, the Jew, the woman, the native American, the small farmer, the businessperson, the environmentalist, the peace activist, the young, the old, the lesbian, the gay, and the disabled make up the American quilt.

Even in our fractured state, all of us count and fit somewhere. We have proven that we can survive without each other. But we have not proven that we can win and make progress without each other. We must come together.

From Fannie Lou Hamer in Atlantic City in 1964 to the Rainbow Coalition in San Francisco today; from the Atlantic to the Pacific, we have experienced pain but progress, as we ended American apartheid laws. We got public accommodations. We secured voting rights. We obtained open housing, as young people got the right to vote. We lost Malcolm, Martin, Medgar, Bobby, John, and Viola. The team that got us here must be expanded, not abandoned.

... Old wine skins must make room for new wine. We must heal and expand. The Rainbow Coalition is making room for Arab Americans. They, too, know the pain and hurt of racial and religious rejection. They must not continue to be made pariahs. The Rainbow Coalition is making room for Hispanic Americans who this very night are living under the threat of the Simpson-Mazzoli bill; and farm workers from Ohio who are fighting the Campbell Soup Company with a boycott to achieve legitimate workers' rights.

The Rainbow is making room for the Native American, the most exploited people of all, a people with the greatest moral claim amongst us. We support them as they seek the restoration of their ancient land and claim amongst us. ... The Rainbow Coalition includes Asian Americans, now being killed in our streets — scapegoats for the failures of corporate, industrial, and economic policies.

The Rainbow is making room for the young Americans. Twenty years ago, our young people were dying in a war for which they could not even vote. Twenty years later, young America has the power to stop a war in Central America and the responsibility to vote in great numbers. Young America must be politically active in 1984. The choice is war or peace. We must make room for young America.

...

We must be unusually committed and caring as we expand our family to include new members. All of us must be tolerant and understanding as the fears and anxieties of the rejected and the party leadership express themselves in many different ways. Too often what we call hate — as if it were some deeply-rooted philosophy or strategy — is simply ignorance, anxiety, paranoia, fear, and insecurity. To be strong leaders, we must be long-suffering as we seek to right the wrongs of our Party and our nation. We must expand our Party, heal our Party, and unify our Party. That is our mission in 1984.

Source: Jesse Jackson, Address before the Democratic National Convention, July 18, 1984. Available online via C-Span (<https://www.c-span.org/video/?124437-1/democratic-national-convention-day-2>).

Satellites Imagined in Orbit (1981)



An artist's concept of various communications satellites in orbit; 11/23/1981. Via [National Archives](#) (ID: 6364532).

While Cold War fears still preyed upon Americans, satellite technology and advancements in telecommunications inspired hopes for an interconnected future. Here, an artist in 1981 depicts various satellites in orbit around the Earth.

Ronald Reagan and the American Flag (1982)



President Ronald Reagan, 1982. Via National Archives (198527).

President Ronald Reagan, a master of the “photo op,” appears here with a row of American flags at his back at a 1982 rally for Senator David Durenberger in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

30. The Recent Past

Introduction

Revolutionary technological change, unprecedented global flows of goods and people and capital, an amorphous and unending “War on Terror,” accelerating inequality, growing diversity, a changing climate, political stalemate: our world is remarkable, frustrating, and dynamic. But it is not an island of circumstance—it is a product of history. The last several decades of American history have culminated in the present, an era of innovation and advancement but also of stark partisan division, sluggish economic growth, widening inequalities, widespread military interventions, and pervasive anxieties about the present and future of the United States. Through boom and bust, national tragedy, foreign wars, and the maturation of a new generation, a new chapter of American history will be written, and when it is, it will be based in part on sources such as these.

Bill Clinton on Free Trade and Financial Deregulation (1993-2000)

During his time in office, Bill Clinton passed the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) in 1993, allowing for the free movement of goods between Mexico, the United States, and Canada, signed legislation repealing the Glass-Steagall Act, a major plank of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal banking regulation, and deregulated the trading of derivatives, including credit default swaps, a complicated financial instrument that would play a key role in the 2007-2008 economic crash. In the following signing statements, Clinton offers his support of free trade and deregulation.

On the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) (1993)

In a few moments, I will sign the North American Free Trade Act into law. NAFTA will tear down trade barriers between our three nations. It will create the world's largest trade zone and create 200,000 jobs in this country by 1995 alone. The environmental and labor side agreements negotiated by our administration will make this agreement a force for social progress as well as economic growth. Already the confidence we've displayed by ratifying NAFTA has begun to bear fruit. We are now making real progress toward a worldwide trade agreement so significant that it could make the material gains of NAFTA for our country look small by comparison.

Today we have the chance to do what our parents did before us. We have the opportunity to remake the world. For this new era, our national security we now know will be determined as much by our ability to pull down foreign trade barriers as by our ability to breach distant ramparts. Once again, we are leading. And in so doing, we are rediscovering a fundamental truth about ourselves: When we lead, we build security, we build prosperity for our own people.

...

Make no mistake, the global economy with all of its promise and perils is now the central fact of life for hard-working Americans. It has enriched the lives of millions of Americans. But for too many those same winds of change have worn away at the basis of their security. For two decades, most people have worked harder for less. Seemingly secure jobs have been lost. And while America once again is the most productive nation on Earth, this productivity itself holds the seeds of further insecurity. After all, productivity means the same people can produce more or, very often, that fewer people can produce more. This is the world we face.

We cannot stop global change. We cannot repeal the international economic competition that is everywhere. We can only harness the energy to our benefit. Now we must recognize that the only way for a wealthy nation to grow richer is to export, to simply find new customers for the products and services it makes. That, my fellow Americans, is the decision the Congress made when they voted to ratify NAFTA.

...

And now I am pleased that we have the opportunity to secure the biggest breakthrough of all. Negotiators from 112 nations are seeking to conclude negotiations on a new round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade; a historic worldwide trade pact, one that would spur a global economic boon, is now within our grasp. Let me be clear. We cannot, nor should we, settle for a bad GATT agreement. But we will not flag in our efforts to secure a good one in these closing days. We are prepared to make our contributions to the success of this negotiation, but we insist that other nations do their part as well. We must not squander this opportunity. I call on all the nations of the world to seize this moment and close the deal on a strong GATT agreement within the next week.

I say to everyone, even to our negotiators: Don't rest. Don't sleep. Close the deal. . . .

...

Today, as I sign the North American Free Trade Agreement into law and call for further progress on GATT, I believe we have found our footing. And I ask all of you to be steady, to recognize that there is no turning back from the world of today and tomorrow. We must face the challenges, embrace them with confidence, deal with the problems honestly and openly, and make this world work for all of us. America is where it should be, in the lead, setting the pace, showing the confidence that all of us need to face tomorrow. We are ready to compete, and we can win.

On the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (1999)

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 900, the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act. This historic legislation will modernize our financial services laws, stimulating greater innovation and competition in the financial services industry. America's consumers, our communities, and the economy will reap the benefits of this Act.

Beginning with the introduction of an Administration-sponsored bill in 1997, my Administration has worked vigorously to produce financial services legislation that would not only spur greater competition, but also protect the rights of consumers and guarantee that expanded financial services firms would meet the needs of America's underserved communities. Passage of this legislation by an overwhelming, bipartisan majority of the Congress suggests that we have met that goal.

The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act makes the most important legislative changes to the structure of the U.S. financial system since the 1930s. Financial services firms will be authorized to conduct a wide range of financial activities, allowing them freedom to innovate in the new economy. The Act repeals provisions of the Glass-Steagall Act that, since the Great Depression, have restricted affiliations between banks and securities firms. It also amends the Bank Holding Company Act to remove restrictions on affiliations between banks and insurance companies. It grants banks significant new authority to conduct most newly authorized activities through financial subsidiaries.

Removal of barriers to competition will enhance the stability of our financial services system. Financial services firms will be able to diversify their product offerings and thus their sources of revenue. They will also be better equipped to compete in global financial markets.

...

The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act is a major achievement that will benefit American consumers, communities, and businesses of all sizes. I thank all of those individuals who played a role in the development and passage of this historic legislation.

On the Commodity Futures Modernization Act (2000)

The Administration strongly supports the version of H.R. 4541, the Commodity Futures Modernization Act of 2000, that the Administration understands will be considered on the House floor. This legislation would reauthorize the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) and modernize the Nation's legal and regulatory framework regarding over-the-counter (OTC) derivatives transactions and markets. In so doing, H.R. 4541 also would implement many of the unanimous recommendations regarding the treatment of OTC derivatives made by the President's Working Group on Financial Markets, which includes the Secretary of the Treasury and the Chairmen of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

It is important that this legislation be enacted this year because of the meaningful steps it would take in helping to: promote innovation; enhance the transparency and efficiency of derivative markets; maintain the competitiveness of U.S. businesses and markets; and, potentially, reduce systemic risk. H.R. 4541 would accomplish these goals while assuring adequate customer protection for small investors and protecting the integrity of the underlying securities and futures markets. A failure to modernize the Nation's framework for OTC derivatives during this legislative session would deprive American markets and businesses of these important benefits and could result in the movement of these markets to overseas locations with more updated regulatory regimes. The Administration looks forward to working with members of Congress to improve certain aspects of the bill as it continues through the legislative process.

[Source: William J. Clinton, "Remarks on Signing the North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act," December 8, 1993. Available online via *The American Presidency Project* (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=46216>); Source: William J. Clinton, "Statement on Signing the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act," November 12, 1999. Available online via *The American Presidency Project* (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=56922>); Source: William J. Clinton, "Statement of Administration Policy: H.R. 4541 – Commodity Futures Modernization Act of 2000," October 19, 2000. Available online via *The American Presidency Project* (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=74825>).]

The 9/11 Commission Report, “Reflecting On A Generational Challenge” (2004)

On July 22, 2004, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States—or, the 9/11 Commission—delivered a 500-plus-page report that investigated the origins of the 9/11 attacks and America’s response and offered policy prescriptions for a post-9/11 world.

Three years after 9/11, Americans are still thinking and talking about how to protect our nation in this new era. The national debate continues.

Countering terrorism has become, beyond any doubt, the top national security priority for the United States. This shift has occurred with the full support of the Congress, both major political parties, the media, and the American people.

The nation has committed enormous resources to national security and to countering terrorism. Between fiscal year 2001, the last budget adopted before 9/11, and the present fiscal year 2004, total federal spending on defense (including expenditures on both Iraq and Afghanistan), homeland security, and international affairs rose more than 50 percent, from \$354 billion to about \$547 billion. The United States has not experienced such a rapid surge in national security spending since the Korean War.¹

This pattern has occurred before in American history. The United States faces a sudden crisis and summons a tremendous exertion of national energy. Then, as that surge transforms the landscape, comes a time for reflection and reevaluation. Some programs and even agencies are discarded; others are invented or redesigned. Private firms and engaged citizens redefine their relationships with government, working through the processes of the American republic.

Now is the time for that reflection and reevaluation. The United States should consider *what to do*—the shape and objectives of a strategy. Americans should also consider *how to do it*—organizing their government in a different way.

Defining the Threat

In the post-9/11 world, threats are defined more by the fault lines within societies than by the territorial boundaries between them. From terrorism to global disease or environmental degradation, the challenges have become transnational rather than international. That is the defining quality of world politics in the twenty-first century.

National security used to be considered by studying foreign frontiers, weighing opposing groups of states, and measuring industrial might. To be dangerous, an enemy had to muster large armies. Threats emerged slowly, often visibly, as weapons were forged, armies conscripted, and units trained and moved into place. Because large states were more powerful, they also had more to lose. They could be deterred.

Now threats can emerge quickly. An organization like al Qaeda, headquartered in a country on the other side of the earth, in a region so poor that electricity or telephones were scarce,

could nonetheless scheme to wield weapons of unprecedented destructive power in the largest cities of the United States.

In this sense, 9/11 has taught us that terrorism against American interests “over there” should be regarded just as we regard terrorism against America “over here.” In this same sense, the American homeland is the planet.

But the enemy is not just “terrorism,” some generic evil.² This vagueness blurs the strategy. The catastrophic threat at this moment in history is more specific. It is the threat posed by *Islamist* terrorism—especially the al Qaeda network, its affiliates, and its ideology.³

As we mentioned in chapter 2, Usama Bin Ladin and other Islamist terrorist leaders draw on a long tradition of extreme intolerance within one stream of Islam (a minority tradition), from at least Ibn Taimiyyah, through the founders of Wahhabism, through the Muslim Brotherhood, to Sayyid Qutb. That stream is motivated by religion and does not distinguish politics from religion, thus distorting both. It is further fed by grievances stressed by Bin Ladin and widely felt throughout the Muslim world—against the U.S. military presence in the Middle East, policies perceived as anti-Arab and anti-Muslim, and support of Israel. Bin Ladin and Islamist terrorists mean exactly what they say: to them America is the font of all evil, the “head of the snake,” and it must be converted or destroyed.

It is not a position with which Americans can bargain or negotiate. With it there is no common ground—not even respect for life—on which to begin a dialogue. It can only be destroyed or utterly isolated.

Because the Muslim world has fallen behind the West politically, economically, and militarily for the past three centuries, and because few tolerant or secular Muslim democracies provide alternative models for the future, Bin Ladin’s message finds receptive ears. It has attracted active support from thousands of disaffected young Muslims and resonates powerfully with a far larger number who do not actively support his methods. The resentment of America and the West is deep, even among leaders of relatively successful Muslim states.⁴

Tolerance, the rule of law, political and economic openness, the extension of greater opportunities to women—these cures must come from within Muslim societies themselves. The United States must support such developments.

But this process is likely to be measured in decades, not years. It is a process that will be violently opposed by Islamist terrorist organizations, both inside Muslim countries and in attacks on the United States and other Western nations. The United States finds itself caught up in a clash *within* a civilization. That clash arises from particular conditions in the Muslim world, conditions that spill over into expatriate Muslim communities in non-Muslim countries.

Our enemy is twofold: al Qaeda, a stateless network of terrorists that struck us on 9/11; and a radical ideological movement in the Islamic world, inspired in part by al Qaeda, which has spawned terrorist groups and violence across the globe. The first enemy is weakened, but continues to pose a grave threat. The second enemy is gathering, and will menace Americans

and American interests long after Usama Bin Ladin and his cohorts are killed or captured. Thus our strategy must match our means to two ends: dismantling the al Qaeda network and prevailing in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism.

Islam is not the enemy. It is not synonymous with terror. Nor does Islam teach terror. America and its friends oppose a perversion of Islam, not the great world faith itself. Lives guided by religious faith, including literal beliefs in holy scriptures, are common to every religion, and represent no threat to us.

Other religions have experienced violent internal struggles. With so many diverse adherents, every major religion will spawn violent zealots. Yet understanding and tolerance among people of different faiths can and must prevail.

[Source: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission report: final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (Washington, D.C., 2004). Available online via *The 9/11 Commission* (<http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/>).]

George W. Bush on the Post-9/11 World (2002)

In his 2002 State of the Union Address, George W. Bush proclaimed that the attacks of September 11 signaled a new, dangerous world that demanded American interventions. Bush identified an "Axis of Evil" and provided a justification for a broad "war on terror."

... As we gather tonight, our nation is at war, our economy is in recession, and the civilized world faces unprecedented dangers. ...

We last met in an hour of shock and suffering. In four short months, our nation has comforted the victims, begun to rebuild New York and the Pentagon, rallied a great coalition, captured, arrested, and rid the world of thousands of terrorists, destroyed Afghanistan's terrorist training camps, saved a people from starvation, and freed a country from brutal oppression.

The American flag flies again over our embassy in Kabul. Terrorists who once occupied Afghanistan now occupy cells at Guantanamo Bay. And terrorist leaders who urged followers to sacrifice their lives are running for their own.

...

For many Americans, these four months have brought sorrow, and pain that will never completely go away. Every day a retired firefighter returns to Ground Zero, to feel closer to his two sons who died there. At a memorial in New York, a little boy left his football with a note for his lost father: "Dear Daddy, please take this to heaven. I don't want to play football until I can play with you again some day."

...

Our cause is just, and it continues. ...

What we have found in Afghanistan confirms that, far from ending there, our war against terror is only beginning. ...

Our nation will continue to be steadfast and patient and persistent in the pursuit of two great objectives. First, we will shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice. And, second, we must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world.

Our military has put the terror training camps of Afghanistan out of business, yet camps still exist in at least a dozen countries. ... While the most visible military action is in Afghanistan, America is acting elsewhere. ... My hope is that all nations will heed our call, and eliminate the terrorist parasites who threaten their countries and our own. ... But some governments will be timid in the face of terror. And make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will.

Our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction. Some of these regimes have been pretty quiet since September the 11th. But we know their true nature. North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens.

Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom.

Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens—leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections—then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.

We will work closely with our coalition to deny terrorists and their state sponsors the materials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver weapons of mass destruction. ... And all nations should know: America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security.

We'll be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons.

Our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun. This campaign may not be finished on our watch—yet it must be and it will be waged on our watch.

We can't stop short. If we stop now—leaving terror camps intact and terror states unchecked—our sense of security would be false and temporary. History has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom's fight.

...

None of us would ever wish the evil that was done on September the 11th. Yet after America was attacked, it was as if our entire country looked into a mirror and saw our better selves. We were reminded that we are citizens, with obligations to each other, to our country, and to history. We began to think less of the goods we can accumulate, and more about the good we can do.

For too long our culture has said, "If it feels good, do it." Now America is embracing a new ethic and a new creed: "Let's roll." In the sacrifice of soldiers, the fierce brotherhood of firefighters, and the bravery and generosity of ordinary citizens, we have glimpsed what a new culture of responsibility could look like. We want to be a nation that serves goals larger than self. We've been offered a unique opportunity, and we must not let this moment pass.

...

Steadfast in our purpose, we now press on. We have known freedom's price. We have shown freedom's power. And in this great conflict, my fellow Americans, we will see freedom's victory.

Thank you all. May God bless.

[Source: George W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," January 29, 2002. Available online via *The American Presidency Project* (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29644>).]

Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)

In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled in Obergefell v. Hodges that prohibitions against same-sex marriage were unconstitutional. Gay marriage had been a divisive issue in American politics for well over a decade. Many states passed referendums and constitutional amendments barring same-sex marriages and, in 1996, Bill Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act, defining marriage at the federal level as between a man and a woman. In 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Court struck down Massachusetts' state's prohibition, making it the first state to legally marry same-sex couples. More followed and public opinion began to turn. Although President Obama still refused to support it, by 2011 a majority of Americans believed same-sex marriages should be legally recognized. Four years later, the Supreme Court issued its Obergefell decision. The majority opinion, written by Justice Anthony Kennedy, considered the relationship between history and shifting notions of liberty and injustice.

The Constitution promises liberty to all within its reach, a liberty that includes certain specific rights that allow persons, within a lawful realm, to define and express their identity. The petitioners in these cases seek to find that liberty by marrying someone of the same sex and having their marriages deemed lawful on the same terms and conditions as marriages between persons of the opposite sex.

These cases come from Michigan, Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee, States that define marriage as a union between one man and one woman. ... The petitioners are 14 same-sex couples and two men whose same-sex partners are deceased. The respondents are state officials responsible for enforcing the laws in question. The petitioners claim the respondents violate the Fourteenth Amendment by denying them the right to marry or to have their marriages, lawfully performed in another State, given full recognition.

...

The nature of injustice is that we may not always see it in our own times. The generations that wrote and ratified the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment did not presume to know the extent of freedom in all of its dimensions, and so they entrusted to future generations a charter protecting the right of all persons to enjoy liberty as we learn its meaning. When new insight reveals discord between the Constitution's central protections and a received legal stricture, a claim to liberty must be addressed.

...

The limitation of marriage to opposite-sex couples may long have seemed natural and just, but its inconsistency with the central meaning of the fundamental right to marry is now manifest. With that knowledge must come the recognition that laws excluding same-sex couples from the marriage right impose stigma and injury of the kind prohibited by our basic charter.

... [T]he respondents ... assert the petitioners do not seek to exercise the right to marry but rather a new and nonexistent "right to same-sex marriage." ... If rights were defined by who exercised them in the past, then received practices could serve as their own continued

justification and new groups could not invoke rights once denied. This Court has rejected that approach, both with respect to the right to marry and the rights of gays and lesbians.

The right to marry is fundamental as a matter of history and tradition, but rights come not from ancient sources alone. They rise, too, from a better informed understanding of how constitutional imperatives define a liberty that remains urgent in our own era. Many who deem same-sex marriage to be wrong reach that conclusion based on decent and honorable religious or philosophical premises, and neither they nor their beliefs are disparaged here. But when that sincere, personal opposition becomes enacted law and public policy, the necessary consequence is to put the imprimatur of the State itself on an exclusion that soon demeans or stigmatizes those whose own liberty is then denied. Under the Constitution, same-sex couples seek in marriage the same legal treatment as opposite-sex couples, and it would disparage their choices and diminish their personhood to deny them this right.

...

Indeed, in interpreting the Equal Protection Clause, the Court has recognized that new insights and societal understandings can reveal unjustified inequality within our most fundamental institutions that once passed unnoticed and unchallenged. ...

It is now clear that the challenged laws burden the liberty of same-sex couples, and it must be further acknowledged that they abridge central precepts of equality. Here the marriage laws enforced by the respondents are in essence unequal: same-sex couples are denied all the benefits afforded to opposite-sex couples and are barred from exercising a fundamental right. Especially against a long history of disapproval of their relationships, this denial to same-sex couples of the right to marry works a grave and continuing harm. The imposition of this disability on gays and lesbians serves to disrespect and subordinate them. And the Equal Protection Clause, like the Due Process Clause, prohibits this unjustified infringement of the fundamental right to marry.

These considerations lead to the conclusion that the right to marry is a fundamental right inherent in the liberty of the person, and under the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment couples of the same-sex may not be deprived of that right and that liberty. The Court now holds that same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry. No longer may this liberty be denied to them. *Baker v. Nelson* must be and now is overruled, and the State laws challenged by Petitioners in these cases are now held invalid to the extent they exclude same-sex couples from civil marriage on the same terms and conditions as opposite sex couples.

...

No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, and family. In forming a marital union, two people become something greater than once they were. As some of the petitioners in these cases demonstrate, marriage embodies a love that may endure even past death. It would misunderstand these men and women to say they disrespect the idea of marriage. Their plea is that they do respect it,

respect it so deeply that they seek to find its fulfillment for themselves. Their hope is not to be condemned to live in loneliness, excluded from one of civilization's oldest institutions. They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right.

The judgment of the Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit is reversed.

It is so ordered.

[Source: Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. ____ (2015). Available online via *The Supreme Court* (https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/14pdf/14-556_3204.pdf).]

Pedro Lopez on His Mother's Deportation (2008/2015)

Pedro Lopez immigrated to Postville, Iowa, with his family as a young child. On May 12, 2008, Pedro Lopez's mother, an undocumented immigrant from Mexico, was arrested, jailed, and deported to Mexico. Pedro was 13. Here, he describes the experience.

I'll go back right to the day. I was in social studies going into my reading class. There was a helicopter circling around the northern part of town. There is a National Guard station up in Decorah so we thought maybe they got themselves a hold of a helicopter. They are doing an exercise. Prior to that there was a raid in Marshalltown. Some people saw that as a possibility of them getting closer to Postville, making connections and whatnot. When we did find out that it was actually immigration that came to Postville, ICE agents, it was a big hit for me. Both of my parents worked at Agriprocessors at that time. My dad worked in maintenance and my mom worked just on the line, is what we called it, which is where they process the meat. My mom worked from three in the morning until whenever they decided to end the day. My dad would go in around four or five in the afternoon. They tried to do that so there was an adult in the house. My mom was working her shift and I knew that she was there for sure. What happened after that was they did arrest my mom and she was scared because she heard stories about Marshalltown and how they would go into the houses.

Immigrants don't sometimes know the full extension of the law and they would allow them sometimes to just come in not knowing what would be the consequences. My mom said she was here alone. She was not here with anybody else. She said I'm here alone, I don't have any kids. If you are going to take me, take me, that's all you are going to get. That's really what they did. She was just scared. She didn't know what to do, but she knew that she had a family. There are three of us. My youngest sister is a United States citizen, my older sister and I aren't, so she was worried about us. And rightly so. She came from Mexico, 2,200 and some miles. They both crossed the desert, in horrendous conditions. She wasn't going to give up all of that just because she was going to open her mouth and say oh yeah I have kids but she didn't know that was one of the ways out of the actual process.

She was arrested and sent to five different prisons. She was sentenced to five months in jail and was deported on October 25th, 2008, which ironically is my dad's birthday. My mom was taken out of the picture for a year. Us here at home it was very difficult. My sister was 17 years old going on 18. In a flip of a coin she had to become a mother of two. My dad had to work double as hard because we had half of our income cut. I kind of had to step up. I was at the age where, I was thirteen, so I could do a little bit more, which I did. You kind of had to leave some of your childhood behind. What I told Luis Argueta, who was actually here filming today, I told Luis it was hard for me. I was a man at that time. I was expected to be a man. And be a rock. Just going through the motions and make sure everything is alright and not really express my feelings. Well that was one of the things that was hurting the most was my feelings because I didn't have my mom, I had to give up some of my childhood just because it wasn't necessary at that time.

We were in constant fear of ICE coming back, most of the time we had half of our belongings packed. That was something that would eat at my mind like oh no, my dad is going to go and work, alright is he going to make it back? If not what are we going to do, what is going to be the process? Plus before my mom was deported, it was where is my mom? I wonder what she is doing, I wonder what she is feeling, I wonder if she is okay, I wonder if she is being treated right? It's a lot on a thirteen-year-olds' mind. Especially when they are thirteen, they are going through their own changes themselves. The fear of going to high school was completely not even in my mind because I was thinking I don't know if I going to survive another day living in the United States. Why do I have to worry about the next four years of possibly being in Mexico? It was a hard time. It was a time where I realized that my story could do a lot of good things, the story of Postville could do some amazing, great things. It was a time of change, it was a time of growth, it was a time to strengthen our family, but it was a hard time nevertheless.

Interviewer: When your mother was in the five jails were you able to contact her at all?

She would send me letters. We took the decision of not going to visit her partly because it would be too much. It would have been nice to see her and nice to know she was okay. I never could see my mother in an orange jumpsuit behind a glass. Thinking of her as oh yeah she is supposed to be a criminal. She's my mother. She has given up so much to give me the opportunity to where I'm at now.

She would send us cards, and that's pretty much it. When she was in Mexico we would call her of course and get in contact with her, but while she was in jail we just kept it at letters. The letters were hard to swallow. She would try to be strong in the letters. She would say I'm fine, I'm doing great, how are you doing? I hope you are doing fine. This is going to be behind us. You are going to be fine. Just keep going, keep looking forward and don't be afraid.

It was hard. It was hard again, you have the half packed house, dad working two jobs, sister uptight with pretty much everything because she is in charge of the house. It was just one more thing, but it was a thing I always looked forward to, it was a thing that gave me strength. It really inspired me to continue talking and when people questioned what I did I took that as a sign that well maybe they really don't want to hear what happened. If they question my story it might be because they are really in the dark of what is happening in the immigration system. I took that and ran with it, just kept talking about my story, about that story of Postville and what I thought was wrong. Source: Pedro Arturo Lopez Vega Interview, in *Community Voices: The Postville Oral History Project*, 9-12. Available via The Postville Oral History Project (https://scholarworks.uni.edu/postville_oralhistory/11/).

Chelsea Manning Petitions for a Pardon (2013)

Chelsea Manning, a U.S. Army intelligence analyst, was convicted in 2013 for violating the Espionage Act by leaking classified documents revealing the killing of civilians, the torture of prisoners, and other nefarious actions committed by the United States in the War on Terror. After being sentenced to thirty-five years in federal prison, she delivered a statement, through her attorney, explaining her actions and requesting a pardon from President Barack Obama. Manning's sentence was commuted in 2017.

The decisions that I made in 2010 were made out of a concern for my country and the world that we live in. Since the tragic events of 9/11, our country has been at war. We've been at war with an enemy that chooses not to meet us on any traditional battlefield, and due to this fact we've had to alter our methods of combating the risks posed to us and our way of life.

I initially agreed with these methods and chose to volunteer to help defend my country. It was not until I was in Iraq and reading secret military reports on a daily basis that I started to question the morality of what we were doing. It was at this time I realized in our efforts to meet this risk posed to us by the enemy, we have forgotten our humanity. We consciously elected to devalue human life both in Iraq and Afghanistan. When we engaged those that we perceived were the enemy, we sometimes killed innocent civilians. Whenever we killed innocent civilians, instead of accepting responsibility for our conduct, we elected to hide behind the veil of national security and classified information in order to avoid any public accountability.

In our zeal to kill the enemy, we internally debated the definition of torture. We held individuals at Guantanamo for years without due process. We inexplicably turned a blind eye to torture and executions by the Iraqi government. And we stomached countless other acts in the name of our war on terror.

Patriotism is often the cry extolled when morally questionable acts are advocated by those in power. When these cries of patriotism drown out any logically based dissension, it is usually an American soldier that is ordered to carry out some ill-conceived mission.

Our nation has had similar dark moments for the virtues of democracy—the Trail of Tears, the Dred Scott decision, McCarthyism, the Japanese-American internment camps—to name a few. I am confident that many of our actions since 9/11 will one day be viewed in a similar light.

As the late Howard Zinn once said, "There is not a flag large enough to cover the shame of killing innocent people."

I understand that my actions violated the law, and I regret if my actions hurt anyone or harmed the United States. It was never my intention to hurt anyone. I only wanted to help people. When I chose to disclose classified information, I did so out of a love for my country and a sense of duty to others.

If you deny my request for a pardon, I will serve my time knowing that sometimes you have to pay a heavy price to live in a free society. I will gladly pay that price if it means we could have country that is truly conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all women and men are created equal.

Source: Statement of Chelsea Manning, as Read by his Attorney, David Coombs, on August 21, 2013. Available via Democracy Now!

(https://www.democracynow.org/2013/8/21/bradley_manning_sometimes_you_have_to_pay_a_heavy_price_to_live_in_a_free_society).

Emily Doe (Chanel Miller), Victim Impact Statement (2015)

On January 18, 2015, Stanford University student Brock Turner sexually assaulted an unconscious woman outside of a university fraternity house. At his sentencing on June 2, 2016, his unnamed victim ("Emily Doe") read a 7,000-word victim impact statement describing the effect of the assault on her life. [Note: Chanel Miller identified herself publicly as Emily Doe in September 2019.]

On January 17th, 2015, it was a quiet Saturday night at home. My dad made some dinner and I sat at the table with my younger sister who was visiting for the weekend. I was working full time and it was approaching my bed time. I planned to stay at home by myself, watch some TV and read, while she went to a party with her friends. Then, I decided it was my only night with her, I had nothing better to do, so why not, there's a dumb party ten minutes from my house, I would go, dance like a fool, and embarrass my younger sister. On the way there, I joked that undergrad guys would have braces. My sister teased me for wearing a beige cardigan to a frat party like a librarian. I called myself "big mama," because I knew I'd be the oldest one there. I made silly faces, let my guard down, and drank liquor too fast not factoring in that my tolerance had significantly lowered since college.

The next thing I remember I was in a gurney in a hallway. I had dried blood and bandages on the backs of my hands and elbow. I thought maybe I had fallen and was in an admin office on campus. I was very calm and wondering where my sister was. A deputy explained I had been assaulted. I still remained calm, assured he was speaking to the wrong person. I knew no one at this party. When I was finally allowed to use the restroom, I pulled down the hospital pants they had given me, went to pull down my underwear, and felt nothing. I still remember the feeling of my hands touching my skin and grabbing nothing. I looked down and there was nothing. The thin piece of fabric, the only thing between my vagina and anything else, was missing and everything inside me was silenced. I still don't have words for that feeling. In order to keep breathing, I thought maybe the policemen used scissors to cut them off for evidence.

Then, I felt pine needles scratching the back of my neck and started pulling them out my hair. I thought maybe, the pine needles had fallen from a tree onto my head. My brain was talking my gut into not collapsing. Because my gut was saying, help me, help me.

I shuffled from room to room with a blanket wrapped around me, pine needles trailing behind me, I left a little pile in every room I sat in. I was asked to sign papers that said "Rape Victim" and I thought something has really happened. My clothes were confiscated and I stood naked while the nurses held a ruler to various abrasions on my body and photographed them. The three of us worked to comb the pine needles out of my hair, six hands to fill one paper bag. To calm me down, they said it's just the flora and fauna, flora and fauna. I had multiple swabs inserted into my vagina and anus, needles for shots, pills, had a Nikon pointed right into my spread legs. I had long, pointed beaks inside me and had my vagina smeared with cold, blue paint to check for abrasions....

...

I thought there's no way this is going to trial; there were witnesses, there was dirt in my body, he ran but was caught. He's going to settle, formally apologize, and we will both move on. Instead, I was told he hired a powerful attorney, expert witnesses, private investigators who were going to try and find details about my personal life to use against me, find loopholes in my story to invalidate me and my sister, in order to show that this sexual assault was in fact a misunderstanding. That he was going to go to any length to convince the world he had simply been confused....

Instead of taking time to heal, I was taking time to recall the night in excruciating detail, in order to prepare for the attorney's questions that would be invasive, aggressive, and designed to steer me off course, to contradict myself, my sister, phrased in ways to manipulate my answers.

...

My damage was internal, unseen, I carry it with me. You took away my worth, my privacy, my energy, my time, my safety, my intimacy, my confidence, my own voice, until today.

... I am no stranger to suffering. You made me a victim. In newspapers my name was "unconscious intoxicated woman", ten syllables, and nothing more than that. For a while, I believed that that was all I was. I had to force myself to relearn my real name, my identity. To relearn that this is not all that I am. That I am not just a drunk victim at a frat party found behind a dumpster, while you are the All American swimmer at a top university, innocent until proven guilty, with so much at stake. I am a human being who has been irreversibly hurt, my life was put on hold for over a year, waiting to figure out if I was worth something....

... Finally, to girls everywhere, I am with you. On nights when you feel alone, I am with you. When people doubt you or dismiss you, I am with you. I fought everyday for you. So never stop fighting, I believe you. As the author Anne Lamott once wrote, "Lighthouses don't go running all over an island looking for boats to save; they just stand there shining." Although I can't save every boat, I hope that by speaking today, you absorbed a small amount of light, a small knowing that you can't be silenced, a small satisfaction that justice was served, a small assurance that we are getting somewhere, and a big, big knowing that you are important, unquestionably, you are untouchable, you are beautiful, you are to be valued, respected, undeniably, every minute of every day, you are powerful and nobody can take that away from you. To girls everywhere, I am with you.

Thank you. Source: Emily Doe, "Victim Statement to Brock Turner," June 2, 2016.

Available online via BuzzFeed

(<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/katiejbaker/heres-the-powerful-letter-the-stanford-victim-read-to-her-ra>).

Ground Zero (2001)



"911: Ground Zero; 10/03/2001." From Records of the White House Photo Office, via [National Archives \(Identifier: 5997364\)](#).

A worker stands in front of rubble from the World Trade Center at Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan several weeks after the September 11 attacks.

Barack Obama and a Young Boy (2009)



Pete Souza, White House, reference number P050809PS-0264, via [Flickr](#).

In 2008, Barack Obama became the first African American elected to the presidency. In this official White House photo from May, 2009, 5-year-old Jacob Philadelphia said, “I want to know if my hair is just like yours.”